



Partial list of pathogens found in imported dogs

Information about pet importation and humane relocation programs

Definition

Authority Statements

Causal References

Data/Information Support for Policy Formulation

Rabies

Canine Influenza

Screwworm

Leptospirosis

Canine Onchocercosis

Distemper (new strain)

Canine Brucellosis

Practices

Hazards

Definition: Humane Relocation

Humane relocation (or *dog trafficking* if you oppose it) refers to the practice of transporting un-owned pets in need of adoption (primarily dogs and cats) from areas with a surplus of homeless pets to areas with a higher demand for pets and more shelter and rescue space. [\(link\)](#) When done responsibly, it is a cooperative, common-sense method of finding homes for pets that might otherwise be euthanized. When done without care, it does nothing to solve the problem of pet overpopulation at its source, and in some cases even encourages it. Worse, it can turn participating rescues and shelters into unregulated pet stores that deal in animals of unknown backgrounds – animals that may have serious behavioral problems or may be infected with

parasites and diseases not endemic to a particular region (e.g. whip worm, heart worm, or rabies). ([link](#))

Out-of-date pet import laws make the US the destination country for stray dogs worldwide. The main thing required for admittance into the US is a certificate showing that the dog was vaccinated for rabies at least 30 days before.

Unlike livestock import requirements, pet import laws have not been updated significantly since 1956. Since then the Internet has made worldwide communication simple and international travel has become more affordable for both commodities and personal movement.

The practice that systematically moves hundreds of thousands of dogs into the US each year is called **HUMANE RELOCATION**

STATEMENTS BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND OVERSIGHT ENTITIES ON INTERNATIONAL PET RESCUE AND ADOPTION

CDC <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2018/conveyance-transportation-issues/taking-animals-animal-products-across-international-borders>

Excerpt “Although done with the best of intentions, rescuing and importing stray animals from foreign countries can create human health risks. Travelers are at an increased risk for possible bites and scratches from fearful and stressed animals, which may result in injury or exposure to infectious disease. Animals that are infected with zoonotic diseases might not show any outward signs of being ill. Therefore, all rescued animals should be examined by a licensed veterinarian both before departure and after arrival in the United States. If the intent of travel is to rescue animals, participants should discuss rabies pre-exposure prophylaxis with their health care providers.”

National Association of State and Public Health Veterinarians: Rabies Compendium

<http://www.nasphv.org/Documents/NASPHVRabiesCompendium.pdf>

Excerpt “Importation and interstate movement of animals. a) Areas with dog-to-dog rabies transmission. Canine rabies virus variants have been eliminated from the United States^{3,7}; however, rabid dogs and a rabid cat have been introduced into the continental United States from areas with dog-to-dog rabies transmission.^{4–6,48,49} The movement of dogs for the purposes of adoption or sale from areas with dog-to-dog

rabies transmission increases the risk of introducing canine-transmitted rabies to areas where it does not currently exist, and this practice should be prohibited. b) International importation. Current federal regulations are insufficient to prevent the introduction of rabid animals into the United States and must be strengthened and appropriately enforced.”

SOURCE REFERENCES

One Health: What is One Health? AVMA Press Release

<https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Reference/Pages/One-Health94.aspx>

Excerpt: “It is estimated that at least 75% of emerging and re-emerging diseases are either zoonotic (spread between humans and animals) or [vector-borne](#) (carried from infected animals to others through insects).”

Imported dogs carry vector-borne diseases

Report from 6th Vector Borne World Forum: Researchers Fear Spread of Canine Vector-Borne Diseases <http://www.dogwoodjrtc.com/new-page/>

New parasite may have come from imported pets

<https://pets.webmd.com/news/20151008/parasite-imported-pets#1>

Pathogens and parasites found in imported dogs, mostly rescue dogs

Federal Select Agent Program: <https://www.selectagents.gov/SelectAgentsandToxins.html>

Excerpt: “The Federal Select Agent Program oversees the possession, use and transfer of biological select agents and toxins, which have the potential to pose a severe threat to public, animal or plant health or to animal or plant products.”

A select agent pathogen, Burkholderia pseudomallei, was diagnosed in a rescue dog imported from Thailand in 2016. The federal special agent list includes anthrax, Ebola, etc.: Public Health Response to an Imported Case of Canine Melioidosis caused by:

<https://cste.confex.com/cste/2017/webprogram/Paper8413.html>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melioidosis>

B. pseudomallei infection in humans is called [melioidosis](#); its mortality is 20 to 50% even with treatment.^[22]

INFORMATION AND DATA GATHERING IN SUPPORT OF POLICY FORMULATION

Rabies

Centers for Disease Control

CDC Importation into the US – **Rabies** (199,000 dogs from across Mexican border alone)

<http://www.naiaonline.org/uploads/WhitePapers/ImportationCDCRabies.pdf> scroll to page 3 to chart showing origin of import dogs.

