01-2017 – Important advice for importers of cats and dogs to Australia

5 January 2017

Who does this notice affect?

All prospective importers of cats and dogs (including assistance dogs) to Australia from Group 2 or 3 approved countries including those following the non-approved country via Group 2 or 3 approved country processes.

Purpose:

To advise prospective importers, animal transport company representatives and other persons responsible for the preparation of cats and dogs for export to Australia of the critical importance of ensuring that the animal’s microchip is functional and the unique number is correctly recorded on all import documentation.

Policy:

All cats and dogs (including assistance dogs) destined for Australia from or via Group 2 and 3 approved countries must be identified by a microchip that can be read by an Avid, Trovan, Destron or other ISO compatible reader.

Upon arrival in Australia, all cats and dogs are scanned and the microchip number is verified against the animal’s import documentation.

If after arrival an animal’s microchip is found to be not functional or the unique number not correctly recorded on import documentation, including laboratory reports, the animal will be held in extended quarantine and in extreme cases it will be directed for export or euthanased.

If the microchip number is incorrectly recorded on the rabies neutralising antibody titration test (RNATT) laboratory report (where required), the animal will almost certainly be directed for export or euthanased.

Instructions for prospective importers and animal transport company representatives:

1. At each veterinary visit for testing, treatments and examinations prior to export to Australia, a Government Approved Veterinarian or Official Government Veterinarian must scan the animal’s microchip, verify the number and ensure that the number is correctly recorded on all documentation including laboratory submission forms.

2. If at any veterinary visit an animal’s microchip cannot be read or if the unique number is incorrectly recorded on the animal’s import documentation, the animal cannot be imported to Australia and the importer should immediately seek written advice from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources.

In some cases, the entire import process will need to be restarted.

Background:

From time to time dogs and cats arrive in Australia without a functional microchip or the scanned microchip number is inconsistent with the import documentation.

Holding such animals in extended quarantine or directing them for export or euthanasia adds very significant expense and unnecessary emotional distress to the import process for owners and also reduces the number of vacancies available at the post entry quarantine facility which in turn impacts other importers.

Further information:

Animal transport company representatives who require further clarification may email the department: imports@agriculture.gov.au.