

EXPLANATORY NOTE

For the purpose of preventing the introduction of rabies into Great Britain, this order controls the landing in this country of any animal (other than man) belonging to the ten orders of mammals specified in Parts I and II of Schedule 1. It revokes and replaces the Rabies (Importation of Mammals) Order 1971 and the Importation of Dogs and Cats Order of 1928, together with the four orders of 1969 and 1970 which amended the latter, and it also includes new provisions derived from the powers of the Diseases of Animals Act 1950 as extended by the Rabies Act 1974.

In respect of the animals to which it applies, the order prohibits their landing in Great Britain except under the authority of, and in compliance with the conditions imposed by, a licence previously granted by the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in England and Wales and the Secretary of State in Scotland. However, licences are not required in respect of animals coming from Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, provided such animals have not been outside the British Isles within the preceding six months. Nor is a licence necessary in respect of an animal which is landed at a British port or airport for the purpose of re-exportation from the same port or airport within a period of 48 hours, although in this case, the animal is made the subject of stringent controls with regard to its movement, detention and isolation, etc.

Except where exceptional circumstances exist, animals may only be licensed to be landed at prescribed ports and airports, and they must be moved as soon as practicable after landing to authorised quarantine premises at which they are to be kept for the prescribed period of quarantine. The order provides for the majority of animals to which it applies to be detained in quarantine for a period of six calendar months from the date of landing, but in the case of vampire bats, their entry into the country is only permitted on the basis of their being quarantined for life. Moreover, vampire bats which are born in this country are also made subject to quarantine for life.

The order contains detailed provisions relating to the movement of animals during quarantine, the licensing of carrying agents and of quarantine premises, and the control of animals which are passing through Great Britain or which are on board a vessel in a British port. The Ministers are also given power to deal with animals (including animals belonging to the additional orders of mammals specified in Part III of Schedule 1) which have been in contact with animals from abroad, and other provisions relate to the keeping of records, the conditions which may be inserted in licences, and other ancillary matters.

With regard to contraventions of the order, power is given to an inspector of the Ministry or of the local authority to destroy an animal which is landed illegally, or in respect of which there has been a breach of a licence granted under the order. As an alternative he may require such an animal to be re-exported or detained and isolated in quarantine. In addition, a person who knowingly and with intent to evade the provisions of the order or of a licence lands or attempts to land, or causes or permits the landing or attempted landing, of an animal in contravention of the order or a licence, or contravenes any provision thereof with regard to quarantine, is made liable at the option of the prosecuting authority to prosecution on indictment, and accordingly to imprisonment for a maximum term of twelve months or to an unlimited fine, or to both.