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Rabies was diagnosed in a street dog imported from the streets of Cairo, Egypt by a US Rescue.

<http://www.naiaonline.org/uploads/WhitePapers/CDCRabidDogImported.pdf> Scroll to page 1359 to read report.

TB was diagnosed in a rescue dog from Turkey in 2015:

<http://www.naiaonline.org/uploads/WhitePapers/TBInRescueDogFromTurkey.pdf>

<https://equimanagement.com/news/foreign-animal-disease-happen-53687>

Rabies in rescue dog: Vermont state veterinarian cautions adopters to learn about their dog’s background before adopting.

<http://www.naiaonline.org/uploads/WhitePapers/PetAdoptionPressReleaseNov2013.pdf>

Rabid dog imported from Iraq into US

<http://www.naiaonline.org/uploads/WhitePapers/rabiesInDogImportedFromIraqJune2008.pdf>

Rescued Dog from Egypt Tests Positive for Rabies

Kansas Department of Health and Environment - February 2019

“On Feb. 25 the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) was notified of a dog in Missouri that tested positive for rabies. This dog was part of a group of 26 dogs that were imported from Egypt at the end of January 2019 by Unleashed Pet Rescue...”

<https://khap2.kdhe.state.ks.us/NewsRelease/PDFs/02-27-2019%20Rescued%20Dog%20from%20Egypt%20Tests%20Positive%20for%20Rabies.pdf>

Importation of Dogs with Rabies and Canine Distemper Virus into New York City and Surrounding Areas

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene - February 2018

“...Rescue dogs are regularly imported into and through New York City for adoption and for purchase...Several rescue dogs imported from other countries into or through New York City subsequently developed severe neurologic illness and have been diagnosed with rabies or canine distemper virus (CDV) in recent years...”

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/zoo/18vet01.pdf>

Rabies in a Dog Imported from Egypt

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control - December 2018

“On December 20, 2017, a shipment of four rescue dogs arrived at JFK from Cairo, Egypt. Two transporters and one owner retrieved the dogs, with planned distribution to foster homes and permanent owners in Connecticut, Maryland, and Virginia. A fifth dog on the flight, traveling with a separate flight parent and not part of this shipment, shared the cargo hold and was temporarily housed in New Jersey and West Virginia before reaching its Washington destination...”

...On assessment at a Connecticut veterinary clinic on December 21, dog A exhibited hyperesthesia (increased sensitivity to stimuli) and paresis. The dog bit a veterinary technician during a blood draw procedure and died shortly thereafter. The clinic submitted brain tissue for rabies testing to CDPHL. On December 26, CDPHL confirmed rabies virus infection by direct fluorescent antibody testing and informed CDC. On December 28, CDC confirmed the direct fluorescent antibody results and determined the variant was consistent with Africa 4 subspecies canine rabies virus circulating in Egypt.

...All five dogs had certificates indicating rabies vaccination both at ≥ 3 months and ≥ 30 days before arrival at a U.S. port of entry, as required by CDC dog importation regulations...

...This report describes the sixth importation of a rabid dog into the United States in the past 15 years and the third from the Middle East; all six were rescued dogs."

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6750a3.htm?s_cid=mm6750a3_e

**Rabies in a Dog Imported from Egypt with a Falsified Rabies Vaccination Certificate
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control - December 2015**

"On May 30, 2015, a shipment of eight dogs and 27 cats arrived at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City from Cairo, Egypt. The animals were distributed to several animal rescue groups and one permanent adoptive home in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. Four dogs from the shipment arrived in Virginia on May 31, 2015 and were distributed to three foster homes associated with a Virginia-based rescue group (group A). On June 3, an adult female street dog (dog A) imported by animal rescue group A became ill. The dog had been imported with an unhealed fracture of the left forelimb, and 4 days after arrival at a foster home in Virginia, developed hypersalivation, paralysis, and hyperesthesia. CDC determined that the variant was consistent with canine rabies virus circulating in Egypt...

...Among the eight dogs in the Egyptian shipment, only dog A and two dogs aged 6 months (dogs F and G) had certificates indicating rabies vaccination at or after age 3 months and ≥ 30 days before arrival at a U.S. port of entry, as required by CDC dog importation regulations. Following dog A's rabies diagnosis, rescue workers reported that the dog's vaccination certificate had been intentionally predated in Egypt."

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6449a2.htm>

**Rabies in a Dog Imported from Iraq
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control - October 2008**

"On June 5, 2008, a shipment of 24 dogs and two cats arrived in the United States from Iraq as part of an international animal rescue operation...

