The benefits of I&R for cats and dogs

EU Parliament - Strasbourg  8 September 2015

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The **Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale Abruzzo e Molise “G. Caporale”** is a technical-scientific body of the Ministry of Health and Regions, founded in 1941.

Our mission is to ensure human health, providing appropriate **response to public health needs**, through scientific knowledge and expertise on food safety, animal health and welfare.
The treatment of animals is a legitimate concern for public policy makers throughout Europe.

Pets have a special relationship with man.

Pets contribute to human QOL and therefore they are of value to the community.

Pet overpopulation must be considered a risk for hygiene, health and human and animal safety reasons.
Health Benefits of Pets to people

- People who own pets typically visit the doctor less often and use less medication;
- Pet owners, on average, have lower cholesterol and blood pressure;
- Pet owners recover more quickly from illness and surgery;
- Pet owners show lower levels of risk factors associated with heart disease;
- Elderly pet owners report an increased quality of life and companionship;
- Pet owners are less likely to report feeling lonely.

In 2003, a longitudinal (multi-year) study showed that the annual national health cost saving resulting from pet owners visiting the doctor less often was estimated to be €5.59 billions for Germany and $3.86 billion for Australia.
The Economic Benefits of Pets in the EU

• The 2012 CALLISTO report estimated the total size of the market for pet care products at 19.7 billion Euros for 12 Member States.

• FECAVA (2009) estimated that 289,000 people were employed in the pet sector - trainers, groomers, veterinarians, nurses and breeders.

• Companion animals (mainly dogs & cats) made up 40% of the EU veterinary medicine market, for a total value of 1.6 billion euros (2011).
But unfortunately...

“the average time spent choosing a pet was often less than the time spent thinking about buying Christmas presents or a TV, and staggeringly, behind choosing a holiday”

• 42% of pet owners would consider buying a pet from the internet;

• 23% did no research at all before taking on their pet.

Promotes responsible ownership and social responsibility towards mistreated/abandoned/stray animals -> lower kennelling costs;

Provides information about population size, structure and demography, and allows to communicate on this matter;

Provides real time/reliable data on health and welfare status and history (i.e. vaccination, testing, spay/neuter, dangerous animals) at individual level;

Is a basic tool for disease surveillance, control/eradication plans (2) disease outbreak and disaster management plans;

Protect consumers by informing them on the real origin of animals (age, genetics, behavioural/health problems) and tracing the animals back to breeders/dealers;

Linked to a licensing fee or liability /Insurance schemes may incentivize + behaviours (spay/neuter).
Cross-border transport of rescue dogs may spread rabies in Europe


Harmonisation of regulations in the European Union and the European Economic Area, as of January 1, 2012, has led to an increase in the number of rescue dogs imported to Norway from Eastern European countries, in particular Romania. Today the only requirements for dogs entering Norway are rabies vaccination and prophylactic echinococcosis multilocularis treatment. The aim of this study was to investigate the antibody levels to rabies virus in vaccinated rescue dogs and to examine if the dogs had sufficient antibody response according to the recommended titre (≥0.5 IU/mL) by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). A significant proportion (33%, 95% CI (41% to 65%)) of imported rescue dogs from Eastern Europe were found to have inadequate titres after rabies vaccination. Moreover, 41% of the dogs had antibody levels below or equal to 0.2 IU/mL, and among these, 14 dogs had titres ≤0.1 IU/mL, which is considered negative in the fluorescent antibody virus neutralisation assay. This study indicates that the present regulation increases the risk of introducing rabies from member states where rabies is still prevalent to countries considered rabies-free.

KEY WORDS
- canine leishmaniosis, preventive measures, introduction, establishment

REWARD!

LOST GOLDEN DOODLE, 6 YEARS
Wearing leather collar, chip near left shoulder.
Fred is missing since February 2, 2013. We lost him in X Street.
If you have any information, please contact Mr. John Smith at 555-555-5555 or email to john.smith@mail.com.

Thank you!
I&R as part of responsible dog ownership often linked to animal health programmes, for example, mandatory rabies vaccination

Registration of animals in a centralised database can be used to support the enforcement of legislation and the reuniting of lost animals with owners

A regulatory framework that would help authorities establishing successful dog control programmes could include registration and identification of dogs.
“I&R are crucial. Identification alone is not enough; it needs to go together with registration”

Rafael Laguens, FVE president
The CALLISTO project

Suggests the development of systems for identifying and registering the most common companion animal species and establishing surveillance programmes that capture data on zoonoses that occur in these animals.
Compulsory I&R in EU countries

- **Yes**
- **Yes, by 2016**
- **No**
  - **only in some Länder**
  - **but no database set up yet**
  - **limited to commercial traded pets**
THE ULTIMATE SYSTEM TO REUNITE OWNERS WITH THEIR PETS

EUROPETNET
Illegal puppy trade and I&R: what evidences?
Main origin and destination of dogs traded across the UE(2014)

- **UK**
  - IN: 1878 (200)
  - OUT: 15 (6)

- **FR**
  - IN: 1061 (88)
  - OUT: 297 (85)

- **ES**
  - IN: 895 (150)
  - OUT: 7561 (1087)

- **BE**
  - IN: 985 (105)
  - OUT: 411 (13)

- **DE**
  - IN: 11862 (1260)
  - OUT: 72 (13)

- **IT**
  - IN: 994 (128)
  - OUT: 760 (77)

- **RO**
  - IN: 2 (0)
  - OUT: 2026 (147)

- **SK**
  - IN: 0 (0)
  - OUT: 2106 (205)

- **HU**
  - IN: 15 (2)
  - OUT: 4474 (329)
Intra EU trade of dogs 2012-2014
Figure 2 Changes in dogs imported under PETS from four central and eastern European countries since joining the EU (2004-2013)

Source: Defra
Origin of dogs introduced in Italy (2014)
IZSAM has developed an **innovative information system** to improve cats and dogs I&R.

A **web-based-application** provides the possibility of connecting databases together through web services, making an integrated and complete system, **without changing the pre-existing platforms**.
Take home message

- Mandatory I&R of cats and dogs is **the cheapest and most effective long-term investment** to protect animals and people;
- The **large experience of the Commission** to manage similar objectives in other areas has been largely positive;
- A **proactive liaison between the Commission and the Member States'** would strongly facilitate the enforcement of the existing EU legislation and maximize the benefits of the information systems already in place.

**However, animal traceability will be guaranteed, only when EU national databases will be interconnected to a central EU-compatible information system.**