

{TS-Kritik}

Nachfolgend wird der vom 25. Juni 2012 datierende Artikel der Autoren im Original abgedruckt. Für Doggennetz.de-Leser mit geringeren Englischkenntnissen wurde eine grobe Zusammenfassung inklusive weiterführender Hinweise in Aua891a zur Verfügung gestellt.

Importing stray dogs

– a threat to public health and welfare?

by Kari Johansen and Jan Johansen □

This article contains the health and some of the economic consequences of Norway's adaptation to the EEA Agreement. It is written against the background of increasing imports of stray dogs into Norway. The two authors are involved in the general health of our community, as well as being dog owners themselves. The Veterinary Institute in Oslo has recently published a risk assessment of infectious and parasitic diseases in relation to stray dogs from Eastern and Southern Europe. We refer to this risk assessment in our article. The article will also deal with zoonoses, which is the term for diseases transmitted between animals and humans. We have for a long time quietly monitored several groups which are responsible for importing stray dogs, and we are deeply shaken by the attitudes of these people. They minimize the importance of the parasite findings and they demonize the Norwegian Food Safety Authority (NFSA) (Mattilsynet). This is the government agency which monitors animal health. Parts of this article will be linked to our experience with these groups.

"I see no problem with dogs running free in a kindergarden area. When Tinka is in heat I let her play in a daycare center close by."

From ww.hundeprat.no (from a dog web page)

Have you ever considered that in eight to ten years' time your child or grandchild might die because it played in a kindergarden where someone had walked his or her dog? Or that your child might get sick because it greeted the neighbouring dog which licked its face or hands? After so many years, no one will connect sickness and death with this incident. Can you imagine that in a few years you may be exposed to a deadly parasitic infection while picking berries or mushrooms in the forest on a lovely autumn day? Horror Scenario? No, this could well be our reality, and we have chosen to call this. The new invisible threat in Norway!

From the Norwegian Veterinary Institute Report Series 03.01.2013:

*"The number of stray dogs imported from Eastern European EU-countries has increased significantly subsequent to the easing of EU import regulations on the 1.1.2012. The EU lifted mandatory checks of rabies antibody titres prior to import, allowing for dogs to enter shortly after vaccination. A number of canine charities have actively been facilitating the import of stray dogs to Norway, in particular from Romania and Hungary. The disease status of the Norwegian dog population is considerably different from that in Eastern Europe and importing dogs from these countries will increase the risk of importing foreign pathogens. This increased risk has been highlighted with the detection of tongue worm (*Linguatula serrata*), heartworm (*Dirofilaria immitis*) and the brown dog tick (*Rhipicephalus sanguineus*) in dogs imported from Romania in the last few weeks. In addition, *Babesia canis* has, previously, been detected in dogs imported from Hungary, Lithuania and Slovakia.*

The Norwegian Veterinary Institute has carried out a quick risk assessment, regarding the import of stray dogs from Eastern Europe to Norway, in order to evaluate the current situation and provide recommendations. Only a few pathogens have been fully assessed due to time requirements and the list is not exhaustive. However, the pathogens included are those that we consider to be of greatest significance to the Norwegian dog population. Some of the recommendations are of a general nature and, once further information regarding the pathogen status in the exporting country becomes available, the advice can be adjusted accordingly.

The risk of importing a pathogen increases with the number of imported dogs. We do not know how many dogs are imported into Norway annually nor from which country they originated. Estimating future import numbers is therefore challenging. However, it is realistic to estimate that the number of imported dogs from Eastern Europe during the course of the next decade would be around 5000 animals, given that 200 stray dogs have been imported into Norway, from Romania alone, during the previous six months. The probability of importing a pathogen is high, given the number of animals being imported, even if it is only found in a few individuals. We calculate that there is a 99% probability of importing a pathogen even though it only occurs in one in 1000 stray dogs, whilst there is 39% probability for importing a pathogen that occurs in one in 10 000 stray dogs.

The probability of importing specific pathogens and the impact on animal and human health are summarized in the figure below.

Impact on animal and human health	Major	Rabies virus	<i>Echinococcus multilocularis</i>	
	Moderate		<i>Angiostrongylus</i>	<i>Babesia</i> <i>Rhipicephalus sanguineus</i> <i>Echinemia</i> <i>Dirofilaria</i> <i>Leptospira</i> <i>Brucella</i>
	Minor		<i>Ehrlichia</i> <i>Echinococcus granulosus</i>	<i>Linguatula</i> <i>Strongyloides</i> <i>Ancylostoma</i> <i>Dermacentor</i>
		Low	Moderate	High
		Probability of importation		

CONCLUSIONS:

- If stray dogs continue to be imported from Eastern Europe there is a high probability that pathogens, not currently found in Norway, will be introduced. If the number of imported strays continues at the same rate (hundreds per year) then even pathogens that are only infrequently identified in the export country's dog population may be imported.
- There is a moderate to high probability that some of these pathogens will be able to establish in Norway. Those of particular concern are: Rabies, *Leptospira* spp., *Brucella canis*, *Echinococcus* spp., *Linguatula serrata*, and *Angiostrongylus vasorum*. Some of the pathogens will be able to establish in the indoor environment only, such as *Strongyloides stercoralis*, *Ancylostoma caninum*, and *Rhipicephalus sanguineus*.
- Many of these pathogens can cause severe clinical disease, particularly Rabies, *Leptospira*, *Brucella canis* (in breeding kennels), *Echinococcus multilocularis* and *Angiostrongylus vasorum* and can infect humans as well as animals.
- The current regulations are only aimed at preventing the introduction of Rabies and *Echinococcus* sp. and do not address other pathogens of concern. Rabies might still be introduced, despite the regulations being adhered to, if the dog is infected prior to vaccination. This route of introduction is thought to be unlikely, although not negligible, and stray dogs, with unknown health status, are of particular concern.»

