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Canine traceability in the EU
Abstracts



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Companion Animal Responsible Ownership
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European Policy Framework to achieve Dog Identification

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Keywords

Animal Welfare, EU animal welfare legislation, Lisbon Treaty, Art. 13 TFEU, EU Constitution, Companion Animals in the EU, Responsible Ownership, Traceability, Identification and Registration (I&R)

Summary

Animal Welfare is a grey field in the system of the European Union. Since 1 December 2009 Animal Welfare is fully implemented into the text of the Lisbon Treaties, precisely the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union as a general principle. There animals are defined as “sentient beings” and the EU institutions and the Member States have “to pay full regard” to the requirements of animals. In the following part of this sentence, however, since the version of the Protocol No 31 of the Amsterdam Treaty broad exemptions were added in three areas: religious rites, cultural traditions, regional heritage. Nonetheless, these terms are not clearly defined, hardly not legally operable and even overlapping. This broad exemption, combined with the term “in particular” erodes the original objective almost completely. Furthermore, in order to be enforced Art. 13 TFEU has to be considered in the context of the new competence clauses of the Treaties. Those clauses can have an impact on the welfare of companion animals and of course have to be developed in the next years by case law.

Through the drafting of the European Constitution, Animal Welfare found its way into the Treaty as a general principle, which finally lead to its inclusion in the Lisbon Treaties as a European value. While the Council of Europe, a non legislative body, has already expressed its concern on companion animals in the so called pet Convention ETS 125 in 1987 and even performed the problem of the increasing canine overpopulation, the European Union has established due to respective competences until the Amsterdam Treaty not more than the obligation for identification of companion animals in case of crossing borders for private (998/2003 EC) or commercial purposes (1/2005) for protection of human and animal health and to have EU wide common market conditions.

The daily visible diverse attitude in the Member States towards companion animals is of increased concern of EU citizens, followed by uncountable actions of individuals and NGOs, demanding the EU for protection particularly for abandoned and killed stray dogs and cats – despite the situation of the legal EU competences and responsibility for this situation on the national level. Following the basic principle of Responsible ownership the problem can only be solved by a package of measures depending on the situation in the Member States by a balanced combination of EU and national legal obligations supported by establishing public private partnership programmes. EU wide the Member States should be strengthened by the EU for Animal Welfare and Information, education and training programmes, legal obligations on EU level for preventive veterinary measures including identification and registration can be provided under the new Treaties with more flexible competence clauses. Systematic neutering programmes on the national level can be asked for due to human and animal health risks and could be supported in respective Member States by the EU.

The first opportunity under the Amsterdam Treaty to step into one of the European wide measure to strengthen a constructive approach to stop the canine overpopulation was given by the Animal Health Strategy of the EU Commission (2008). At that time the new established VIER PFOTEN office in Brussels started, created the CAROdog project together with the Istituto G.Caporale, Teramo, based on the basic principle Responsible Ownership of dogs, prepared in 2009 a website managing knowledge on all aspects on canine overpopulation, initiated conferences in 2008, 2010 and 2011, and a first technical working group of Identification and Registration in 2010. The European Commission and the Federation of Veterinarians in Europe joined as members the editorial board of the CAROdog website. The goal of CAROdog is to have an EU civil society with dogs and cats only kept by responsible owners. More than twenty years of wide range and uncountable actions of NGOs and individuals on all levels took and take place financed by private donors with millions of Euros: campaigning, and in particular concrete neutering projects in the respective Member States, consulting on the national and EU level, educational programmes on the national level, specific databases on the EU level such as the CAROdog website and expert exchange of information in conferences to prepare solutions on EU level. Nonetheless with regard to the situation in Romania and some other Member States still facing an increasing canine and feline overpopulation – even more since the illegal breed and trade of breed dogs started – it is proved that without legal obligations and effective enforcement based on the *acquis communautaire* and commitment of the Member States, there will be no sustainable effect to reduce the overpopulation and the respective ethical and health problems.