...On June 8, one of the 24 dogs, a mixed-breed aged 11 months (dog A), became ill and was taken to a veterinarian the next day. The dog was hospitalized with fever, diarrhea, wobbly gait, agitation, and crying. The dog's condition deteriorated, progressing to lateral recumbency with periods of agitation. On June 11, the dog was euthanized. Specimens were shipped to the Public Health and Environmental Laboratories for rabies testing, but delivery of the specimens was delayed. On June 18, the specimens were tested, and rabies was diagnosed. Specimens also were submitted to CDC, where rabies was confirmed on June 26 and typed as a rabies virus variant associated with dogs in the Middle East...

...Upon arrival in the United States, none of the 24 dogs were accompanied by the valid rabies vaccination certificates required for admission by CDC animal importation regulations."

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5739a3.htm>

Canine Influenza

Dogs from Asia bring flu (H3N2 virus) epidemic to US

Important: Cornell scientists have documented a direct cause and effect relationship between rescue dog shipments from Korea and several outbreaks of the H3N2 canine influenza in the United States.

The introduction of this virus

- Caused the American public to spend \$ millions for veterinary care
- forced the temporary closure of some veterinary clinics
- added additional costs to animal shelters whose dogs fell ill with this disease
- required pharmaceutical companies to make huge expenditures to develop new vaccines
- forced pet owners to make additional expenditures to vaccinate their dogs
- hurt dog clubs through lost entries
- lost tourism dollars in communities where dog events were impacted by virus

These shipments were facilitated and advertised by the Humane Society International, which is an affiliate of the Humane Society of the United States that raises funds on this issue.

http://www.hsi.org/issues/dog_meat/facts/stop-dog-meat-trade.html scroll to Animal Rescue: South Korea.

<https://www.avma.org/News/JAVMANews/Pages/150815g.aspx>

<https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Reference/Pages/Canine-Influenza-Backgrounder.aspx>

<http://mediarelations.cornell.edu/2015/04/12/midwest-canine-influenza-outbreak-caused-by-new-strain-of-virus/>

http://www.weny.com/story/35775357/experts-at-cornell-university-explain-dog-influenza-how-to-protect-your-pups?utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook WENY TV News

<http://www.clickorlando.com/pets/dog-flu-causes-orlando-pet-alliance-to-suspend-dog-adoptions>

<http://www.citywatchla.com/index.php/los-angeles/13395-rescued-dogs-imported-from-asia-infected-with-deadly-influenza-was-la-properly-warned>

<http://iheartdogs.com/outbreak-of-asian-dog-flu-hits-los-angeles-county/>

Canine Influenza H3N2 cases in Los Angeles County

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health - March 2018

“Outbreak in 35 dogs, most imported from Asia - In March 2017, a local veterinarian reported a potential outbreak of canine influenza H3N2 in dogs imported from Asia. The dogs showed signs consistent with influenza such as coughing, sneezing, fever and nasal discharge...After a prolonged investigation, a total of 52 dogs exposed to the virus were identified, including 35 sick animals. Of the 35 sick dogs, the virus was confirmed by PCR in 6 dogs and suspected in the other 29 dogs...”

“Single case in an ill dog imported from Asia to the San Gabriel Valley - In May 2017, a single dog imported from Asia was found to have fever and pneumonia soon after arrival. The dog was taken to two veterinary practices in the San Gabriel Valley area of Los Angeles County. It was kept at home until it appeared healthy, but was not isolated for 40 days. After it appeared healthy, it was taken to local dog parks. This case was not reported until August 2017, three months after the dog's illness...”

“Single case in a dog imported from South Korea - In mid-March 2018, a group of 3 dogs were imported from South Korea. One of the 3 had ocular and nasal discharge, and tested PCR positive canine influenza H3N2. The sick dog was placed into 40 days of home isolation, and the 2 exposed dogs were placed in a 14-day home quarantine. An additional dog on the same flight was also quarantined at home for possible exposure...”

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/InfluenzaCanineH3N2.htm>

Screwworm

New World Screwworm

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - May 2014

“In September 2007, screwworm larvae were found on a dog that had recently entered the United States from Trinidad and Tobago. An alert private veterinarian detected the larvae and submitted them to the NVSL for identification. State and Federal animal health authorities immediately took measures to track the dog's movements from Florida to Mississippi, disinfect sites where the dog spent time, and prevent any spread of the pest.

...In May 2010, a similar incident occurred when a private veterinarian found screwworm larvae on a dog that traveled from Venezuela to Florida. The Florida location was thoroughly treated to destroy any larvae that may have exited the wound.

...If this pest became established in the United States again, it could cause more than \$1 billion in losses for our country's livestock industry."

