



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Animal and Plant Health Agency
Access to Information Team
Woodham Lane
New Haw
Addlestone
Surrey
KT15 3NB

enquiries@apha.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/apha

Our Ref: ATIC2325

[REDACTED]

{By Email}

22 February 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

PROVISION OF REQUESTED INFORMATION

Thank you for your request for information about rabies, which we received on 22 January 2021. Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

The information you requested and our response is detailed below:

"I request the following information and ask answers are related to dogs, cats and ferrets:

When was the last recorded case of rabies in GB and of the UK as a whole?"

The last recorded human case resulting from a bite of an indigenously infected dog was in 1902.

Great Britain was free of rabies from 1922 until October 1969 when an imported dog died of rabies 10 days after release from 6 month quarantine. In 1970, a second case of rabies occurred 3 months after release from quarantine. This was the last case of recorded rabies in GB/UK outside of quarantine (excluding bats). The most recent case of rabies within quarantine was in an imported dog in 2008.

Sources:

<https://www.oie.int/doc/ged/d11246.pdf>

<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/1/4/402>

"Is GB deemed to be rabies free?"

According to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), GB/UK is rabies free. The OIE definition of freedom refers to rabies virus only and excludes the viruses that cause bat rabies in the UK.

Source:

https://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Health_standards/tahc/current/chapitre_rabies.pdf

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) for human health, GB is not rabies free as the definition includes all viruses that cause the disease rabies (includes the lyssaviruses that cause bat rabies – last case of bat rabies in GB was December 2020). However, the OIE rabies status above is used for animal movements/trade.

“Is the UK deemed to be rabies free?”

Yes. As above.

“What is the risk profile of rabies going from GB to NI given there has never been a requirement for vaccine against it for dogs, cats and ferrets prior to 01/01/21”

A request under the Freedom of Information Act is a request for recorded information, APHA do not hold this information. However, given both regions are considered free and there is a strong degree of certainty about the disease free status, the risk profile would likely indicate a negligible risk for rabies to be introduced via GB or NI born pets travelling to the other country.

“What is the risk profile of rabies coming from NI to GB?”

As above.

“Why is this journey deemed different than travelling in the other direction from GB to NI (which has the requirement of vaccine for travel post 31/12/20)”

This requirement is a consequence of the UK leaving the EU and is not based on disease risk.

“Has DEFRA requested any scientific testing of any sorts on rabies and the rabies vaccine (in relation to the above named animals) from the Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA) or any other public, private or third sector organisations?”

- If so can I have full details of the testing commissioned and results ideally in the report format it was presented to DEFRA.

- As part of the response to this question I would also like to know the involvement if any by DEFRA (this includes discussions, agreement and/or scientific testing) in the potential to change the required vaccine application from 3 years to 1 year”

DEFRA have not requested any such testing in the last two years. APHA does not hold this information.

“What is the tapeworm (Echinococcus) profile in GB and in the UK as a whole?”

E. multilocularis, the causative agent of alveolar echinococcosis, has never been recorded in the UK from human or indigenous animal hosts.

Only two species of Echinococcus are known to be endemic in the British Isles, Echinococcus granulosus sensu stricto (s.s) (G1 genotype) and Echinococcus equinus (horse strain) both responsible for cystic echinococcosis (CE).

“What is the risk profile of tapeworm (Echinococcus) going from GB to NI given there has never been a requirement for treatment against it for dogs, cats and ferrets prior to 01/01/21”

There may be a risk of introduction of E. granulosus G1 as this was confirmed in GB in farm dogs and fox hounds, but no formal assessment of this risk has taken place.

“What is the risk profile of tapeworm (Echinococcus) coming from NI to GB?”

To date only E. equinus is known to occur in NI and that is also endemic in GB. No formal risk assessment has taken place.

“Why is this journey deemed different than travelling in the other direction from GB to NI (which has the requirement of vaccine for travel post 31/12/20)”

This requirement is a consequence of the UK leaving the EU and is not based on disease risk

“Has DEFRA requested any testing of any sorts on tapeworm (Echinococcus) and tapeworm (Echinococcus) treatment (in relation to the above named animals) from FERA or any other public, private or third sector organisations?”

The National Reference Laboratory for Echinococcus at APHA Sand Hutton carries out a yearly surveillance program for Echinococcus multilocularis in foxes previously required by the EU to demonstrate UK disease freedom and allow derogation for border pet treatment to apply.

“- If so can I have full details of the testing commissioned and results ideally in the report format it was presented to DEFRA”

All reports on the UK Echinococcus multilocularis surveillance are annually published by EFSA and can be found here: <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa>.

“- If such testing was carried out please confirm if the following scenarios/tests were carried out and if so the results ideally in the report format it was presented to DEFRA”

See above.

“The safety of frequent applications of the tapeworm (Echinococcus) treatment including what are deemed safe levels/frequencies

The view that the veterinary profession has in that only treatments every 6 months are justified and that any more than this is overdosing

The short, medium and long term effects of dosing/overdosing (occasional and regular) of tapeworm (Echinococcus) treatments

The safety of tapeworm (Echinococcus) treatment on pregnant dogs given the veterinary professional views this as being a dangerous treatment and one that shouldn't be administered during pregnancy”

APHA are not the arbiters of veterinary drugs the [Veterinary Medicines Directorate - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) may be able to advise.

“Has DEFRA been asked to submit any reports, carry out any scientific testing and/or to attend/partake at the House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Select Committee inquiry”.

Defra are unaware of any such request however, the EFRA Committee secretariat may be able to advise.

<https://old.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environment-food-and-rural-affairs-committee/>

Information disclosed in response to this FOI request is releasable to the public. In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOI and the government's Transparency Agenda, this letter and the information disclosed to you may be placed on GOV.UK, together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. No information identifying you will be placed on the GOV.UK website.

An Annex is attached which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you and contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact the Access to Information Team at the email address below. During the current Coronavirus outbreak, our offices will be closed.

Yours sincerely

ACCESS TO INFORMATION TEAM

Email: enquiries@apha.gov.uk

Annex

Copyright

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research, and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law.

Documents (except photographs or logos) can also be used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

Most documents produced by APHA will be protected by Crown Copyright. Most Crown copyright information can be re-used under the [Open Government Licence](#). For information about the OGL and about re-using Crown Copyright information please see [The National Archives website](#).

Copyright in other documents may rest with a third party. For information about obtaining permission from a third party see the [Intellectual Property Office's website](#).

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request, you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 11 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to the Access to Information Manager at the address at the top of this letter or email enquiries@apha.gov.uk and the team will arrange for an internal review of your case.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for a decision. Please note that generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted APHA's own complaints procedure. The ICO can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Coronavirus

However, following the changes to Government advice, from Tuesday 24 March 2020 the ICO offices will be closed. They will therefore not be able to collect correspondence sent via post. Where possible, they ask that you [contact them online](#) or call on 0303 123 1113