Impact on animal and human health

Norway has a unique nature, and as part of our heritage we are a people who like to enjoy the great outdoors. Forestry and mountain recreation areas are located close to our cities and

towns. We have wild animals like foxes in close proximity, thus experiencing potential disease carriers close to us. Norwegians gather from nature by hunting, fishing and picking berries and mushrooms. We depend on a healthy agriculture which supplies us with grain and vegetables, and where animals are grazing. This lifestyle may be threatened if we are infected by parasites foreign to us. Norway has always had good human and animal health because of very strict laws regulating the import of animals. When Norwegian authorities eased the regulatory framework to that of the EEA Agreement, it was primarily because it would be easier for Norwegians to take pets on holiday abroad. (Pet Regulation of 2003). From January 1st 2012 the government changed the regulations again and lifted the mandatory blood testing in connection with rabies vaccination. Now animals must be vaccinated 21 days before coming to Norway.

A new image of reality. When the EU regulations for the movement of pets across borders were changed in 2004, it was presented to the involved ministries. There were no objections at the time. In those days the animal health in the member states of the EU was generally good. Later the EU expanded and acquired several countries from Eastern Europe. In some of those countries neither animal health nor animal welfare was satisfactory. Norway joined a set of agreements where the terms have changed from when the contract was signed. As early as in 2001 the Akershus Farmers and Smallholders Union asked the Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Health and Minister for the Environment that border controls should be tightened again.

<http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/ostlandssendingen/1.348575>

Later the EU regulation on pet movement has been relaxed further.

Importing dogs: A different risk scenario. There are various ways of importing live animals, and several of these give reason for concern. There is extensive organized importing of dogs with unknown health background (stray dogs and smuggled dogs), there is acquisition of breeding dogs from recognized breeders, return of Norwegian dogs which have been accompanying their owners on holidays abroad, and tourists bringing their dogs on holiday to Norway. Statistics from the FSA show that about 6 000 pets came to Norway through Gardermoen alone, in 2011. Gardermoen is Norway's largest airport.

Many dogs are brought to our country through the Swedish border, and dogs enter Norway from Denmark on ferries. The majority of the dogs from EU countries are entering Norway through Customs but are only occasionally stopped for inspection. The FSA veterinarians are summoned only if Customs finds irregularities. Smuggled pets are not part of the import statistics, but smuggling can involve thousands of dogs each year.

Stray dogs. Lately there has been much focus in the media on the import of stray dogs. Radio, TV, various newspapers and especially NRK Brennpunkt has asked many questions about these imports.

<http://www.nrk.no/programmer/tv/brennpunkt/1.8116014> <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/norge/1.8110596> <http://www.nrk.no/programmer/tv/bre>

nnpunkt/1.814408

<http://www.nr>

k.no/programmer/tv/brennpunkt/1.8116889

There are millions of stray dogs in eastern and southern Europe. Many of these are waiting to be imported into the richer part of Europe. In Hungary, there are approx. 2 million stray dogs, and Romania published figures of 4-6 million. In recent times it has become very popular to import these dogs into Norway. There are many different websites which post street dogs for adoption. It is difficult to quantify exactly how many stray dogs have already come to Norway, but in January 2012 twenty to thirty dogs were expected from Romania only.

These dogs are spread across the country. One of the major players in the export to Norway, Rolda, estimated in March 2012 that it has exported over 100 dogs to Norway just from the city of Galati in Romania. There are shelters spread throughout Eastern and Southern Europe, and there are numerous sites on the Internet where you will be encouraged to adopt dogs, or donate money to them. Exports also occur to other countries such as England, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Finland to name a few.

This is a large and well-organized business. There is much corruption in many of the countries which provide these dogs, which means that there is every reason to question the veterinary certificates accompanying the animals. FSA has found counterfeit veterinary certificates, but not enough to prohibit these imports.

"Animals are worth a damn more than humans to me."
(From a stray dog web page)

"..and have a little extra for a bribe for the vet at the airport in case he shows up.....usually about 50 Lei"
(From a stray dog web page)

The disease background of these dogs is unknown. The discovery of intestinal parasites, ticks, fleas and mange lately mean that there should be questions asked about the conditions in which these dogs live. Because they lack clean water and food they eat their own faeces, and thus they become both the medium and end host of parasites. These dogs live on the streets before being taken in to various shelters for adoption. The dogs are raised in conditions where survival of the fittest applies. They had to fight for food and territory. This background increases the risk of importing dogs with high levels of aggression and behaviour problems. We have seen several examples of adopted street dogs which required relocation or which were euthanized because of aggression.

