

PRESS RELEASE



TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

Office of the High Commissioner

Saipan, Mariana Islands

96950

RELEASE: 124-67

Marianas

RABIES THREAT TO THE TRUST TERRITORY

Saipan, Mariana Islands, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, June 22 . . . Several months ago the first case of rabies appeared on Guam. This is the first time that any case of rabies had been known from anywhere in Micronesia. Since the first case occurred on Guam at least six dogs and cats have died from rabies there.

Truk

All cases have been verified by laboratory examination of brain tissue from the affected animals. The final rabies diagnoses have been made in laboratories in Hawaii and in the mainland United States.

Ponape

The fact that rabid animals have been picked up from widely scattered parts of Guam indicates that rabies may be in epidemic form on Guam. At least fourteen persons on Guam are now taking rabies shots as a result of contact with rabid animals.

Marshalls

In March of this year, following a conference with the Division of Agriculture and the High Commissioner, the Department of Public Health issued a ninety day total ban on the entry of Guam dogs and cats into the Trust Territory. The ban will probably be extended until rabies has been eradicated from Guam. Guam is now making serious efforts to eradicate rabies but the outcome of this campaign may not be known for many months.

Yap

Palau

MORE

By previous arrangements, agricultural quarantine inspectors of the district Department of Agriculture are charged with enforcing the Trust Territory rabies quarantine at ship and plane ports of entry into the Trust Territory.

Agricultural quarantine inspectors have been issued the following instructions regarding the rabies quarantine:

Confiscate all dogs and cats originating on Guam on entry into the Trust Territory.

Confiscate all dogs and cats, no matter what their origin, if they have passed through Guam enroute to the Trust Territory unless accompanied by an authorized certificate showing that they have been held in quarantine while on Guam.

Since there have been no provisions or arrangements made for the issuance of authorized certificates showing that an animal has been held in quarantine on Guam, the above conditions mean, in effect, that no dog or cat presently living on Guam or that touches on Guam before coming to the Trust Territory, will be allowed in the Trust Territory. This prohibition applies to dogs carried on ships as well as planes, and dogs or cats found on ships entering Trust Territory ports will be confiscated, regardless of whether or not there are holding facilities on the ships for holding the dogs or cats.

Dogs and cats confiscated by agricultural quarantine inspectors will be turned over to the Department of Public Health in the district of entry for disposition, which means either the destruction of the animals

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or their return to Guam at the owner's expense. Animals not destroyed will be held in quarantine at a district hospital until shipped out of the Trust Territory.

Rabies is a terrible incurable disease which is easily transmitted to human beings by the bite or scratch of a rabid animal. It is imperative that drastic measures be taken to prevent the entry and spread of this disease in the Trust Territory.

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OWEN/PIO/2148