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March 28, 2018

Dear Colleagues:

The purpose of this letter is to provide information on the recent regulatory amendments to O. Reg. 567 (Rabies Immunization) under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* (HPPA). The amendments, coming into force in summer 2018, will ensure a consistent provincial approach to rabies immunization in animals.

These amendments replace the previous approach, which saw rabies immunization of animals, particularly livestock, required in some health units, but not others. This will ensure that all animals in Ontario are subject to the same requirements, regardless of location.

As of July 1, 2018:

- all dogs and cats and ferrets over 3 months of age in Ontario must be immunized against rabies;
- all horses, cattle and sheep intended to come into direct contact with members of the general public must be immunized against rabies; and
- horses, cattle and sheep which are only accessible to persons responsible for their care and control will remain exempt from the rabies immunization requirement.

Horses, cattle and sheep are found in a wide variety of contexts across the province, the majority of which do not fall within the scope of the rabies immunization requirement. Animals accessible only to persons responsible for their care and control (e.g. owners, trainers, veterinarians, veterinary staff, handlers, barn staff, shippers, grooms, hotwalkers, abattoir workers, sales barn staff, transporters etc.) are not subject to the rabies immunization requirement. However, horses, cattle and sheep in settings such as petting zoos, animal exhibits where the general public or other individuals who are not directly responsible for their care and control are encouraged and/or expected to have direct contact with these animals, do need to be immunized against rabies.

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Additional information about how the rabies immunization requirements apply to livestock in the province may be found in the attached list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

The text of the newly amended O. Reg. 567 is available on the e-Laws website at <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r17497?search=567>

The ministry is finalizing an implementation plan for these regulatory changes to ensure consistency in awareness across the agricultural sector, as well training on consistent enforcement approaches for Boards of Health. Education and awareness activities will include: training webinars, information sessions, and written resources to ensure and support a consistent application of rabies immunization requirements for animals across the province.

For further information about rabies immunization requirements for animals under the HPPA, please contact Melissa Helferty, Manager, Infectious Diseases Policy and Programs at the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care at (416) 326-3107 or melissa.helferty@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Nina Arron
Director

Attachment