The Disease Issue

Zoonosis is the term for diseases transmitted between humans and animals. We refer to the risk analysis below for a review of each disease and zoonosis. In April 2012 the FSA received, because of parasites found among street dogs, the means to take blood samples from dogs imported to Norway on arrival at Gardermoen Airport. Against this background, the National

Veterinary Institute conducted a risk analysis which was published on 13 June 2012.
<http://www.vetinst.no/Media/Files/Importrisikovurdering-av-gatehunder-fra-OEst-Europa>

The Veterinary Institute concluded that "The import of street dogs from Eastern Europe is likely to introduce additional disease agents that do not exist in Norway. By importing hundreds of dogs a year there is also a large possibility that rare agents are also imported." The risk analysis is based on the recommendations of the World Organization for Animal Health. The Institute has made recommendations for the import of street dogs in order to minimize the risk of infection. Such recommendations will always depend on whether we can trust the veterinary certificates accompanying the dogs.

"... I got him straight from shelter ... He was in a horrible mess ... green mucous in his eyes and so dirty ... He had not been attending any veterinarian ... They had just given his vaccinations in the shelter"

(From street dog group)

Rabies. Norway has not had rabies on the mainland since the 1800s. Ninety percent of rabies infections are transmitted through biting, but the disease can also be transmitted through scratching and licking. If the disease is allowed to develop far enough to show symptoms it is 100% fatal. In Sweden there have been several deaths in humans due to rabies where people were infected abroad. One example is a woman who died in 2000 after being licked by a dog traveling to Thailand.

<http://www.vardguiden.se/Sjukdomar-och-rad/Omraden/Sjukdomar-och-besvar/Rabies/>

Romania is one of Europe's most infected countries as far as rabies is concerned. In the first six months of 2008 the Romanian veterinary laboratories tested 2 598 blood samples from different animal species. Six hundred and fifty four of these tested positive for rabies. This is a high percentage. These numbers give a good example of the dangers we expose the Norwegian public to through the import of dogs with unknown health backgrounds. Norwegian authorities have no choice but to allow the import of street dogs when the regulations on rabies vaccination and tapeworm treatment are followed. Romanian veterinary authorities fear the spread of rabies, especially outside their own borders in connection with this type of dog export.

(Non-commercial movements of pets might cause rabies to be spread outside Romania's borders). There have been several deaths in humans in Romania due to rabies in the past few years. One example is a 5 year old girl who was bitten by a street dog in December 2011. She died on 27th of February 2012.

http://www.fve.org/news/presentations/taix/2008/2008_5_12_non_commercial_pet_movement_lharbuz.pdf

Another girl died after being bitten by a rabies infected cat. Moreover, Romania has a current vaccination against rabies in foxes that only ends in 2016.

http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/eradication/rabies_pres_8.pdf

<http://www.mail.com/int/scitech/news/1111564-5-year-old-girl-dies-rabies-romania.htm>

<http://www.who-rabies-bulletin.org/service/news.aspx>

http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/eradication/rabies_pres_8.pdf

Several of the blood samples of imported street dogs in Norway showed too low levels of antibodies against rabies. Then we must ask: is the vaccination programme good enough? After the recent legislation which came into force January the 1st 2012, dogs may not be vaccinated until they are 3 months old, and they must wait another 21 days prior to entering Norway. Many street dogs are sick, emaciated and suffering from parasites when they enter the shelters. Such dogs are in poor condition when they are vaccinated, and their immune systems may not be good enough for the vaccine or treatment to have the desired effect.

The Department of Agriculture notes that many countries have little control of diseases in the stray dog population and that rabies remains a major problem: "Last year over 8 000 people just in Romania's capital, Bucharest, were treated for possible rabies after dog bites. Many other diseases may also become established in the Norwegian fauna, and they will in many cases be impossible to eradicate. Apparently healthy animals may also carry disease." <http://www.nettavisen.no/nyheter/article3394882.ece>

If people become infected the consequences can be deadly. In a country with rabies infections the smallest dog bite needs to be treated as if the dog is a carrier of the virus. Some people have poor tolerance towards this treatment, and it can have major side effects.

<http://helsenet.info/7/2012/03/rabies-vaksine-bivirkninger.html>

<http://anneviken.blogspot.no/2008/10/bivirkingene-av-rabiesvaksinen-er.html>

The Fox Tapeworm. *Echinococcus multilocularis* is relatively common in central Europe. The greatest danger of having the infection introduced to Norway is expected to be irregular imports of pets (dogs), or regular entry of pets that have not been properly treated against the parasite. If people are infected with eggs from the faeces they become intermediate hosts. The period from infection till they start showing symptoms can take 10-15 years. The disease causes tumor-like masses of parasitic sacs in the internal organs, especially the liver. The disease is rare in humans, but very serious. Parasite eggs are excreted in the faeces and can infect humans through contact with faeces or fur from infected carnivores (dogs, foxes), and contaminated soil.

