

FISCAL NOTE TO
ASSEMBLY, No. 785
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JULY 22, 1996

Assembly Bill No. 785 of 1996 would amend existing laws pertaining to cruelty to animals to better provide protection to horses. The language in the current statute protects horses as "work" animals and fails to take into account their widespread use in recreation, shows, exhibitions, and as domestic pets. This bill also extends the Department of Agriculture's authority to regulate the sale of livestock to horses, which are not currently covered by the statute. At present, only the sale of sheep, swine and cattle is regulated by the department. The intent of these changes is to clarify that horses are subject to the same protections afforded other animals.

The Department of Agriculture estimates that the bill will generate revenues of \$5,000 from the licensing of horse brokers or dealers in the first year after the bill's enactment, and \$6,000 annually thereafter. It also estimates that it would have to spend \$4,000 for materials and supplies to carry out this licensing responsibility in the first year of the bill's enactment, and \$2,000 annually thereafter. The department believes that existing staff who currently carry out the licensing and enforcement functions for other livestock dealers would be able handle these additional duties. The department's revenue estimate is based on charging a \$50 license fee to 100 horse dealers or brokers annually.

It should be noted that section 8 of the bill, which amends a statutory provision (by including horses) that charges livestock dealers or brokers a \$15 license renewal fee, is not addressed by the department because this fee is not being charged at the present time. Instead, the department charges the full fee for each year's license renewal.

The Office of Legislative Services concurs with the department's cost estimates but not with its revenue estimates because the current license fee for cattle, sheep and swine brokers or dealers is \$30 per year. The bill includes horses in this license category. Hence, at the present rate, \$3,000 in license fees from an estimated 100 horse dealers or brokers would be generated annually. The department cited the \$50 rate because it hopes the current fee rate can eventually be raised to this level.

This fiscal note has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67.