

RABIES - FRANCE: (LOIRE) ex ALGERIA, CANINE, HUMAN EXPOSURE

A ProMED-mail post

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A case of canine rabies has been reported in Chambon-Feugerolles, close to Saint-Etienne in the Loire Valley. Rabies was confirmed by the Pasteur Institute on 21 May 2015.

The dog was symptomatic from 7 May and died on 18 May 2015. The [owner] of the dog and his neighbour were both bitten by the dog while it was ill. A further 3 contacts of the dog have been identified. The dog is believed to have been imported illegally from a country where rabies is circulating.

Following further investigation and the declaration of rabies in the area, there will be a restriction of movement of unvaccinated domestic animals (dogs, cats, ferrets) in the town of Chambon-Feugerolles. A restriction zone has been established around the place where the dog with rabies was located.

Advice for travellers

France is considered by WHO as a No-Risk country for rabies; that status and vaccination recommendations remain unchanged. Dogs have been illegally imported from rabies-endemic areas to France in the past. Travellers should always report any bite (including bats) for proper medical assessment.

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[According to information in local French press, kindly collected by ProMED-mail's rapporteur SB, the Prefecture of the Loire announced on Fri 22 May 2015 that all people who had been in contact with the animal who died of

rabies between 7 and 16 May 2015 had been sought. A public information helpline (04 77 48 47 58) has been made available for calls. "These people should not expect to have any symptoms but are to be referred to the University Hospital anti-rabies Centre to receive an anti-rabies vaccine, because if it is not quickly treated the infection inevitably leads to fatal consequences," said Nathalie Gershon, director of the Departmental Directorate of Protection of Populations (HADD) of the Loire. In total, 19 people were identified as having had contact with the dog, whose owner resides in the town of Chambon-Feugerolles. 7 were treated and 6 others were being processed 6 people around age 30 are still being sought. Placards in French and Arabic were plastered in halls and public spaces around Louis Huguet square, where the owner of the animal lives.

The 6 month old bull terrier died during the night of May 17 to 18, after biting a relative of his master and the dog of a neighbor. It was brought from Algiers, where the owners visited from 21 Apr to 7 May 2015.

A stray cat capture operation was under way at Chambon-Feugerolles on Fri 22 May 2015, said the prefecture, prohibiting cats from leaving the homes of their owners in this part of the town of Chambon-Feugerolles. A restriction zone was set up around Louis Huguet square. A decree in place until 27 Oct 2015 restricts the movements of other domestic carnivores that have no valid vaccination and identification certificates.

France is has been considered free of rabies since 2001. The last case previously identified by authorities dates back to 2013, in the Val-d'Oise. It concerned a kitten acquired on a trip to the Maghreb.

Rabies is endemic in Algeria. According to the most recent available annual OIE report (2013), during that year there were 331 cases in dogs and 35 in cats. Vaccination seems to have been restricted to owned, domestic animals: 52 248 dogs, 13 109 cats. During 2013, 22 cases/deaths in humans were reported. - Mod.AS