At first the European Parliament with several demands to the EU Commission started to be active and strengthened the aspect of canine overpopulation and the negative animal welfare and health risks effects with the resolution to animal health in 2008, later the Paulsen Report mentioned the problem, Member of the European Parliament used the parliamentary tool of written questions and recently – arguing with the new Art. 13 TFEU - the Written Declaration No 26 including identification and registration of dogs was initiated successfully and turned into as resolution. Supported by the Belgian Presidency in 2010, when the CAROdog website could be launched and the first CAROdog technical experts working group on canine traceability was hosted, the first action of The Council happened in November 2010 by giving a mandate to the EU Commission for research and activities on companion animals. In the EU Commission, DG SANCO, the discussion on measures started within the Animal Health Strategy and now the Animal Health Law to be drafted – not to forget the Animal Welfare and Educational approach. In addition the EU Commission is planning to include companion animals in the new Animal Welfare Strategy and in the EU Animal Welfare Law.

Under the Lisbon Treaties the regulation 998/2003 and in the light of a recent EU court case (VZW v.Belgium) has to be revised and completed for an all over identification and in addition registration of dogs, cats and ferrets, to manage basic data in databases functioning within an EU wide compatible system, considering the experience of the already existing European network Europetnet and other stakeholders in this field.

The political and postconstitutional situation of the Lisbon Treaties in the EU offers since 1 December 2009 the framework to achieve canine traceability: For the first time Art 13 TFEU can be and has to be considered as a general principle. As companion animals are in the scope of Art. 13 TFEU, and are either farm- nor wild animals, stray animals are not linked to religious rites, are no cultural tradition nor regional heritage, the broad exemption of Art 13 TFEU in this case is not an obstacle.

Within the upcoming policy-making programmes and planned EU legislation, the EU institutions have to use animal welfare as a general principle also regarding companion animals. Even the gap of clear competence of the EU with regard to Art 13 TFEU can be solved e.g. by the new flexibility clause of the Treaties of Lisbon Art 352 TEU, combined with Art 5 TFEU. In fact any discretion has to consider now animals as sentient beings stated in Art 13 TFEU. Every interpretation of the valid Treaties and the secondary law has to respect

this general principle, not to forget that the Member States have the same obligation under the Lisbon Treaties.

Canine I&R system in Spain

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Keywords

Traceability, Autonomous community, Competent authority.

Summary

The objectives of the presentation are to explain the current situation in Spain about canine identification and registration and also the problems for improving the canine traceability system in Spain.

At central level in Spain there are differences between production animals and pets.

Whereas for production animals there are a developed traceability system (that includes recording of holdings, individual animal identification and movements), regulations and a broad experience in the use of electronic identification, for pets there is not any work in this field. The competent authorities who are in charge of companion animals are the regional level (Autonomous communities). All of them have legislation about animal identification and databases. Also there is a web (REIAC - Spanish net of pet identification) that integrates the databases of fifteen out of the seventeen Autonomous communities (but not the databases of Castilla La Mancha and Extremadura).

Although steps have been made by the regional level, there is a weak canine traceability system due to the lack of harmonization in the whole country.

The way to involve the central administration in order to harmonize the identification and recording system and to link the regional databases would be the existence of regulation at community level.

In order to minimize the economy impact it would be useful to use the regional database and the experience of the central administration for coordinating the system.

Finally, the main point it is to bear in mind the owners. They have to be conscious of the identification importance.

Example of legislation enforcement from an EU founder Country

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Keywords

Italian legislation, dog identification and registration

Summary

The Italian legislation concerning companion animal welfare and stray animal management will be presented. Recent and urgent laws aiming at the improvement of dogs identification and registration will be highlighted, as well as other actions undertaken by the Ministry of Health in order to implement the legislation.