In this context, it is a paradox that before 11 March 2011 we could travel with our pets into Sweden without treating them. The fox tapeworm has been found several times in Sweden in 2011, however. This shows that spreading of a new parasite is a fact. One fox was shot not far from the Norwegian border. This parasite emerged after 600 street dogs were imported to Sweden. <http://www.hundhjalpen.se/>

One cannot exclude these imports as the transmitter of the disease.

We would be somewhat naive to believe that this might not happen in Norway. Swedish TV in their "investigation" has also focused on street dog imports due to irregularities in the paperwork accompanying street dogs. This was particularly so for dogs from Spain. There is no reason to believe that animals imported to Norway have a different disease background to those imported to Sweden, as we import street dogs from the same countries and through the same organizations. Various associations in Sweden, among them the Hunter Association have been rather harsh in their criticism of the Swedish authorities. They believe that the government is not doing enough to prevent a proliferation of the disease. Swedish veterinary authorities have

warned against street dogs imports. "Avoid importing these dogs. I mean that one at least must think carefully before taking the dogs from other countries. There is an obvious risk that we import disease which we never had before in the country, said Eva Osterman- Lind of the National Veterinary Institute."

In Norway veterinarians are very reluctant to treat dogs for intestinal worms. They want to identify the parasites in advance. With the large amount of traveling between Norway and Sweden and repeated treatments against the fox tapeworm, there is a risk that this parasite develops a resistance to the drugs that are commonly used. (Dogs and cats which are regularly being transported between Sweden and Norway (ex. by cabin owners) should be treated regularly, and at least every 28 days, instead of at each border crossing.) (From Norwegian Institute of Public Health.)

The Scientific Committee for Food Safety, VKM, has in their risk assessment estimated that Norway will experience the first cases of the fox tapeworm within 10 years. Through the import of street dogs the risk is vastly increased of the parasite showing up at a much earlier stage. The Norwegian authorities should apply the precautionary principle to prevent the importation of the parasite via imported dogs.

http://www.njff.no/portal/page/portal/njff/artikkel?element_id=151380007&displaypage=TRUE

<http://www.vetinst.no/Faktabank/Alle-faktaark/Revens-dvergbendemark-E.-multilocularis>

"The infection will come sooner or later"

(From street dog group)

Multi-resistant bacteria. Even in Norway we have by now found bacteria resistant to several types of antibiotics. Due to our restrictive policy on the use of antibiotics Norway has a relatively small problem compared with that of most other countries. We appreciate that most often these bacteria are found in connection with people, but it turns out that multi-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) are increasingly detected outside health institutions, and in several European countries such bacteria are now found in animals and humans in frequent contact with animals. Since MRSA bacteria in animals were detected in Europe in 2003, there has been an explosive spread. "MRSA spread in Europe is a consequence of the open market and intensive animal operations. Trade and transportation of animals lead to the spread of infection, and intensive operations such as extensive use of antibiotics make animals more vulnerable, says Madeleine Norström at the National Veterinary Institute."

"Perhaps the largest problem with MRSA is that individuals with normal immune systems do not get sick, but can be carriers of the bacteria and infect others", says Marianne Sunde at the National Veterinary Institute. Once the bacteria are in the community, it will be very difficult, if not impossible to control. Both the large imports into Norway of street dogs from Europe and the movement of holiday dogs across borders increases the risk that we may develop serious problems with MRSA bacteria in Norway.

<http://www.forskning.no/artikler/2007/desember/1198229694.3>

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Results from a health survey of street dogs imported into Norway in 2012. The discovery of *Linguatula serrata*, (Tongue worm), *Dirofilaria immitis* (Heartworm), *Rhipicephalus sanguineus* (brown dog tick), *Babesia canis* and *Trichuris trichiura* (Whipworm *Trichuris vulpis*) are extremely worrying. Several dogs had remarkably low incidences of antibodies against rabies. We have never found so many exotic diseases in imported dogs in Norway as during the spring of 2012, and we will not be surprised if new occurrences will soon dominate the news. Findings on imported street dogs in Norway confirm the claims that these animals have infestations of new diseases.

There is disagreement within the scientific community as far as tongue worm is concerned. Some veterinarians who are trained abroad fear that the parasite is more dangerous than the Veterinary Institute claims. There are indications that it might be passed directly from dog to human. In Linköping, Sweden they found the tongue worm in early 2010, when a street dog imported from Romania sneezed out a parasite of ca. 10 cm long.

<http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=160&artikel=3441618>

In Norway, this parasite was found in a Romanian street dog for the first time in the spring of 2012.

The nightmare: infection in our children. We know from several discussion threads on the internet that many dog owners are letting their dogs loose in kindergartens, playgrounds and other areas where children congregate. It is easy to let the dogs run free because the areas are likely to be fenced. This may eventually endanger the youngest and most vulnerable in our society.

<http://hundesonen.no/forum/topic/13942-lek>

e-lufte-i-barnehage

<http://forum.kvinneguiden.no/index.php?showtopic=638044>

<http://www.canis.no/innlegg.php?start=1&nr=98857>

We must accept that we are in the process of importing diseases that can be lethal to people and animals, diseases which a physician in general practice or a veterinarian may not be too knowledgeable about, unless they have graduated from countries where these diseases are common or they have expertise in that particular area.

