

USDA, DOJ, DHS, and HHS Launch Coordinated Effort to Crackdown on Chronic Dog Welfare Violators Federal Blitz Targets Worst Offenders

By USDA - Washington, D.C. – U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins, alongside U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi, U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem, and U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr., together are taking historic actions to hold chronic companion animal welfare violators accountable and prosecute those who fight dogs to the highest extent of the law in an effort to end this horrific practice once and for all. The suite of actions will boost compliance with existing laws, protect our companion animals, and reiterate that the Trump Administration stands with the majority of Americans who own companion animals.

Today, dogs are the most popular pet in the United States, with 65.1 million households owning a pet dog. About half of pet owners (51%) not only consider their pets to be a part of their family but say they are as much a part of their family as a human member.

“Let me be clear,” said Secretary Brooke Rollins. “If you are breeding dogs and not meeting the Animal Welfare Act’s humane standards of care, your time is up. We will not allow a handful of bad actors to tarnish the reputation of responsible American breeders or compromise the humane treatment of animals. Together, President Trump’s cabinet is working together to support our great dog breeders across the country, while stepping up enforcement on recurring bad actors and working to end dog fighting once and for all.”

USDA Focus on Animal Welfare Act Consistency & Enforcement

Over the past 15 years, USDA has significantly strengthened its oversight of dog breeding facilities. Compliance with the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) among facilities that breed dogs has risen from an average of 67% in 2015 to over 92% in 2025 reflecting both regulatory improvements and industry cooperation across the country over the last decade. Despite this progress, several breeding facilities continue to tarnish the industry with recurring and chronic violations. To address this, USDA will:

- Root out bad actors with a history of non-compliance through initiation of enforcement actions against the licenses of persistent AWA violators and in worse cases, remove those offenders from the industry altogether.

- Deploy and expand Animal Care’s compliance and enforcement specialist team to aggressively identify and investigate unlicensed activities under the Animal Welfare Act, and intensify enforcement against individuals importing dogs for resale without the required permits.

- Improve consistency across industry with AWA inspections through increased inspector training, compliance tracking, and processing.

- Expand information sharing with Federal and state partners so they can factor in USDA’s inspections when considering when to conduct their own inspections.

- Help state and local partners pursue enforcement action against breeders who do not fall under USDA’s authority but impact the welfare of dogs.

- Since announcing the strike force to combat animal cruelty, USDA has taken swift action to target bad actors. USDA has cancelled, denied, suspended and revoked licenses issued to six dog breeders who failed to provide humane care to their dogs, filed administrative enforcement cases against two chronically noncompliant dog breeders, referred a case to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) involving a facility that has repeatedly prevented USDA officials from conducting animal welfare compliance inspections, and partnered with DOJ to pursue a dog breeder who skirted laws aimed at protecting animals by supporting the humane placement of over 100 dogs, among other things. Our work to protect dogs and promote animal welfare will not stop here.



USDA Opens Request for Information to the Public & Stakeholders

Today, USDA opened a Request for Information (RFI) to allow the public and stakeholders, including those regulated by the AWA the opportunity to provide input on the current standards governing the humane care of dogs under the AWA. USDA wants to ensure federal standards reflect current best practices and scientific evidence to promote dog welfare. The comment period will be open for 30 days.



Beyond Lilly: Life Sciences in Lehigh Valley

By Paul Muschick

LEHIGH VALLEY - Eli Lilly and Company is making the largest investment in Lehigh Valley history and biggest life sciences investment ever in Pennsylvania. The world’s largest pharmaceutical maker recently announced it will build a \$3.5 billion manufacturing campus to produce weight-loss medications. The investment will create 850 permanent jobs and 2,000 construction jobs, with the potential to spark \$14 billion in related spending into the community.

One of the reasons Lilly chose the Lehigh Valley over more than 300 other regions is because Lehigh Valley has a heritage of innovation and of technical manufacturing, with the infrastructure to support it.

When announcing the investment on Jan. 30, Lilly CEO David Ricks said it was important for Lilly to be “involved in a growing industry in life sciences and life sciences manufacturing.” He said the Lehigh Valley has an “ecosystem around us that really supports what we do.”

Here’s a look at Lehigh Valley’s life sciences ecosystem, which as a Fortune 100 company, Lilly will elevate into a new chapter of the region’s long manufacturing story.

Growth

There are more than 180 life sciences business establishments in the Lehigh Valley - manufacturing facilities, labs, research centers, offices, and distribution centers - that employ about 5,800 people.

Since 2020, life sciences companies in the region have added more than 2.5M square feet of new space. Employment in Lehigh Valley’s life sciences companies has grown by about 35% over the last decade.

Strategic Location

The Lehigh Valley is conveniently located in the life sciences belt between Boston and Philadelphia. One-third of U.S. consumers can be reached within a day’s drive. The region is home to an international airport that is expanding its cargo operations, with access to nearby international airports and ports.

Global Brands

Lehigh Valley touts a growing concentration of life sciences companies, including the U.S. headquarters of B. Braun and Olympus, and operations of ThermoFisher Scientific, Sharp, Piral Critical Care, and OraSure Technologies, among others.

Pipeline of Talent

Lehigh Valley’s 11 colleges and universities graduate 10,000 students annually. Another 1,000 students annually complete studies at the region’s three career and technical schools.

To help meet Lilly’s need for talent, Lehigh Carbon Community College received state funding to create and expand academic and workforce training programs in life sciences. This includes updating science programs customized for biotechnology and advanced manufacturing careers and adding specialized equipment utilized in pharmaceutical operations.

There is a labor force of 1.8 million within a one-hour drive from the Lehigh Valley.

Family-sustaining Careers

The average annual wage for the life sciences industry in the Lehigh Valley is more than \$114,000. That’s about 70% more than the regional average annual wage.