

BACKGROUNDER: CFIA COMMERCIAL DOG IMPORT BAN

The Issue:

On June 28, 2022, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (“**CFIA**”) announced a new measure that will prohibit the entry of “commercial dogs” into Canada from more than 100 countries that have been deemed “high risk for dog rabies”.¹ As per the CFIA’s bulletin, **commercial dogs** include, but are not limited to dogs for intended for resale, adoption, fostering, breeding, show or exhibition, research, and other purposes.

All shipments of commercial dogs, regardless of age, from countries at high-risk for dog rabies will be prohibited as of **September 28, 2022**. All import permits issued on or after June 28, 2022 will expire on September 27, 2022, regardless of when the permit was issued. There are currently no exceptions to this prohibition.

The CFIA’s list of high-risk countries, in its entirety, is attached hereto as **Appendix “A”**. Notably, this list includes several war-torn countries such as Ukraine and Afghanistan and several countries where rescuers are saving animals from the meat trade, like Philippines and China.

The CFIA’s Rationale:

The CFIA is implementing this measure as a means “to protect Canadians and their pets, and to reduce the risk of introducing dog rabies into Canada.” This is despite the fact that Canada does not currently have any active cases of dog rabies. This policy was seemingly developed in response to a small number of isolated incidents in 2021 where dogs were imported into Canada with dog rabies. The CFIA’s move to implement a ban is substantially similar to the United States’ “temporary suspension” of dogs from countries classified as high risk for dog rabies (which was recently extended until January, 2023).²

Our Response:

The CFIA’s wholesale ban on dog imports is unreasonably far-reaching. Animal adoptions are done to save lives, not to profit. Adoptions should be exempted with appropriate rabies vaccination requirements and other measures to prevent this disease. Though dog rabies is often fatal, it is nearly 100% preventable with proper vaccination of animals.

Animal Justice is consulting with stakeholders and politicians to discuss how we can support efforts to exempt dogs for adoption from the ban. We are actively pushing for a more nuanced policy from the CFIA and soliciting feedback for practical solutions moving forward.

Dog rescues were not consulted on the CFIA’s plans and if the policy stands many will have to shut down their operations. This is not an acceptable outcome.

¹ See: <https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/rabies/notice-to-industry/eng/1656424333818/1656424334393>

² See: <https://www.cdc.gov/importation/bringing-an-animal-into-the-united-states/high-risk-dog-ban-frn.html>

**APPENDIX “A”
COUNTRIES AT “HIGH RISK” FOR DOG RABIES ³**

Africa

- Algeria, Angola
- Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi
- Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte D'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)
- Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti
- Egypt
- Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini (Swaziland), Ethiopia
- Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau
- Kenya
- Lesotho, Liberia, Libya
- Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique
- Namibia, Niger, Nigeria
- Republic of Congo, Rwanda
- Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan
- Tanzania (including Zanzibar), Togo, Tunisia
- Uganda
- Western Sahara
- Zambia, Zimbabwe

Americas and Caribbean

- Belize, Bolivia, Brazil
- Colombia, Cuba
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador, El Salvador
- Guatemala, Guyana
- Haiti, Honduras
- Peru
- Suriname
- Venezuela

Asia and the Middle East, Eastern Europe

- Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan

³ Available online: <https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/rabies/countries-at-high-risk-for-dog-rabies/eng/1656375417730/1656375418777>

- Bangladesh, Belarus, Brunei
- Cambodia, China (excluding Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan)
- Georgia
- India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan
- Laos, Lebanon
- Malaysia, Moldova, Mongolia, Myanmar (Burma)
- Nepal, North Korea
- Oman
- Pakistan, Philippines
- Qatar
- Russia
- Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Syria
- Tajikistan, Thailand, Türkiye, Turkmenistan
- Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan
- Vietnam
- Yemen

Note: This list is reviewed regularly and is subject to change.