

France Reports Second Canine Rabies Case

New case highlights problem of illegally importing dogs from other countries.

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France on Thursday reported its second canine rabies case of 2008, once again attributing the case to the illegal movement of animals into France from other countries.

In the most-recent case, a female dog who was born in December 2007 in Gambia traveled from Gambia to Belgium on April 7, then was transported to France a week later. Despite a rabies vaccination on March 15 and a certificate of good health signed April 5, the dog was in poor condition when she arrived in France, according to the French Ministry of Agriculture.

She was examined by three veterinary clinics, and the third clinic suspecting rabies due to signs of nervousness.

The dog died on April 21 and a laboratory examination of her head confirmed rabies was the cause.

The only other animal known to have had contact with the dog was the owner's 18-year-old cat. The cat was not vaccinated against rabies, did not have contact with other animals, and was scheduled to be euthanized April 25.

France has reported that this rabies case is not epidemiologically linked to the case of canine rabies it reported in February 2008. Rabies is a reportable disease, meaning countries must report any outbreaks to other countries.

The strain identified in the new case was similar to those in Guinea and Sierra Leone, suggesting a Gambian origin of the strain, French authorities say.

One of the Senate amendments of the pending U.S. Farm Bill under consideration by a conference committee is a measure that would ban the import of puppies until they were at least 6 months of age, received necessary vaccinations, and were in good health.