

## **Advice 27-2013 of the Scientific Committee of the FASFC on a royal decree and on a ministerial decree aiming at the control of rabies**

The Scientific Committee is asked to evaluate a project of royal decree and a project of ministerial decree related to the control of rabies.

The Scientific Committee is of the opinion that a legislation on rabies in the wild fauna should be made on regional level (legal competency of the Regions in that matter) because of the importance (1) of the epidemiological role of the wild fauna in regard to rabies in domestic animals and man (2) of an official epidemiological surveillance of this disease in the wild fauna, and (3) of a control by means of vaccination of the populations of (the) wild carnivorous reservoir species, when rabies is confirmed in those populations.

The Committee is of the opinion that, despite the practical difficulties it can generate, cats and ferrets have to be more considered in several articles on the measures to be taken (royal decree) and on vaccination (ministerial decree), because of their non negligible role in the excretion of the virus.

The Committee insists on the importance to develop internal procedures to define the practical modalities of some mentioned activities such as the under surveillance setting, the isolation, the determination of the surveillance zone, the start of a surveillance plan and the epidemiological survey.

The Committee recommends formulating the royal decree in such a way that some decisions, namely those related to euthanasia and to exemption of euthanasia in case of illegal importation of animals, can be taken by the veterinary inspector after an epidemiological survey, and in such a way that his responsibility is covered.

The Committee proposes not to determine the radius of the surveillance zone in the royal decree thus to avoid to be too restrictive. The establishment of the radius should be made in accordance to the results of the epidemiological survey realized following a case of rabies. The measures to be taken in the surveillance zone have to be completed.

The Scientific Committee recognizes the necessity to rapidly adapt the Belgian legislation concerning rabies. It insists that the remarks and recommendations formulated in the advice are taken into account and that internal procedures are written rapidly.

The full text is available on this website in dutch and in french, respectively under the section "Wetenschappelijk Comité/Adviezen" and "Comité scientifique/Avis".