Making discoveries of new parasites look harmless. When the incidence of parasite discoveries rose sharply during 2012, the street dog community argued that these parasites might come in with migrating birds or with wild fauna which had crossed the borders. This is, in our view, arguments that do not make sense. Migratory birds and animals have been around forever, but we have never found these parasites in Norway before. However, they have been found specifically on imported stray dogs in 2012. There is a long border with Sweden. It is inconceivable that the parasites should have come to Norway via animals which cross this border. Discoveries made in Sweden might also be linked to imported street dogs. Apart from the fox tapeworm no new parasites have been found in the Swedish fauna. In the north, Norway shares borders with Russia and Finland. It is also inconceivable that the infection has come to Norway through these border areas, as most of the parasite discoveries were made in dogs in

southern Norway.

Climate change and new parasite species. Several parasites are transmitted by insects which today do not have satisfactory living conditions in Norway. We know too little about many of these hosts, and it may be only a matter of time before they adapt to a Norwegian climate with rising temperatures.

<http://www.cicero.uio.no/fulltext/index.aspx?id=9471&lang=NO>

A warmer climate may also change the vegetation and make an adjustment easier. Before 1988 there was no Iberian Snail (*Arion vulgaris*) to be found in Norway. It has its origins in southern France and Spain. Now it exists in large parts of southern Norway and right up to the coast of Nordland. The Norwegian forest tick has been widely spread in recent years and is found as far north as Finnmark. Lately brown dog ticks (*Rhipicephalus sanguineus*) were found in the sleeping areas of dogs imported to Norway a few days earlier. The discovery was made in northern Norway in winter. This tick species is present today and is not stationary in Norway. Unlike our own ticks, this species is adapted to living indoors and is very difficult to get rid of. Brown ticks use mainly dogs as host animals, but can also suck the blood of other species such as cats, rodents and birds. It is also found on people, especially if a dog is no longer present and the tick is already in the house. This tick can be a vector for a number of organisms (bacteria, parasites and viruses) which are not common in Norway. Some of these cause diseases only in dogs, while others can cause illnesses in humans as well.

<http://www.vetinst.no/Faktabank/Alle-faktaark/>

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There was a large infestation of ticks on humans in Romania in the spring of 2012, and it evolved into a massive problem in certain shelters as well.

" ... it is said that there is already one big problem. Dogs suffer not only in shelters but also in foster homes! They say they have too little equipment and tools to be able to cope with the problem and they are begging us to help them now! They said the fleas are carriers of other things ... and ticks breed now in the heat. "

(From street dog internet pages.)

Discoveries made in apparently healthy dogs. A survey conducted by the Faculty of Biology at the University of Warsaw in Poland in the period 2006 - 2008 found *Babesia canis* and other tick-borne diseases in apparently healthy dogs.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19837515>

Sweden has had its first case of *Brucella canis*. It was found in a breeding dog imported from Poland which was mated with a dog imported from Serbia. This dog is possibly a carrier. The dogs tested negative when they were imported. Yet infection was present. There are efforts made in tracking the infection and it is suggested that "stray dogs in the Mediterranean area are suggested to serve as a reservoir." The authors of the article believe that Brucellosis may be under-reported in humans.

<http://www.actavetscand.com/content/pdf/1751-0147-54-18.pdf>

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"Hmmm ... Now I'm not sure what Brucellosis is, but this sentence makes me sure that I do not want my dog tested for it:" If it turns out that the dog is infected FSA will consider further measures. " (Further action = killing)

"It is quite possible that it is a disease we do not want here, but if there is talk about killing, I think you should think it over before running to the vet for testing only. "
(From street dog Group June 25, 2012.)

Sticker tumor/venereal tumor in dogs. This disease is extremely rare or non-existent in Scandinavia. The cancer is one of the very few malignant tumors which can be transmitted between dogs. The tumor was discovered in 2008 in Sweden in a street dog imported from Romania. The dog was humanely euthanized.

"The dog seems to be infected with sticker tumor and needs vincristine. Strange that they cannot get hold of the medicine. I know several dogs which have been treated for this in Bucharest, including my own, and then there was no problem in getting hold of the medication".
(From a Group of Romanian street dogs imported into Norway, January 2013)

<http://www.expressen.se/nyheter/hund-hade-smittsam-tumorsjukdom/>

About pet passports and microchips. Pets crossing the border into Norway must be provided with passports. It is a standard procedure for the entire EU region.

