

NOTICES

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

General Quarantine Order

[48 Pa.B. 6390]

[Saturday, October 6, 2018]

By this Order, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (Department) establishes a general quarantine in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to address rabies—a dangerous transmissible disease of animals that is present in this Commonwealth and that poses a threat to humans, domestic animals and wild animals. This Order is authorized under 3 Pa.C.S. §§ 2301—2390 (relating to Domestic Animal Law) (Act).

Background.

Every year several hundred cases of rabies in animals are confirmed in this Commonwealth. The animals include wild animals, livestock and domestic pets. Human exposure can occur through contact with any rabid animal.

The socioeconomic impact of rabies in animals and humans is significant. Infection by the rabies virus is almost always fatal once the virus reaches the central nervous system. The protocol surrounding a single suspected rabid domestic animal or a domestic animal suspected or confirmed to be exposed to rabies virus requires the expenditure of both significant monetary and human resources by the Department of Agriculture. Post-exposure prophylaxis for humans exposed to rabies virus requires a series of injections and is very expensive.

Rabies is designated a "dangerous transmissible disease" of animals under § 2321(a)(7) of the Act (relating to dangerous transmissible diseases). The Department has broad authority under the Act to regulate the keeping and handling of domestic animals to exclude, contain or eliminate dangerous transmissible diseases. This includes the authority at § 2329(d) (relating to quarantine) to establish and enforce this General Quarantine Order.

Order.

The Department hereby establishes a General Quarantine under the authority of § 2329(d) of the Act. The terms of this Order are as follows:

1. *Quarantine Area.* This General Quarantine is applicable to the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

2. *Definitions.* The following terms when used in this Order have the following meanings:

Cat—Members of *Felis catus* species regardless of their location or relationship to humans.

Compendium—The most recent version of *The Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control* published by The National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians.

Department—The Department of Agriculture of the Commonwealth.

Department of Health—The Department of Health of the Commonwealth.

Direct veterinary supervision—Occurs when a veterinarian is on the premises and has given either oral or written instructions to a certified veterinary technician or noncertified employee and is easily and quickly available to assist the certified veterinary technician or the noncertified employee.

Dog—A domestic subspecies (*Canis lupus familiaris*) of the wolf. Domestic animal hybrids, such as a cross between a dog and a wolf, are not included in this definition.

Domestic animal—An animal maintained in captivity.

Exposed to rabies—A human or domestic animal that has been bitten or scratched so that the skin has been broken by a rabid animal or a suspected rabid animal, or that has had contamination of an open scratch or wound, eye, or mucous membrane with saliva or other potentially infectious material such as neural tissue. An animal with a wound of unknown origin may be considered to have been exposed to rabies virus if it was, in the opinion of a veterinarian or an official representative of the Department or the Pennsylvania Game Commission, likely to have been exposed to rabies virus.

Official rabies test—Fluorescent antibody, animal inoculation or other tests which have been approved by the USDA or the USPHS and which are conducted in a State laboratory or other facility designated by the Secretary.

Person—An individual, partnership, association or corporation.

Quarantine—Departmental restrictions upon the use, movement or other disposition of domestic animals, domestic animal products, equipment, facilities, vehicles, buildings and other articles required to eradicate, contain or otherwise control a dangerous transmissible disease or to control or prevent contamination by hazardous substances.

Rabies—A viral disease affecting the central nervous system of a mammal that is transmitted through contact with saliva or other potentially infectious material such as neural tissue from a rabid animal, including, but not limited to, a bite or scratch that breaks the skin or contact of saliva or other infectious material with a fresh open scratch, wound, an eye, or mucous membranes.

Rabies vaccine—A product used to stimulate an immune response to rabies, licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture and listed in the current version of the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians Rabies Compendium.

Secretary—The Secretary of Agriculture of the Commonwealth.

Suspected rabid animal—A mammal exhibiting behavior that is suggestive of infection with rabies in the opinion of the veterinarian, public health official or official representative of the department, the Department of Health or the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Vaccinated against rabies—The status of an animal that:

- a. has undergone administration of unexpired rabies vaccine in accordance with the specifications of the vaccine manufacturer:
 - i. by a licensed veterinarian; or
 - ii. under direct veterinary supervision; and
- b. is a member of an animal species with respect to which the rabies vaccine has been approved for use.