Dog electronic identification and registration in the framework of ISO standards

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Keywords

Electronic identification, ISO, transponder.

Summary

The electronic identification of animals only makes sense if there is a world-wide standard for coding and communication. This task has been fulfilled with the ISO norms 11784 and 11785 which have been in force since 1996. Several EC regulations as well as National laws have been established, based on the standards mentioned above. The market which has the highest number of identified animals with a transponder is the pet animal market. As this was the first market with big volumes, today we have a lot of experience gained in this sector.

My personal experience is that a lot of people, major decision makers, those responsible for tenders, and control etc., are, in most cases, not interested in technical details. But we are dealing with technology and so we need to look a little closer at the details of the standards and in particular at the code structure of ISO 11784. When the standard was finalized, there was only laser programmed silicon available and the regulations, laws, required tests etc. were based on the existing technical parameters.

For transponders being injected into animals, medical tests are required like for example there is only one type of glass approved for that use. It has taken many years until the administrative basics have been put in place and during the same time technical improvements and developments have been made, major steps which require also an adaptation of the administrative sector. This is a clear imbalance as the development of technology always runs faster than the administration catching up.

The market has become much bigger, in the early years there were around 15 to 20 companies, most of them actively working in the standardisation procedure, whilst today we have in total 119 companies, 53 with a full manufacturer code (986 – 934) and 66 with the

shared manufacturer code 900 (a 3 digital located code has to be used in the animal ID and a range of 1 mi codes is allocated to this 3 digit code).

Each manufacturer receives a product code for the product tested. Each single product has to pass at least the conformance test according to ISO 24631-1 successfully and will then be listed on the ICAR website. Companies with an ICAR manufacturer code offer products without corresponding product codes.

Unfortunately our experience has shown quite a chaotic picture across the companion animal market in Europe. Wrong codes, senseless codes, no animal codes, double codes, strange codes, which I analysed and reached the conclusion that it will be impossible to transfer all the expertise required to understand the details of a code, to be able to distinguish between correct and fraud. How can this work be done effectively at border, customs or transport control stations? How will a disease eradication programme or a successful prophylaxis work, if the basis of all, the pure animal ID, is not trustworthy?

This is partly related to a lack of application homogeneity, to a lack of coordinated rules and consequences. There are countries with a kind of over-regulation with expensive regular tests which are partly superfluous, but better than no regulation at all. For the animal owner as well as for the animal it is necessary that rules will be established to protect them. All problems being created in the identification sector lead to a problem which concerns the animal and his/her owner.

All in all, the market is still young and has shown sufficient experience to be able to establish a simple, cost effective procedure across the EC on behalf of the consumer and his/her pet, an industry which represents a huge voter volume. An authority across Europe which has the power to support and to control the EC member-countries could be the tool of choice.

Technologic requirements and infrastructure to manage a dog I&R system

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Keywords

Information systems, dog population management programs, disease surveillance system

Summary

Dog Identification and Registration system is one of the most effective measure for the sustainability of dog population management programs, to make realistic plans for any disease surveillance system is necessary that the recorded data are complete and updated.

In Italy every region hosts its own dog registry, and these registers are not compatible amongst them, the recorded data are then transferred to the national level, that is only a list of animal with few informations, sending files in batch mode.

One of the main problem in this kind of architecture is that data at national level are often not updated respect the data stored in regional systems and this multiplicity of databases makes difficult to find a dog without knowing exactly in which database it has been registered.

Istituto G. Caporale has developed a pilot application, on a web-based architecture, to manage dog database for the Molise region and recently the Sicily region has adopted the same system. The database actually manages data on more than 330,000 dogs.

This system can be fed by different channels, either directly by users through the web interface, or through file uploads, and through the use of web services.

This approach, based on web services technology, could be the solution to gather all the data in real time, from regional to national level, allowing already existing applications to exchange data via the web, without changing the pre-existing platform ensuring a complete an updated traceability of all data regarding dogs at all levels.

