



## Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Governor Deval L. Patrick  
Secretary Richard K. Sullivan Jr.

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### **Department of Agricultural Resources Encourages Massachusetts Residents to Help Prevent Animal Homelessness**

BOSTON – Tuesday, February 25, 2014 – With tax season underway, the Patrick Administration’s Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) is asking taxpayers to consider giving to the Homeless Animal Prevention and Care Fund. Residents can contribute to the fund by checking off a donation on their state tax returns.

“This new fund provides Massachusetts taxpayers with a convenient and effective way to help protect and care for homeless animals in the 321 registered animal shelters and rescue facilities in Massachusetts,” said DAR Commissioner Greg Watson.

The donation option can be found on Line 32f of the 2013 tax return. Contributions go toward reducing the number of homeless cats and dogs by spaying or neutering animals in shelters and animal control facilities, providing vaccinations, assisting families who would not otherwise be able to afford these services for their pets, and providing training to municipal animal control officers.

The fund is part of a new law that took effect in 2012 as a proactive measure to provide assistance for the well-being of Massachusetts’ most vulnerable animals. The fund is administered by DAR’s Division of Animal Health.

In December of 2013, the Division of Animal Health worked with several local animal control officers, the Animal Rescue League of Boston, Thomas J. O’Connor Animal Control & Adoption Center, and the Pat Brody Shelter for Cats to remove more than 70 cats from an illegal shelter. Several thousand dollars from the Homeless Animal Prevention and Care Fund was made available for vaccines and spay/neuter services to help defray costs incurred by private organizations assisting these animals from rescue through adoption.

In addition to establishing the Homeless Animal Prevention and Care Fund, the 2012 law also created a five-member advisory committee appointed by Governor Patrick that assists DAR in establishing procedures for the disbursement of funds. The advisory committee has already created the framework for a voucher program that aims to provide free spay/neuter services, and they are continuing to work out the details of a free mandatory training program for the Commonwealth’s municipal animal control officers, expected to begin in 2015.

From dogs, cats, chickens, goats, cattle, horses and more, the health and safety of the state’s domestic animals is the primary responsibility of DAR’s Division of Animal Health. Through inspections, licensing, awareness and education, the Division helps to ensure the general welfare of companion and food-producing animals across the state.

Staff from the Division work with the Department of Public Health, the Animal Rescue League of Boston, the MSPCA, local veterinarians, local health departments, municipal animal inspectors and animal control officers to respond when problematic situations arise.



DAR’s mission is to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – Agricultural Conservation & Technical Assistance, Agricultural Markets, Animal Health, and

Crop and Pest Services – DAR strives to support, regulate and enhance the rich diversity of the Commonwealth’s agricultural community to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture’s role in energy conservation and production. For more information, visit DAR’s website at [www.mass.gov/agr](http://www.mass.gov/agr), and/or follow us at [www.twitter.com/MDARCommish](http://www.twitter.com/MDARCommish) and [www.twitter.com/MassGrown](http://www.twitter.com/MassGrown)

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