Veterinarian—A licensed doctor of veterinary medicine.

3. *Human exposure.* Dogs, cats and other domestic animal bites, as well as other potential rabies virus exposure of humans, shall be reported to the Department of Health or local health authority.

4. *Reporting of suspected rabid animals.* A veterinarian, public health official, or official representative of the Department, the Department of Health, or the Pennsylvania Game Commission who suspects that a dog, cat or other domestic animal is exhibiting clinical signs consistent with rabies shall report the suspicion to the Department's Bureau of Animal Health and Diagnostic Services.

5. *Dogs, cats and domestic animals exposed to a confirmed or suspected rabid animal.*

a. *Unvaccinated or No Documentation of Vaccination.*

i. *General.* A dog, cat, or other domestic animal which, prior to exposure to a confirmed rabid or suspected rabid animal, was never vaccinated against rabies or where the owner or keeper can produce no proof of a prior vaccination shall be quarantined by the Department for a minimum of 120 days, unless euthanized.

ii. *Ferrets.* Paragraph (i) notwithstanding, a ferret which, prior to exposure to a confirmed rabid or suspected rabid animal, was never vaccinated against rabies or where the owner or

keeper can produce no proof of a prior vaccination shall be quarantined by the Department for a minimum of 180 days, unless euthanized.

b. *Vaccinated and Exposed.* A dog, cat, or other domestic animal which has been exposed to a confirmed or suspected rabid animal and has a valid and current vaccination against rabies at the time of exposure, shall be observed for clinical signs of rabies by the owner or keeper for 45 days. Any suspicion of rabies shall be reported to the Department.

c. *Vaccinated within 28 Days of Exposure.* Subsection (b) notwithstanding, a dog, cat or other domestic animal that has received its initial vaccination against rabies within 28 days prior to the exposure or suspected exposure shall be quarantined by the Department for a minimum of 120 days, unless euthanized.

d. *Expired Vaccination.* A dog, cat or other domestic animal that was previously vaccinated against rabies, but where that vaccination has expired prior to exposure or suspected exposure may, at the discretion of the Department, be managed in accordance with either subsection (a) or (b).

e. *Animals for Human Food or Animal Food.* A domestic animal that is to be used as food for human or animal consumption, and which has been exposed to a confirmed or suspected rabid animal, but which is not exhibiting signs of rabies while under observation or quarantine, may, with the approval of the Department, be moved while under observation or quarantine to a licensed rendering plant or slaughtered for animal consumption if processed by cooking. Consumption of the animals after proper processing does not constitute a rabies exposure.

6. *Suspected rabid animals under quarantine.*

a. *General Restrictions.* A dog, cat or other domestic animal suspected of having rabies may not be released from quarantine until suspicion of rabies is dispelled or until the animal has died or has been euthanized. No tissues or secretions from that animal may be sold, transported, or used for human or animal consumption unless that animal was negative on an official rabies test.

b. *Required Testing of Dead Quarantined Animals.* A dog, cat, or other domestic animal that dies or is euthanized while quarantined for suspicion of having rabies that has exposed a human, dog, cat or another domestic animal shall be subjected to an official rabies test, and disposed of in accordance with Sections 2351—2357 of the Act (relating to disposal of dead domestic animals and animal waste).

7. *Extension of quarantine period.* The Department may, at its discretion, extend a quarantine period as it deems appropriate to protect and assure human or animal health. The Department may use information from the Compendium or other scientific protocols or studies in making this determination.

8. *Violations and Penalties.* Any person violating the requirements of this Order shall be subject to the penalties established at §§ 2383 and 2386 of the Act (relating to enforcement and penalties; civil remedy).

9. *No Restriction on Further Action by the Department.* This Order shall not be construed as limiting the Department's authority to establish additional quarantine or testing requirements or take any actions otherwise permitted under applicable statute or regulation.

10. *Effective Date.* This Order is effective October 6, 2018, and shall remain in effect unless rescinded or modified by subsequent order.

RUSSELL C. REDDING,
Secretary