<http://www.pcspets.com/international-pet-relocation>

According to the EU's decision on completing passports (CD2003 / 803) they must have a printed ISO country code and unique number on the front cover. We are aware that the NFSA sought to stop imports from the EU countries because the passports were not properly designed and completed. One of the NFSA directors was contacted directly by the European Commission with clear instructions to accept these passports, even though they are not produced or supplemented in accordance with the EU's own legislation. This is most strange, given that Norway is not even a member of the EU, and that such instructions were passed through the ESA (EFTA Surveillance Authority). In addition to a passport all dogs must be fitted with a microchip. The chip is supposed to contain a country code and the individual's unique number. The number should be internationally recognized by ISO. Sample chip numbers according ISO from Norway: NO 578 and the individual's unique number. A chip number from Romania should be RO 642 and an individual number. Then why do dogs imported to Norway from Romania have country code numbers that are different from those that apply under the ISO standard?
http://www.iso.org/iso/country_codes.htm

A dog passport should also contain information about valid vaccinations. Then there must be no doubt about the dog's identity. If unknown chip numbers (other than ISO) are used there should be questions asked about the country of origin of a dog, and who has put in the chip. Therefore one can also ask whether the passport is valid. If the information in the passport is not correct, it

can be questioned whether vaccinations are actually given and who has stamped the passport. We are aware that a Norwegian woman brought home a dog which had not been to the vet before leaving their country of origin. Yet the passport was stamped with valid vaccinations. At a meeting between the Authorities and representatives of a street dog Group held on 11th of June 2012 it was stated that there were no changes in the regulations relating to dog imports. NFSA still recommend that you do not import street dogs from Southern and Eastern Europe.

"One does not advertise when a Romanian dog is reassigned to another family. How could NFSA know that it has been relocated without going through the ads?"

(From street dog group)

"... There is always a way out if you manage to get it to Norway ... Who checks if it gets relocated after a while ..."

(From street dog group)

Continued import of dogs into Norway. That NFSA and other agencies have warned against the importation of dogs to Norway, and this is not new. NFSA already came out with warnings three years ago. Imports and adoption of street dogs in Norway continues even after the Veterinary Institute presented its risk analysis, and despite all the warnings from the scientific community. The same day as the meeting between representatives of the street dog group and NFSA was held, there were three dogs coming from Romania to Norway via Gardermoen. We have evidence that dogs are lining up to come to Norway. Daily the dogs are advertised for adoption on different Norwegian sites on the Internet. This means that my, yours and our children's future health status is controlled by a group of street dog importers who defy all warnings from the assembled veterinary profession and the Ministry of Agriculture, and what for us seems like a somewhat 'paralyzed' NFSA.

"What happens to dogs which have waited so long to get a home from ...shelter." "They are coming soon"

(From street dog Group June 19, 2012.)

"Hey, I need a car for the weekend so we can collect some dogs, someone who can help?"

(From street dog group 21 June 2012.)

Pressure groups, smear campaigns and disclaimers. Several European countries have huge problems with stray dogs. In Romania we have seen examples of politicians who want to address this issue being subjected to petitions from both national and international pressure groups. These include those involved in shelters in Romania and importers in Norway. These pressure groups do not want street dogs to be killed, and it is legitimate to question whether there can be financial interests behind this? In Norway we see that there is a major smear campaign against the government and the NFSA in particular, in connection with the import of street dogs into the country. This happens on many facebook pages. Here NFSA is criticized for the handling of sampling of street dogs, suspension of imports because of pet passports in May 2011 and for bad information to dog owners. NFSA could possibly be criticized for poor handling

of individual cases, but to criticize them for doing a job they have been assigned is unfair. To an outsider it may seem as if the smear campaign has intensified after the Veterinary Institute presented its analysis. We see that the criticism is partly unjustified, and that the cases against named individuals who are exposed are said to amount to hate speech. This is harassment and shows lack of knowledge about behaviour on the internet. To us it seems that there is a conscious effort to turn the focus away from the import and adoption, to the way officials of NFSA exercise their authority.

The import regulations distinguish between non-commercial and commercial activities. Placing dogs in foster homes before final adoption is illegal according to the non-commercial regulations. This is considered commercial activity. We have evidence that the introduction of many street dogs to Norway is done on a commercial basis. Adoption groups blame the NFSA for not responding earlier, and argue that the NFSA do not know their own regulations. However, any person has a duty to familiarize themselves with the laws and regulations that apply. Authorities disclaim responsibility, as the strongest means available to them is a recommendation to not import from Southern and Eastern Europe. Those who are behind street dog imports deny responsibility for any wrongdoing. They belittle the dangers of the parasites/diseases found during 2012, and blame the authorities by covering themselves behind the statement that the import is legal.

"I'm a foster home and have had many dogs until now. They live with me until they have been "acclimatized".

(From street dog group)

Despite strong warnings from the collective veterinary society the import of street dogs continues. Blaming each other does not help if people or animals become infected and ill. Everyone is responsible for their own actions. The Act on food production and food safety. (Food Act) § 19 reads: "Everyone must exercise due care to avoid any risk of the development or spread of contagious animal disease. Live animals will not be sold, included in husbandry, moved or taken out when there is reason to suspect a contagious animal disease that can have significant social consequences. "

Some statements from various street dog groups.

