

# ISSUES & INSIGHTS

## The Importation of Rescue Animals Without Quarantine Procedures Poses a Risk to U.S. Livestock

### SITUATION

Dogs are increasingly being imported from countries that are positive for African swine fever, Foot-and-Mouth Disease and other foreign animal diseases. These dogs are often rescued from wet markets or other circumstances in which where they, or their bedding and crates, may be contaminated with blood, manure or other secretions from food animals. While the dogs themselves are not known to be susceptible to or to carry the foreign animal disease agents of concern to the livestock industry, there is the potential for disease transmission from contamination of bedding, crates or dogs' coats.

Two federal agencies have responsibility over the importation of dogs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) oversees the certificates of veterinary inspection of animals coming to the United States as pets. Its focus is on preventing human diseases (e.g. rabies). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), under the Animal Welfare Act, has separate requirements for dogs that are imported for commercial sale or adoption as pets. These regulations currently include a requirement for an import certificate stating the animal is in good health and has been vaccinated for rabies and various other canine diseases.

There is no statutory provision that generally requires an import permit for the following types of imports: a) a dog an individual acquires outside the United States and imports for personal use as a pet; b) pet dogs that leave the United States and later return; c) dogs that organizations (or other entities) acquire outside the United States and import for distribution (including adoption) within the United States where there is no exchange of "de minimis compensation;" or d) dogs that may present pest or disease risks related to human, companion animal or livestock health (such as distemper, canine influenza, leishmaniasis as well as other pests and diseases that cause significant mortality and morbidity in dogs).

### NPPC POSITION

***USDA, under the Animal Health Protection Act, has authority to develop rules for the safe importation of dogs from countries that are positive for foreign animal diseases that present risks to livestock. NPPC requests that USDA develop rules on safe importation of these animals, including protocols for quarantine and safe disposal of bedding, bowls, food/water and crates to protect the U'S"livestock herd.***

The Animal Health Protection Act gives the USDA authority to prohibit or restrict importation or entry of any animal, bedding or conveyance if the secretary determines such action is necessary to prevent the introduction into, or dissemination within, the United States of any

pest or disease of livestock. Under this authority, USDA restricts dogs from screwworm-positive countries and livestock herding dogs from tapeworm-positive areas. Current USDA rules do not account for the potential for animals, bedding or conveyances to serve as transmission sources for foreign animal diseases of risk to livestock. Specific states may have additional, or different, regulations for these importations.

A third federal agency, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, within the Department of Homeland Security, is responsible for the inspection of these animals and the enforcement of the existing CDC or USDA requirements.

### FAST FACTS

- Over one million dogs per year are imported into the United States, with about 1/3 of those arriving by air. While most of these are pets traveling with their owners, several thousand enter each year for resale or adoption.
- No single federal agency controls all aspects of the importation of dogs either as pets or for resale/adoption. Nor is there a central federal site to apply for an import permit for pets and/or those dogs imported for commercial sale or adoption.

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