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/2014/fs_new_world_screwworm.pdf

Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis Found in Puppy From Puerto Rico

New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Infectious Disease Control - November 2017

"The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is investigating a group of 10 puppies potentially infected with leptospirosis that were imported to Vermont and New Hampshire from Puerto Rico on November 9. On November 12, a number of these puppies were brought to the outdoor patio at Ramunto's Brick and Brew Pizzeria at 9 South Street in Hanover, NH, where patrons were able to interact with them. Since coming to the area, five of these puppies have become sick and one tested positive for leptospirosis, a bacterial infection that can be transmitted from animals to humans and other pets.

...Individuals and families who adopt pets from other countries or U.S. territories like Puerto Rico should be aware of the risks of importing animals, and these animals should undergo the appropriate veterinary inspection and quarantine to prevent the spread of diseases such as leptospirosis."

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/media/pr/2017/11172017-leptospirosis.htm>

Canine Melioidosis

Imported Case of Canine Melioidosis

New York State Department of Health, Bureau of Communicable Disease Control - April 2016

"Melioidosis in humans presents variably as fulminant sepsis, pneumonia, skin infection and solid organ abscesses. It is caused by *Burkholderia pseudomallei*, which in the United States is classified as a select agent, with "potential to pose a severe threat to both human and animal health, to plant health or to animal and plant products..."

"...Human cases are rare in the United States and are usually associated with travel to endemic areas. *Burkholderia pseudomallei* can also infect animals. We describe a multijurisdictional public health response to a case of subclinical urinary *B. pseudomallei* infection in a dog that had been adopted into upstate New York from a shelter in Thailand. Investigation disclosed three human contacts with single, low-risk exposures to the dog's urine at his residence, and 16 human contacts with possible exposure to his urine or culture isolates at a veterinary hospital.

Contacts were offered various combinations of symptom/fever monitoring, baseline and repeat *B. pseudomallei* serologic testing, and antibiotic post-exposure prophylaxis, depending on the nature of their exposure and their personal medical histories. The dog's owner accepted recommendations from public health authorities and veterinary clinicians for humane euthanasia...”

“...A number of animal rescue organizations actively facilitate adoptions into the United States of shelter dogs from South-East Asia. This may result in importation of *B. pseudomallei* into almost any community, with implications for human and animal health...”

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29451368>

Canine Onchocercosis

Canine Infections with *Onchocerca lupi* Nematodes

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control - May 2015

“We report 8 cases of canine onchocercosis in Minnesota, New Mexico, Colorado, and Florida. Identification of 1 cytochrome c oxidase subunit 1 gene haplotype identical to 1 of 5 from Europe suggests recent introduction of this nematode into the United States.

...Dogs relocated from disease-endemic areas to new areas should be routinely screened for skin-dwelling microfilariae because these parasites might represent a risk for other animals. In addition, because *O. lupi* nematodes circulate among canine populations, the potential role of dogs as reservoirs for human infection should not be underestimated, as also inferred by zoonotic cases reported in the United States.”

https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/21/5/14-1812_article

Distemper (new strain)

“Well-meaning people are trying to save animals, but when you move animals, you move their infectious disease,” said **Edward Dubovi**, director of the virology laboratory at the AHDC and a professor of population medicine and diagnostic sciences. “If this particular Asia-1 strain got out into the wildlife population, then it’s here forever, because you can’t get rid of it once it hits wildlife.”

<https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2019/03/new-strain-canine-distemper-virus-arrives-north-america>

New strain of distemper imported from So. Korea with no current vaccine

<https://www.wormsandgermsblog.com/2019/02/articles/animals/dogs/new-imported-distemper-strain-in-dogs/>

Canine Brucellosis

Canine Brucellosis has been identified in dogs imported from numerous countries, in South Asia and Mexico. With increasing dog relocation programs, there is concern that the distribution of the disease is changing its historic geographic locale.

<https://news.wisc.edu/school-of-veterinary-medicine-assists-wisconsin-animal-shelters-with-canine-brucellosis-response/>

PRACTICES

Example of typical Southern California rescue website, openly talking about importing rescue dogs

<http://thebarkinglot.net/available-dogs> There are currently 132 dogs listed on their website as available for adoption today, June 27, 2017. Many are puppies. The Barking Lot finds its recruits in several places and ways. We rescue them from high kill shelters and humane societies – from Los Angeles all the way down and into Mexico. More often than not, the dogs we rescue were already scheduled to be euthanized. The Barking Lot is their last chance at finding a forever home.

HAZARDS

Example of inhumane treatment and tragic results in unregulated import Puerto Rican Tragedy, street dogs imported for rescue adoptathon in New York. At least 107 dogs die.
<http://www.naiaonline.org/uploads/WhitePapers/PuertoRicanImportTragedy.pdf>