

4.18 Senator S.C. Ferguson of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the health implications for humans who import dogs and cats or who are injured by wild animals whilst travelling in Eastern Europe:

Given that immigration from Eastern Europe is increasing, what measures are being put in place to impose requirements for the testing of imported dogs and to ensure clinicians are aware of the health implications for humans who import dogs and cats from, or who are injured by wild animals while travelling in, Eastern Europe where rabies and zoonotic diseases are endemic?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Assistant Minister, you have one minute and a half to answer the question.

The Connétable of St. Peter (Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services - rapporteur):

I will attempt to do it in that time, Sir. In answering the question, I have to say the arrangements for important and testing of animals are not part of the Minister for Health and Social Services' very wide remit and the question would better have been referred on this matter to the Minister for Planning and Environment and the States vet. However, I can also go on to say that travellers are advised to seek medical advice about their destinations to ensure that they are safe and to have the necessary vaccinations before they leave. Appropriate advice is given to travellers if there are health risks, such as endemic zoonotic diseases like rabies. The Medical Officer of Health receives routine alerts from the U.K. on international diseases and emerging threats. These are forwarded to G.P. practices and relevant health professionals as necessary. Finally, I can reassure the good Senator that there was a recent animal health emergency exercise about rabies which tested local systems and procedures and the Medical Officer of Health took part in the exercise. So we are fully advised within Health and Social Services of the risk.

The Deputy Bailiff:

That brings the first part of question time to an end. We are not able to take any further questions.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

May I request Ministers involved to circulate to States Members their prepared answers to those questions?

The Deputy Bailiff:

No doubt Ministers will be aware of that for all the outstanding questions.