

There is a big market in the United States for dogs. Some parts of the country have a surplus. Other countries have a surplus.

Many dogs are imported into the United States illegally.

They come from Eastern Europe, India, Africa, South America and Asia and most of them come without shots or any paperwork.

Other dogs come from parts of this country where veterinary services are scarce.

No one knows how many dogs are illegally imported for resale each year in Vermont.

No one knows where they come from, or what if any, shots they've had or what diseases they carry.

States surrounding Vermont have strict importation and enforcement policies for importation of dogs. Vermont has some laws but no enforcement .

Dogs are shipped by the truckload to Vermont to prearranged sites where people come from all over New England to pick up their new supply of dogs with little or no attention to paperwork.

Unfortunately dogs can carry diseases which are fatal to them overtime and can be transmitted to humans as well as to other animals.

The diseases that present the biggest zoonotic risk at this time are rabies, and brucellosis .

Rabies has been controlled in this country in the canine population because of education, the availability of rabies shots. Recent cases in this country have been traced to imported unvaccinated dogs from countries where it is common. In India for example about 20,000 people a year died from rabies, about a third of all of the deaths from rabies in the world. {data WHO } Dogs and people usually get rabies by being bitten by an infected animal.

There is a type of brucellosis specific to dogs which spreads through breeding, whelping and contact with body fluids. It is incurable. Dogs can also catch the types of brucellosis more commonly found in cattle or swine [Including feral swine] by eating tissue, blood , meat or other fluids or waste from cattle or swine who are infected with their more specific strains .

This presents a risk to the population in general as well as the agricultural sector in Vermont.

Vermont lacks a comprehensive program that upholds the animal well fare laws of the State through communication, education, and enforcement.