From TRACES to an EU dog I&R: what can be adopted

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Keywords

Italian identification and registration of dog, microchipping

Summary

Identification and registration of dogs is mandatory in Italy since 1991 (Law 281). The law established a compulsory tattoo was imposed also by Law for all dogs, as well as the animal's enrollment in a register managed by the Local Health Service.

Since 2005 microchipping has been the harmonised system at the national level for dog identification and a national dog register was established. This register now also includes cats and ferrets.

Lessons learned in implementation and enforcement: the Belgian example

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Keywords

Belgian competent authorities, dog registration, Infringements,.

Summary

In Belgium, registration of dogs is mandatory since 1 September 1998. Precise numbers on the percentage of dogs being registered are not available, but estimations range between 50 % (according to pet shelters) and 90 % (result of inspections in the street). The main reasons for adopting this legislation were diminishing the number of dogs euthanized in shelters and enhancing the control of the national market.

Unfortunately, statistics on the number of stray dogs arriving in pet shelters and their fate have only been kept since 2000. Nevertheless, an augmentation of the percentage of stray dogs being returned to their owner is still clearly visible, going from 45 % in 2000 to 57 % in 2003 and being more or less stable ever since.

In 2004, the European passport was linked to the mandatory registration. Therefore, an owner cannot get a passport for his dog without having the animal registered. Secondly, the replacement of a passport has been forbidden, preventing foreign dogs being transformed into Belgian animals and allowing buyers to know which country their puppy is coming from. These changes resulted in a clear increase in the number of dogs being registered.

The link with the European passport has resulted in better enforcement, mostly by enhancing the efficiency of inspections, especially on the European internal market. Crosschecks between the Traces database and the Belgian national database have allowed to identify a number of infringements of European legislation:

- microchips and passports of death puppies are being removed and reused, rabies vaccinations thus being falsified;
- pups are being shipped from one member state to another without the mandatory health certificates and Traces messages;
- pups are being shipped with the necessary documents, but they do not arrive at the destination indicated on these documents; instead, exporters travel around the country trying to sell their puppies and taking them back home when they fail to do so;
- surprisingly often, veterinarians want to change the microchip number, the identification date or the birth date in the passport, not realizing that these data are of key importance for rabies prevention.

These practices create serious public health as well as animal welfare risks.

In order to reinforce the implementation of Regulation 998/2003 and to allow for even the most basic controls of the European dog trade and its conformity with European legislation, it is absolutely necessary to have a mandatory registration of at least all dogs going from one member state to another. Of course, registration of all dogs in Europe would be even better. Different solutions can be worked out to allow competent authorities of the member states to consult all national databases at the same time, going from one European database to a search engine allowing to determine in which member state a dog has been registered.

A ban on the systematic replacement of passports is necessary in view of consumer protection as well as in order to preserve vaccination data. Veterinarians should be made aware of the reasons why key data in the passport, i.e. microchip number, birth date, identification data and data about rabies.

Veterinarian responsibilities and role in the framework of a dog I&R system and outcomes from an FVE survey

Author

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Keywords

FVE Statement, dog population management, traceability.

Summary

FVE Statement on traceability of pet movements following the written Declaration of the European Parliament on dog population management in the EU.

FVE is extremely pleased that the European Parliament has supported the Written Declaration calling on the Commission and Member States to develop a cohesive policy for dog population management and compulsory identification and registration of dogs. In particular asking for:

“the Commission to encourage the Member States to introduce the mandatory identification and registration of every dog, by means of EU-wide compatible systems, in order to avoid the spread of diseases, “

This Written Declaration reinforces the message sent by the European Council during the Belgian Presidency at the end of 2010 when Council Conclusions on the welfare of cats and dogs were agreed.

