

**PRESS RELEASE FROM THE FEDERAL AGENCY FOR THE SAFETY OF THE  
FOOD CHAIN**

**RABIES**

**Still a real danger to public health**

**14 July 2009**

**Rabies is a fatal disease in humans !**

**Do not bring pet animals illegally to Belgium on your return from a foreign country !**

**Given the real danger that rabies is to public and animal health, the Federal Agency wants to emphasize once more that the rules on the import of animals from countries affected by rabies must be strictly observed.**

Contact your veterinarian in time and ask for information before leaving the country with your animal. Do not bring home any animals from countries at risk – no matter how good your intentions may be ! Observe the rules very strictly. If you don't you will put the life of other pet animals at risk, as well as your own life and that of your children and your fellow citizens !

Rabies is always **fatal** in man and in mammals.

Sometimes, contamination through saliva may have taken place several months before the first symptoms appear.

This period may last for six months and the symptoms are not always easy to recognise at first.

Moreover, in animals the diagnosis can only be confirmed after a postmortem and an examination of the brain. In summer, some tourists bring home with them a dog or a cat, thus importing the animal illegally in the country. Such an animal may transmit rabies. That is why the rules on the import of animals from countries affected by rabies must be strictly observed.

One of the measures taken consists of carrying out euthanasia on illegally imported animals.

In Belgium, vaccination against rabies is still **MANDATORY** in the southern area of the country (south of Sambre and Meuse) and on all camping sites in Belgium. The Agency reminds tourists that all cats, dogs and ferrets transported to or from Belgium must have been vaccinated according to the rules.

More detailed information is available on the website [www.afsca.be](http://www.afsca.be) : lien professionnels => production animale => santé animale => maladies animales => rage (in Dutch and in French)

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