Reducing Zoonoses: Controlling Animal Importation through Federal-Local Collaboration

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Presenter Disclosures

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(1) The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose
Objectives

• List 5 instances where imported animals posed a threat to the public or animals.
• Describe current federal and local animal importation oversight roles.
• Describe findings of animal importation surveys at Los Angeles International Airport.
• Identify potential weaknesses to current animal importation procedures.
• Discuss how the LAX animal importation collaborative could serve as a model to address this issue.
Nature of the Problem

• Between 2000 and 2004:
  – Over 1 billion live animals imported
  – About 588,000 per day ¹

• Risks:
  – Zoonotic diseases
  – Foreign animal diseases
  – Carrying vectors
Zoonotic Threats

• **Imported Rabies:**
  - 2008: Operation Bagdad Pup
  - 2007: dog from India
  - 2004: puppy from Thailand
  - 1987: cat from Mexico

• **Monkey Pox:**
  - 2003 Outbreak
  - Source: imported Gambian Rat
  - Spread: Prairie dogs and 47 people

• **Leishmaniasis:**
  - 2011: Dog from Turkey
Other Threats

• **Foreign Animal Diseases:**

• **Vectors:**
  • 2000 – ticks on imported tortoises in Florida infected with bacteria that causes heartwater in cattle
  • Dogs sporadically imported with screwworm infections.

Source: John Kirk and Heidi Hamlen, UC Davis Veterinary Medicine Extension
Federal & Local Animal Importation Roles

• Federal
  – CDC – Dogs, cats, primates, other PH threats
  – USDA, Animal Care – animal welfare act
  – USDA, APHIS – birds, livestock, hoof stock
  – USFWS – wildlife, fish
  – Customs & Border Protection – assists, tariff

• Local
  – Dog confinement agreements
Los Angeles Animal Importation Surveys

- **Reason:**
  - 3 dead puppies at LAX in 1 month
  - Mismatched age

- **Multi-agency collaboration**
  - VPH, CDC, CBP, numerous animal control agencies
  - 3 weeks, all species
  - Two follow up surveys, a year apart
## LAX Animal Importation Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Survey - 2008</th>
<th>Second Survey - 2009</th>
<th>Third Survey - 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of Survey</strong></td>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong># Animals Inspected</strong></td>
<td>6048</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong># Dogs Inspected</strong></td>
<td>183</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong># Large Dog Shipments (4 or more)</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong># (%) Dogs Younger than Listed Age</strong></td>
<td>71 (39%)</td>
<td>12 (10%)</td>
<td>50 (40%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Other Findings

• Animal welfare violations
• Health/rabies certificates not always accurate
• Some dogs not healthy
• External parasites present
• Mice in boxes not inspected
• Puppy shipments listed as for personal use
Potential Weaknesses Identified

- “Official” paperwork not reliable
- Not all animals inspected
- No requirement for animals to be treated for parasites
- What to do with problem shipments?
- Not enough staff
Potential Model for Federal Local Collaboration

- Surveys to support effort
- VPH assist CDC Quarantine Station
- Local animal control provide quarantine site
- Humane officers available for animal welfare issues
- Required pre-notification
- Animal Importation Working Group
References


2. CDC. Rabies in a Dog Imported from Iraq – New Jersey, June 2008. MMWR 2008:57(39);1076-8


For More Information

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Thank you!