FVE has called consistently for compulsory identification of dogs connected with a reliable system of registration. Compulsory identification and registration is essential to effectively control the risk of disease spread and prevent risks associated with illegal trade. Furthermore, it can help reunite strays with their owners, help tackle puppy farming and encourage responsible ownership. In pedigree dogs it also can facilitate the reporting of hereditary health problems.

Establishing a traceability system requires that pets be identified according to regulation 998/2003, but also those identifications to be registered into a database from which they could be easily retrieved. The first priority should be to compulsory identify and register all

dogs moving; which could be done effectively and with little administrative burden by linking databases to the Europetnet database or a similar one.

FVE calls upon the Commission to act upon the request of the European Parliament and Council regarding compulsory identification and registration of dogs, with the identification and registration of all dogs moving as a first step.

FVE also requests the Commission to take actions in respect to illegal trade of companion animals.

The importance of dog traceability in epidemic emergencies

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Keywords

Traceability, Rabies, Dog, Emergency, Vaccination, Oral fox baits, Dog bites, Cats, Lesions, Risk factors, Veterinary Public Health.

Summary

In the territory of the Province of Bolzano no cases of rabies were found in the last 15 years (last case in 1995). But during spring 2010 a total of 5 positive foxes were found in municipalities bordering with the Province of Belluno (Region of Veneto). Rabies originating from Slovenia arrived in to the Province of Bolzano through the regions Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto. The measures implemented by these two Regions were not sufficient to stop the spread of the disease north- westward.

Eradication of rabies is one of top priorities of the European Commission. Under the surveillance of the National reference laboratory for rabies, the Italian Ministry of Health and the European Commission, several oral fox vaccination campaigns were coordinated in four Regions in North Italy. Fox baits were distributed by helicopter in spring and autumn and compulsory mass vaccination of all resident dogs was enacted. Also vaccination for dogs coming in to the Province of Bolzano with tourists was compulsory. Surveillance of all dogs was strictly pursued.

The implementation of the above measures was greatly simplified by the existence of the compulsory identification of dogs with microchip and the registration of the animal and its owner in the regional database. In high risk areas and mountain pastures all cattle, sheep, goats, horses and pigs were vaccinated against rabies. Specific information on rabies was spread by mass media (newspaper, TV and radio stations), posters, flyers and informational meetings.

Foxes are considered the principal cause of spreading rabies to domestic animals and therefore to humans. Vaccination of foxes and dogs was essential to protect the dog population and therefore the public health. The incidence of dog bites for the year 2010 is presented as well in a detailed analysis.

The Identification and Registration (I&R) of Dogs: Compulsory versus voluntary I&R systems

Author

Les Eckford
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Keywords

Animal Welfare, Dangerous Dogs, Responsibility, Microchipping.

Summary

The presentation will consider the aims of an integrated identification and registration system from a government perspective, the costs and likely success. I will look at the benefits and disadvantages of increasing the number of dogs identified using both compulsory and voluntary approaches and will consider some issues on enforcement.

Identification and registration of dogs will give benefit to both dogs and the public but those benefits are possibly derived out of concerns for different issues. For dogs there will be the permanent entry into a database to facilitate reunification with its owner, information to veterinarians etc, improve welfare. For the public, dogs out of control can be reconciled to a legal responsible person for enforcement action as necessary.

Within the United Kingdom (UK) there are differing approaches to I&R by the 4 administrations. Northern Ireland has retained dog registration and will require microchipping to complement this when amended legislation is in force in 2012. Registration was abandoned in the other 3 administrations in 1987. Consideration is currently being given to introducing compulsory microchipping of all dogs following public concern on dogs out of control. Legislation currently prescribes several breeds of dogs that are seen as potentially dangerous (1), microchipping is one of the additional control mechanisms on such dogs. Welfare organisations are asking that such identification be extended to all dogs to address responsibility on dangerous animals, of what ever breed, and to promote better standards of welfare. There appears to be a similar attitude from the public, 73% in favour.