"Someone who has asked the damn hag (who certainly has not been laid recently) about WHY she personally is so horrible towards our dogs?? Has she been bitten in her ass by a dog and developed heartworm, tongue worm AND been infected with Giardia? No Miss NFSA (Very vulgar expression) get a life and stay away from us, yes actually stay away from people in general. Imagine that she might have children HEEEEELP. Hoping for God's sake that they do not become infected by anything. Then they will be killed in COLD blood!!! "

"I witnessed a raid by NFSA at an eatery in Lillestrøm. If everybody is like that owl who led the raid, then God help us. She was snooping around like a mad hen, without finding anything to put your finger on. She oozed being power hungry. Ugh! And to be really nasty, the hag is probably suffering from certain power hunger due her fright of mirrors. I considered actually asking her to visit to greet the world's most beautiful contagious bomb from Romania. :-)) "

"I suspect all the damn NFSA-gang of having rabies. They should be shot!"

"..... Who wants full stop on these imports because s scaremongering around this tongue worm Yet it says in all reviews that infections are VERY rare in people!!! "

"I blame Norway for its crazy f .. ing laws! Long live Breivik, hire him some more friends."

"NFSA is a whorehouse sorry but this kind of behaviour ... now they must get a skinful from higher authorities."

There are economic consequences if new diseases were to be established in Norway. If this business isn't controlled or stopped, there could be major public and economic consequences. A dog owner whose dog is infected by parasites will have major veterinary expenses on sampling and medication, and presumably there will be insurance premium increases. We have a long border with Sweden, and many Norwegians travel across the border both to second homes and for holidays. If we get rabies in Norway or Sweden, all dog owners would have to inoculate their dogs against rabies. An infection control program against rabies will cost the Norwegian society both money and human resources.

For a farmer who receives a transmittable disease into the herd, the entire livelihood may be threatened. Brucellosis causes abortion, infertility and decreased milk production in animals. In humans it may cause serious disease which is hard to cure. In Norway the whole herd will be slaughtered. For producers of vegetables, fruits and berries who have crops contaminated with manure containing pathogens, the consequences will be severe. They may have to disinfect the farm and let fields lie fallow for several years because of infection. We may experience the pollution of water, which will affect many. The cost of fighting the fox tapeworm will amount to

large sums of money if this parasite is established in Norway. Another major cost will be tracking disease outbreaks and vaccination programs. The Norwegian veterinary authorities are now doing a study of street dogs from Romania; there is a cost which the community carries through sampling and additional use of human resources.

A well-documented study requires that the involved parties participate. We know that many owners of imported stray dogs do not want this. They are afraid that their dogs will be euthanized if dangerous diseases are discovered.

http://www.nkk.no/nkk/public/openIndex?ARTICLE_ID=14090

On multi-resistant bacteria, the problem is so great in some places in Europe that people who are involved with livestock must be examined for the presence of MRSA before they can be hospitalised. It takes time to get the results of the tests, and it can be a problem in acute admissions. If we have an outbreak of bacterial disease resistant to antibiotics, it may lead to a more difficult treatment. If no medication works the disease can be fatal.

In Sweden *Brucella canis* was found in a breeding dog. The result was the loss of the dog, the loss of future litters, and loss of income. The other dogs had to be isolated. The same was true for other dogs which had been in contact with the dog breeder. Many people were affected even if only one dog was sick. Parasites, bacteria or viruses do not distinguish who becomes infected. Not all pathogens are dangerous for everyone, but what may not be dangerous for a healthy person can be life threatening for another. A healthy person can be a carrier of bacteria without being sick, and transmit the bacteria to susceptible people. Many Norwegians live with compromised immune systems due to an underlying disease. It can be both a human and an economic burden to be hit by an additional disease due to infection from new pathogens.

"The vet..... wrote: Veterinarians are most susceptible when it comes to dogs from the shelter, we come in contact with many dogs and many diseases. I answered: What about doctors, they are in contact with lots of people and many diseases, some of which are infectious and serious too. Many asylum seekers who come to the doctor can be the carriers of dangerous diseases that we do not have in Norway. However, they will not be denied medical care because of it.

That vet is not quite good in the head, hey "

(From street dog group)

Can public health become compromised? It seems that very little money has been allocated to public health in relation to pets. Society is spending huge sums to have an overview of the

clinical picture of farmed animals and fish. However, money has never been used to establish which diseases we actually may find in pets. There is little knowledge of the zoonotic situation in small animals, beyond reporting by some pet veterinarians. Autopsies are relatively rare on dogs, and it is usually the owner or the insurance company who pays. The EU has introduced zoonotic surveillance in connection with food contamination. This should also apply to pets, particularly as the import of stray dogs from Eastern and Southern Europe has increased significantly and because of the findings made in street dogs. It is also worrying that no risk analysis has been done since the NFSA was established in 2004. We believe there is every reason to be concerned about the current and future public health situation in Norway.

Importing new species to Norway is not a crime, but it may be harmful to the environment. The government is responsible for animal and public health in Norway. One of the NFSA tasks is to combat disease in animals and prevent the introduction of new species of parasite, virus and bacteria to Norway. How could they implement this on the basis of the prevailing regulations? Iceland, like Norway, is also an EEA country. They have managed to some extent to keep their strict regime for the import of animals. Are we no longer "our own masters"? We are blessed with good animal health, which we want to keep. To import a street dog with unknown health background is not illegal under current regulations. However, there has been no lack of warnings from authorities. The importers of these dogs must not complain years later, when the infections are a fact, and say that "we were not warned" or that "we did not do anything illegal". One is allowed to use one's head and show responsibility. Everything that is legal is not necessarily wise! The warnings from the scientific community against these imports are picked apart by the street dog people in order to fit the importers' own interests. What do these people know which the scientists do not?

