POLICY NOTE

THE NON-COMMERCIAL MOVEMENT OF PET ANIMALS (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT (NO. 2) REGULATIONS 2022

SSI 2022/262

The above instrument was made in exercise of the powers conferred by Articles 38 and 39(6) of Regulation (EU) 576/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the non-commercial movement of pet animals. The instrument is subject to negative procedure.

Summary Box

To permit until 1 April 2023, an alternative, quicker rabies antibody titration test for the movement of pet animals into Scotland and release from quarantine, given the unprecedented number of pet animals accompanying persons displaced by the conflict in Ukraine.

Policy Objectives

These Regulations have been made as part of a temporary streamlined process for persons displaced by the conflict in Ukraine to enter Great Britain with their pets. On 9 April 2022, as part of this process, an amendment was made to Annex 4 of the Pet Travel Regulations (retained Regulation (EU) 576/2013), which sets out the validity requirements for rabies antibody titration tests on pet dogs, cats and ferrets moved into Great Britain. Under normal circumstances, there is only one type of antibody titre test that can be used for entry into Great Britain from Ukraine and to authorise release from quarantine if the animal is non-compliant on entry. This test (*the Fluorescent Antibody Virus Neutralisation (FAVN) test*[1]) has a turnaround time of two weeks. The Non-Commercial Movement of Pet Animals (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2022 introduced a provision to give Scottish Ministers the ability, for a time limited period (until 1 October 2022), to administer an alternative rabies antibody test (a specific form of *enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) test*). The ELISA test has a turnaround time of two to three days.

As pets must remain in quarantine until there is confirmation of their vaccination status, the ELISA test has been used to reduce time in quarantine by quickly determining those animals that have been vaccinated and have a sufficient level of protection against the rabies virus. This has reduced the overall burden on quarantine spaces and enabled refugees to be reunited with their pets earlier than if the FAVN test were used, whilst still protecting public and animal health.

These Regulations will extend the time period permitting the use of the ELISA test by six months (until 1 April 2023). Although the initial influx of refugees and their pets from Ukraine has diminished, extending the use of the ELISA test will significantly speed up the rabies testing process at a time when the system faces a significant backlog. This will continue to reduce the overall burden on quarantine spaces and enable refugees to be reunited with their pets earlier than if the FAVN test were used.

Consultation

[1] Fluorescent Antibody Virus Neutralisation (FAVN) Tests (defra.gov.uk)

As required by Article 39(7) of the Pet Travel Regulations Government has undertaken a GB-wide consultation exercise and consulted the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and members of the GB Exotic Disease Core Group for Rabies, which includes those representing the interests of veterinarians, pet charities and public health bodies. These consultees were in agreement that the use of the ELISA test should be continued to relieve pressure on quarantine facilities.

Impact Assessments
No significant, impact on the private, voluntary or public sector is foreseen

Financial Effects
The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands confirms that no BRIA is necessary as the instrument has no financial effects on the Scottish Government, local government or on business.

Scottish Government
Agriculture and Rural Economy Directorate

24 August 2022