During the last year , 126,176 stray dogs were dealt with by local authorities within the UK (2). The reunification rate is only 48%. After attempts at re-homing have been exhausted

some 7,500 dogs have been euthanased by local authorities. From experiences elsewhere that reunification rate would be expected to be much greater if all dogs were identified. On the other hand, estimates of the number of dogs already identified by microchip is around 55-60 % of the population of about 8 million (3) and last year microchipping only assisted in 32% of the dogs returned to owners. This has been achieved by voluntary means acknowledging that some are dogs prepared to the non-commercial movement of pet animals scheme. This increase in number of dogs microchipped has slowed relatively in the last few years. Whether a continued voluntary approach can achieve significant increase may be in doubt.

While existing databases can cope adequately with requests for reunification data, and access is granted to local authorities, veterinary surgeons etc, a unified database operating across countries may be beneficial, there could be some issues on how this financed and operated.

Within the UK there are other opportunities for increasing the number of dogs microchipped. Current reviews of the legislation of the dog breeding legislation are taking place in Wales and Northern Ireland. Both administrations are considering compulsory microchipping of puppies before they leave the breeding establishments. This follows concerns on lower standard large scale dog breeding operations in both countries. Puppies would be identified to specific establishments and to the sire and dam. Tracking of genetic defects could be developed in the future.

An efficient I & D system will give potential benefits to individual dog welfare and the public thorough both this and a reduction in antisocial behaviour of owners. A compulsory approach should reach a higher level of identification but cannot meet 100% and those dogs not within the compliance group are those that may be at risk from lower welfare standards and /or are a risk to the public.

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Implications of dog I&R on the market: e.g. illegal puppy trade

Author

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Keywords

Dog identification, Puppy trade, Enforcement problems.

Summary

Despite the Council of Europe convention on pet animals stating that dogs and cats should be permanently identified and numbers recorded and the recent overwhelming call from members of the European Parliament for a European registration scheme on dogs, it is estimated that less than half the countries in Europe have legislation that specifically addresses pet ownership, half have no legislation on the breeding of dogs and about a third of countries have no legislation on registration and licensing (Tasker, 2007). Eight of the 30 countries surveyed had no problem with stray dogs with many of these importing dogs to manage demand. The demand is met from commercial puppy breeding operations.

The trade routes tend to be concentrated on supply certain countries such as Ireland-UK, Hungary-Spain, Italy and Germany. As there is no harmonised European system for dog identification or rules on commercial dog breeding, the trade is difficult to monitor, and the rules under the pet passport system are routinely broken. Several investigations reveal lack of disease control in the trade in puppies in Europe and the health problems arising from its non regulation. A RSPCA survey of puppies available for sale found three countries were responsible for over half the puppies, Czech Republic (25%), Hungary (23%) and Poland (22%) but Ireland is also known to have a large commercial dog breeding industry. Dealers allege that 70% of the European trade comes from Hungary.

There is a large illegal trade in puppies in Europe. One Member States' Veterinary Chamber estimated that legal exports from the country were only 30% of the total trade. Traders supported this view and estimated that up to 151,000 dogs were illegally exported from one

country alone annually to others. The lack of identifying paperwork in this illegal trade is confirmed by reports from the Commission, the Federation of Veterinarians (FVE) in Europe and non governmental organisations. A FVE survey of veterinarians reported as common inaccurate or forged vaccine certificates and mismatches between the animal's microchips and the certificates (FVE 2010). A RSPCA investigation reported that 70% of all Hungarian puppy exports are transported without the correct vaccinations or antibiotics.

Other reports have uncovered irregularities on checking vaccinations and identification at the Italian and Spanish border.

With the planned new proposals harmonising the pet identification and disease control rules coming into effect on 1st January concerns have been expressed regarding the serious costs of possible outbreaks of zoonotic diseases such as *Echinococcus multilocularis*. Several measures could rectify this including harmonised rules on registration and identification, harmonising rules on dog breeding and implementing further enforcement spot checks on borders.