<http://www.lovddata.no/cgi-wift/ldles?doc=/sf/sf/sf-19650319-9941.html>

The different animal diseases are graded by NFSA in risk categories from A to D in order of severity, where A is the most serious. Several of the zoonoses we have described are classified into groups A and B.

It is not the Norwegian government's responsibility how other EU countries safeguard their own welfare, but they are expected to take the necessary steps to protect both animals and humans in Norway from an increased infection threat. One measure could be to reintroduce quarantine laws. Today some of the people that adopt Romanian dogs take "shortcuts" and re-register the dogs in other countries on the way to Norway to camouflage their origin. We know that this has happened, and it shows once again the need for more stringent regulations.

We do not want a reduced quality of life due to illness caused by the importation of parasites

and other disease pathogens. We do not want the extra burden society will have if children are affected. We want to walk safely in the forest which is part of our culture, eating berries and fruits without the risk of getting sick, we want safe food on the table, drink clean water, we want healthy animals and we want our children to grow up in a safe environment with the same opportunities that their parents and grandparents had. There are millions of street dogs in Europe. As long as there is an offer, there will also be a demand. The discovery of parasites like ticks, fleas and mange in the recent past shows that control programs in countries where dogs have their origins are not good enough or absent, and that we cannot rely on the veterinary paperwork that comes with the dogs. This is serious, and there will be a continuing issue that the government must deal with the prevailing regulations.

Zoonoses are fought primarily by breaking the transmission chain. Climate change makes it easier for alien insects and new parasites to become established in Norway. We must have a regulatory framework that safeguards us and the next generation in our everyday lives. This issue is urgent! Imports of street dogs of unknown disease background from southern and Eastern Europe have increased sharply since the recent legislation came into force on 01.01.12. It is worrying that this coincides with border controls becoming less despite all the warnings from scientific communities. From 2004, NFSA had a 24-hour system of rapid emergency response but this was unfortunately closed down from 01.01.2010. The customs officers could turn to State veterinarians in cases where knowledge of disease and animal welfare legislation was needed. Then problems around imports of pets and possible disease could be resolved immediately. There is a great need to have the larger border posts re-manned by border control veterinarians who can check incoming ferries and non-domestic aircraft.

That it is so easy to introduce dogs to Norway and that this has been taken so far was not the intention behind the "pet Regulation" at the time when it was adopted. If the situation continues, Norway will sooner or later experience new and unwanted diseases entering the country. It is only a matter of time. We have many in the scientific community who agree that the movement of live animals across borders must be regulated in a stricter way than is the case today. In addition, the NFSA and the Customs Service should have increased allocations to step up border controls.

The legislation in Norway today does not maintain animal and public health in a satisfactory manner.

"Is it really possible to make an issue out of something like this? God, maybe it is simply true that kids do not get a proper upbringing anymore? Germs? Who the hell cares about germs

when one is three? I often take the dog into a kindergarten. They have put up a sign now, "Please walk your dog somewhere else, for the sake of the children." For the sake of the children? There aren't any kids there after closing. So how in the world would it be inconvenient for kids? I understand the argument with shitting and peeing, but I make sure she is done before we go into the kindergarten. So what's the problem? "

(From Child and Parent AP / Debate)

"Been waiting for this, and today it happened: An ancient dragon threw herself at me because I walk the dogs in the cemetery. Dragon: What, walk the dogs in the cemetery? It is not permitted. I: It's allowed, read the poster at the entrance. Complain to Oslo Municipality if it bothers you. Bitch: What, the dogs shall pee on the graves? It's absolutely disrespectful, I: My dogs are doing nothing wrong, and they're allowed to be here. Troll: Oh, what would you have said if a mongrel peed on your grave when you were dead? I: That's what I thought would be great, life goes on. I found it best to pull away at the time, and heard the horror owl shouted something about "education" after me. My consolation is that this old bitch soon will end up in the grave, and worms which will enjoy themselves on her decomposing corpse are hardly going to show any respect."

(From street dog environment)

Links to warnings from doctors and veterinarians

http://www.reiseklinikken.no/Gunnar_Hasles_pr%C3%B8veforelsning_til_PhD.pdf

<http://www.nvh.no/no/Aktuelt/Nyheter/Norges-veterinarhogskole-advarer-mot-ny-parasitt/>

http://www.nkk.no/nkk/public/open_reservation?ARTICLE_ID=14057

<http://dbhedmark.no/artikkel.aspx?pid=2&ArtID=449>

<http://www.vetinst.no/Nyheter/Husflaatt-brun-hundeflaatt-paavist-from-import-dog>

http://www.mattilsynet.no/aktuelt/kronikker/hjelp_gatehundene_i_romania_i_hjemlandet__101950

http://www.mattilsynet.no/import_eksport/reise_med_dyr

<http://www.forskning.no/artikler/2007/desember/1198229694.3>

Other links to this topic:

