



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

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Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30333

MAR 10 2005

Christine Hahn, M.D.
President
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
National Headquarters
2872 Woodcock Boulevard, Suite 303
Atlanta, Georgia 30341-4015

Dear Dr. Hahn:

Thank you for your letter regarding the position statement entitled "Developing Importation and Exportation Restrictions on Exotic and Native Wildlife with Potential Adverse Impact on Public Health." On June 11, 2003, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a joint order banning the importation of African rodents and the domestic distribution of specific African rodents and prairie dogs. On November 4, 2003, this order was codified into an interim final rule. CDC has continued to work with FDA and the Department of Health and Human Services' Secretary's Council on Public Health Preparedness on the regulatory processes associated with the restriction on animal importation and movement that were initiated in response to the monkeypox outbreak. Members of the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) participate on the Council. In addition, CDC has responded to several additional zoonotic outbreaks since then. On January 13, 2004, CDC issued an order banning the importation of members of the family Viverridae (civets and related animals) because of evidence that they may have been involved with the genesis of the SARS outbreak. On February 4, 2004, CDC and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) banned the importation of birds and bird products from countries in Asia experiencing outbreaks of H5N1 avian influenza. That order was revised on March 10, 2004, and again on September 28, 2004. Details of these actions can be found on the CDC website on the Internet at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dq/animal.htm.

During this time, CDC has participated in meetings discussing exotic animal issues, including the Interagency Committee on Invasive Terrestrial Animals and Pathogens and three informal State Department-sponsored discussions. However, CDC has not hosted any interagency meetings and so has not had the opportunity to invite CSTE and the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians (NASPHV) participation. CDC staff has also met with USDA personnel at ports of entry in New York, Chicago, and Miami, exchanging information and improving collaborative working relationships. State health department personnel have been included in some of these discussions.

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We would welcome input from CSTE and NASPHV members about importations of exotic animals and how CDC might improve its current regulatory and nonregulatory mechanisms for handling these emerging disease threats.

Please be assured that CDC is committed to the development of comprehensive national control measures to reduce the risk of importing zoonotic pathogens via animals and animal products, while maintaining the ability to respond to novel threats as they occur. We look forward to working with you to achieve this goal, and appreciate your letter regarding this important health issue. I also will provide this response to Dr. Gail Hansen who co-signed your letter.

Sincerely,


Julie Louise Gerberding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director