

Maryland Mandates Exotic Bird Registration

Maryland exotic bird owners with three or more caged birds are now required to register their pets

4-28-2006

Maryland exotic bird owners with three or more caged birds are now required to register under the Maryland Department of Agriculture's (MDA) new Domestic Poultry and Exotic Bird premises registration program. MDA is requiring premises registration so that in the event of any bird-related disease outbreak, residents can be notified quickly.

"Poultry is Maryland's number one agricultural commodity involving more than 2,500 farm families and 14,000 poultry company employees on Delmarva," said Lewis Riley, Maryland Secretary of Agriculture. "The registration program is designed to protect all the poultry and bird industries in the state—from commercial to agri-tourism to backyard flocks. In the event of any avian disease outbreak, a rapid response is essential in preventing the spread of disease and the loss of family income."

Although a specific timeline has not been released, the registration process will take place in three phases. First, backyard flocks, including fair and show birds, will be registered. Then, certain categories of exotic and pet birds will be registered, including budgerigars, canaries, cockatiels, finches, parrots and other cage birds. This applies only to those premises with three or more cage birds. The final phase will be the registration of commercial flocks.

The identity of the registrant will be protected, unless it is determined that the disclosure is necessary to protect the public health or prevent the spread of an infectious or contagious disease.

Similar programs already exist in several Southern states.

For more information and to obtain a registration form, visit www.mda.state.md.us.

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