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Examples of public information campaigns

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Keywords

Public information, Emergency, Rabies, Oral fox vaccination, Vaccination of dogs and domestic animals, Veterinary Public Health.

Summary

The reappearance of rabies in the territory of the Province of Bolzano after more than 15 years (last case in 1995) induced the implementation of several measures and strategies to stop the spread of disease in wild animals, to protect domestic animals and therefore to protect humans. Rabies originating from Slovenia arrived in to the Province of Bolzano from the regions Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto. The measures implemented by these two Regions were not sufficient to stop the spread of the disease north- westward.

Under the surveillance of the National reference laboratory for rabies, the Italian Ministry of Health and the European Commission, several oral fox vaccination campaigns were coordinated in four Regions in North Italy. Vaccination of foxes and dogs was essential to protect the dog population and therefore the public health. Fox baits were distributed by helicopter in spring and autumn and compulsory mass vaccination of all resident dogs was enacted. Also vaccination for dogs coming in to the Province of Bolzano with tourists was compulsory. Surveillance of all dogs was strictly pursued. In high risk areas and mountain pastures all cattle, sheep, goats, horses and pigs were vaccinated against rabies and owners were specifically informed.

Information on rabies was spread by mass media (newspaper, TV and radio stations), posters, flyers and informational meetings. All dog owners were individually informed by the local municipality on the compulsory rabies vaccination campaign. Information on veterinarians, timetables, costs of vaccination was made readily available to the public. Preventive vaccination and specific education on rabies was given to persons at risk (vets, hunters, people working in animal shelters, loggers etc.). Also ample distribution of flyers, posters

and brochures was carried out. Several meetings with hunters, vets, forestry workers and farmers were organized. Additional specific informational meetings were held in municipalities affected by rabies.

Education campaigns towards specific targets: primary school children

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Keywords

Health educational campaigns, primary school children, stray dog

Summary

Many health problems such as stray dog are often related to an improper human/animal/environment interaction, which can be prevented through activities mainly addressed to primary school children educational projects.

Since 1994 Istituto "G. Caporale" (ICT) has managed various educational campaigns, particularly addressed to children between 6-10 years of age.

Primary school represents one of the best contexts to develop health education activities, which necessarily have an impact on social, cultural and lifestyle aspects. Furthermore, primary school students are able to easily acquire new behaviours and change the incorrect ones, because of their not mediated habits.

Taking into account children's learning skills and their capability to share new information within their social tissue, all the various stakeholders should promote educational programmes specifically dedicated to dogs' identification and registration.

Education campaigns towards specific targets: adults

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Keywords

Adult Education, dog bites, behaviour change, puppy buying

Summary

The education of adult dog owners on their responsibilities is key to improving responsible dog ownership. However many campaigns tend to be generic rather than targeted at particular owners and are also rarely reviewed. Measurements are challenging but a mixture of hard data such as numbers of dog bites, and soft survey data such as the source of dogs can provide some benchmarks to measure success of educational work. Two issues will be examined to assess effectiveness of adult campaigns to reduce dog bites and improve prospective dog owner understanding of their animals' needs.

Though education of adults is seen as crucial to reducing the dog bite problem (Overall and Love 2001), campaigns tend to be aimed at children and reviews are rare. Two adult educational campaigns aimed at reducing dog bites that have been reviewed, in Calgary and Winnipeg, Canada (Ledger and others 2005) saw a drop in dog bites after a large scale advertising and education campaign. And Oswald (1991) found that dog bite recidivism was reduced in Oregon, USA after introducing legislation that included owner education as a sanction if a dog bite incident occurred.

Reviews of adult educational campaigns aimed at improving responsible dog ownership are even rarer. In the UK a major area of concern is the lack of information potential dog owners have before getting a dog. The impact is seen in unhealthy dogs (36% of dog owners reported health problems in their animals) and non retention of dogs (19% of dog owners do not have their animal two years post purchase).

