



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE PUBLIC HEALTH VETERINARIANS, INC.

CSTE POSITION STATEMENT 1994-4

COMMITTEE: Infectious Disease

TITLE: Translocation of Wildlife

ISSUE: Wildlife species from endemic areas of zoonotic disease are being translocated interstate for hunting and companion animal purposes.

POSITION TO BE ADOPTED: CSTE/NASPHV recommend that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the appropriate state agencies adopt regulations prohibiting the importation and interstate movement of certain wildlife (for use as companion animals or for hunting purposes). These include but are not limited to, wild canids and carnivorous animals, wild rodents, and feral swine.

BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION: There are significant, serious public health risks associated with the translocation of wildlife for companion animal and hunting purposes. Interstate movements of wildlife species from geographic areas where zoonotic diseases are endemic into other areas pose a needless threat to native wildlife, domestic livestock, and human health. There is substantial evidence that the current raccoon rabies epizootic in the midatlantic and northeastern United States is the result of translocated raccoons from the southeastern United States. Millions of dollars are now being spent annually to halt the migration of the fatal disease and decrease the public health threat.

Echinococcus multilocularis causes alveolar hydatid disease in humans, with mortality rates exceeding 50%. Recent surveys in the northwestern United States revealed that 60-90% of foxes and coyotes are infected with the parasite. The tapeworm has been detected in foxes translocated to the non-indigenous southeastern United States for hunting purposes.

The coyote/dog rabies virus variant occurring in Texas and previously unidentified in the southeastern United States, has been isolated from a foxhound in Alabama exposed to a hunting enclosure reported to contain translocated coyotes from the endemic area.

Prairie dogs from areas of the southwestern United States endemic for plague and hantavirus have been shipped to pet shops across the nation to be sold as household pets.

Feral swine, which serve as a reservoir for brucellosis, are known to be trapped and moved interstate for hunting purposes. The transmission to domestic swine results in a high potential for the exposure of humans to brucellosis.

When wild animals are translocated, parasites and arthropods on the animals are also moved. These vectors may serve to transmit other zoonotic diseases such as Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, ehrlichiosis, and tularemia.

Because of the risks of potential public health hazards and the lack of feasible methods to certify that animals are free of many of these diseases, regulations are needed to prohibit the translocation of wildlife.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:

Agencies for response: US Fish and Wildlife Service
CDC

Agencies for information: AMA
AVMA
State Departments of Public Health
State Departments of conservation and natural resources
State Departments of Agriculture
USDA, APHIS, VS
USDA Animal Damage Control

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