



**TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
505 SILAS DEANE HIGHWAY  
WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT 06109  
(860) 721-2837 FAX (860) 721-2843

**APPLICATION GUIDANCE\***

For  
**Pets and Livestock**

The Town of Wethersfield allows for the keeping of pets and livestock on residential property greater in area than 8,000 square feet. The provisions of Section 3.5 of the zoning regulations establish the requirements for pets and livestock. The Town of Wethersfield has created this guide in an effort to summarize the requirements of these regulations for individuals interested in keeping pets and/or livestock on their property.

\*This guide is intended for general guidance only, and does not replace the full zoning regulations and code requirements. Any questions should be directed towards the Town of Wethersfield Building Department, which can be reached at (860)-721-2840.

**What Is Considered Livestock?** The term livestock includes horses, cows, sheep, goats, hens, rabbits, and similar animals.

**What is Considered a Livestock Unit?** A livestock unit is defined as follows:

- one horse, cow, or similar large animal whose mature weight exceeds 500 pounds;
- three sheep, goats, or similar medium size animals whose mature weight is between 30 and 500 pounds; or
- fifteen hens, rabbits, or similar small animals whose mature weight is less than 30 pounds.

**What is a Farm?** A farm is a parcel of land of five (5) or more acres under single ownership or leasehold and used for farming. The term “farm” shall include farm buildings and accessory buildings, nurseries, orchards, ranges, pastures, greenhouses, and structures used primarily for the raising and incidental sale of agricultural and horticultural commodities. Farms are exempt from the provisions of the following guidelines, as seen in Section 3.5 of the zoning regulations.

**What is Farming?** The use of a farm for agricultural activities:

- including forestry; cultivation of the soil for raising and harvesting any agricultural or horticultural commodity; the raising, dairying, shearing, feeding, caring for, training and management of livestock; the production or harvesting of maple syrup or another agricultural commodity as an incident to ordinary farming operations; and the handling, packing, storing or delivery to storage or to market or the direct sale of any agricultural or horticultural commodity as an incident to ordinary farming operations.
- excluding the commercial raising of pigs, commercial slaughtering, commercial reduction of inedible animal matter, commercial kennels, or animal hospitals.

## **Pets Allowed Without a Permit**

The keeping of dogs, cats, and other animals as pets or companions that are housed together with human occupants is Permitted by Right, and thus no permit is required.

## **Dog License Requirement**

By state statute, all dogs over six months old must be licensed annually by June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. All dogs must also have a current rabies vaccination. For further information regarding dog licensing, please contact the Wethersfield Town Clerk's office, which can be reached by phone at (860) 721-2800.

## **Livestock Allowed by Zoning Permit Approval Issued by the Zoning Enforcement Officer**

Livestock is allowed (following the permit approval process by the zoning enforcement official) on residential premises solely for the personal use of the occupants or when accessory to a farm, under the following conditions:

- The keeping of livestock may include raising, breeding, instructing, training, sales, boarding, riding, driving, and other similar uses.
- The keeping of bees is permitted in conjunction with a residence.
- All livestock shall be confined in keeping areas with adequate fencing located at least 25 feet from any lot line.
- An appropriate permanent shelter shall be provided for all livestock and such shelter shall be located at least:
  - 100 feet from the street line,
  - 50 feet from a rear property line,
  - 25 feet from a side property line, and
  - 100 feet from a reservoir, pond, or watercourse.
- All manure shall be:
  - Kept in a covered, water-tight pit or chamber as approved by the Wethersfield Health Department<sup>1</sup>.
  - Removed at least once a week during the period from May 1<sup>st</sup> to October 1<sup>st</sup> and during the other months at intervals sufficiently frequent to maintain a condition which is sanitary and free from offensive odors to the satisfaction of the Director of Health.
  - Located at least 100 feet from any street line and 50 feet from any lot line.
  - Visually screened from the street or any neighboring lot.
- Any pre-existing non-conforming fence for confining livestock may be repaired, maintained, or replaced.
- Additional regulations of the Public Health Code, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, and the Connecticut General Statutes may apply.

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<sup>1</sup> The Wethersfield Health Department can be reached at (860) 721-2822.

**Minimum Lot Size Requirements and Permitted Livestock\***

<b>Lot Size</b>	<b>Permitted Livestock</b>
Less than 8,000 square feet	None
8,000 to 20,000 square feet	Up to 5 hens, capons, rabbits, or similar small animals or birds, one sheep, or one goat
More than 20,000 square feet	0.5 livestock units per acre or part thereof

\*Livestock offspring shall not apply to the calculation of livestock units until after weaning.

**Prohibitions**

- The raising or breeding of livestock exclusively for their pelts is prohibited.
- Kennels (sites or structures used for the keeping of animals for compensation) are prohibited except in certain commercial zones. Kennels are permitted with special permit approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission in the following business zones: General Business, Regional Commercial, and Business Park.

**Permitted By Special Permit Issued By The Planning and Zoning Commission**

The regulations allow the Planning and Zoning Commission to issue Special Permits for certain pets and livestock that do not comply with the regulations as stated above.

Proposed pets and livestock that do not comply with the provisions of Section 3.5. can only be permitted following the submission of an application for, and the approval of, a Special Permit by the Planning and Zoning Commission. (See Special Permit handout for details of this process.) This process involves the submission of an application to the Planning Department, notice to neighbors, and a public hearing with the Planning and Zoning Commission.