England has over ten laws aimed at improving dog ownership including in 2010 a new Code showing owners the needs of their animals. Two campaigns have been run to improve this.

In 2006, in response to new legislation, the RSPCA ran an information campaign aimed at social categories C2, D, Es. The campaign was done through radio adverts and achieved a shift in understanding from 5-24% of people surveyed over a four month period.

The second campaign was aimed at improving knowledge of people buying puppies. Prospective dog owners most commonly obtain their dogs from registered breeders (29-37%), friends (25%), and private advertisements/the internet (24%) with unregistered breeders accounting for a further 17% (APGAW 2010). Apart from registered breeders, the prospective owner may find obtaining adequate information from the other sources to be challenging. Many people buying a puppy do minimal amount of research. Nearly 56 per cent of buyers did not see their puppy with its mother before they bought it and more than 60 per cent of people who bought a puppy in the past two years only visited one litter of puppies before deciding on the one they wanted. Using a cartoon video and an internet based campaign, targets were set to shift consumer behaviour. A web viewing target of 20,000 was achieved with 28,000 visitors but the average viewing time target of six minutes was not, remaining below two minutes. This highlights the problems of getting messages through to a targeted audience profile.

Achieving behaviour change in a challenging target audience is difficult but unless this audience is targeted normal educational campaigns will prove to be inadequate in shifting consumer behaviour. Specific audience targets need to be set before hand and reviewed post campaign if the campaign is to have any effect.

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Dog I&R role in the One Health concept

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Keywords

Zoonoses, traceability, CALLISTO, One Health

Summary

Keeping companion animals has become widespread in industrialized societies with participation by nearly 50% of the households. The vast majority of them keep classical pets (dogs, cats, rabbits, small rodents, birds and fish), among which dogs are the most represented. The risks associated to zoonotic infections transmitted by these animals are a serious public health concern, as they share the same environment with people and can transmit a wide range of infectious diseases to humans through physical injuries, direct contact, environmental contamination, ingestion of contaminated food or water, and arthropod vectors. As well as a public health risk for people, infections with (emerging) pathogens transmitted by companion animals are also a risk for food producing animals. Vaccinations is possible for the prevention of only a few of these diseases, however one of the most effective tool that public health personnel can use to contain the spread of zoonoses are disease surveillance, controls and research. This will allow to reduce the incidence of animal diseases and minimise the impact of outbreaks when they do occur. However, in order to translate data into appropriate action, early detection of cases, dissemination of information, and a cross-border, harmonic and prompt response are crucial. At present a general lack of disease surveillance on companion animals exists, going in strong contrasts with the situation pertaining both humans and farm animals. Moreover, since the available knowledge and understanding of the zoonotic risks associated with pets is scattered across various sectors in different areas, each having a different and relatively limited perspective on the whole subject, it is difficult to collect the data needed for the establishment of any control plan. The epidemiological situation concerning zoonotic diseases can be even more complicated when companion animals, particularly dogs, are allowed to roam freely, being more prone to get in contact with new pathogens and to spread them in a wide area. In this framework the European Union recently funded the CALLISTO project, in order to promote the One Health principle and calling for close cooperation between clinicians, researchers, agencies and

governments, as zoonoses are certainly the most prominent example of inextricably linked interaction between human and animal health. The ICT will contribute to the CALLISTO think tank of experts, providing an up-to-date overview of the current situation with regard to pathogens that are likely to be transmitted from pets to humans. Finally the constant growth in commercial and non-commercial movements of animals, both legal and illegal, together with the vast numbers of people travelling abroad with their pets, necessitates a coordinated transnational effort. In this respect an EU wide I&R system could significantly contribute to ensure pet traceability and it would be the basis for the development of efficient companion animal zoonoses surveillance and control plans.

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