

Uganda

Rabies Act

Chapter 53

Legislation as at 31 December 2023

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Rabies Act (Chapter 53)
Contents

1. Interpretation 1

2. Power to seize, detain or destroy stray dogs 1

3. Dogs seized to be impounded and notice given 1

4. Order on owner 2

5. Duties of owners and persons in charge of diseased or suspected dogs 2

6. Powers in respect of diseased or suspected dogs 2

7. Power of Commissioner to issue orders in case of outbreak or expected outbreak of disease 2

8. Power of Commissioner to authorise laying of poison 2

9. Prohibition of entry of animals from infected countries 3

10. Indemnity and compensation 3

11. Rules 3

12. Power to amend Schedule 3

Schedule (Sections 1, 12) 3

Uganda

Rabies Act Chapter 53

Commenced on 29 June 1935

[This is the version of this document at 31 December 2023.]

[Note: This legislation was revised and consolidated as at 31 December 2000 and 31 December 2023 by the Law Reform Commission of Uganda. All subsequent amendments have been researched and applied by Laws.Africa for ULII.]

[Amended by [Law Revision \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) Act, 2023 \(Act 17 of 2023\)](#) on 28 July 2023]

An Act to provide for the suppression of rabies.

[Cap. 219 (Revised Edition, 1964); Cap. 44 (Revised Edition, 2000); Act 17/2023]

1. Interpretation

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires—

“**currency point**” has the value assigned to it in the Schedule to this Act;

“**disease**” means rabies;

“**diseased**” means infected with rabies;

“**dog**” includes any animal of the canine tribe;

“**proclaimed district**” means any area to which this Act may, by statutory order, be applied by the Minister;

“**stray dog**” means any dog found wandering at large in any public place and not being under the control or charge of any person;

“**suspected**” means suspected of rabies.

2. Power to seize, detain or destroy stray dogs

- (1) An administrative officer, veterinary officer, police officer or any person authorised by the Commissioner of Livestock and Entomology may seize and detain any stray dog in a proclaimed district.
- (2) In any proclaimed district, an administrative officer, veterinary officer, police officer or any person expressly authorised to do so by the Commissioner of Livestock and Entomology, may shoot or otherwise destroy any stray dog found in any public place or any stray dog which he or she has reason to suppose to be suspected.

3. Dogs seized to be impounded and notice given

- (1) Every dog seized under section 2 shall be detained in a place appointed for that purpose by the Commissioner of Livestock and Entomology until the owner has claimed it and paid all expenses incurred by reason of the detention.
- (2) Notice of the seizure of a dog shall without delay be given to the owner, if known.
- (3) When a dog has remained under detention for three clear days without the owner claiming it and paying all expenses incurred by reason of its detention, a veterinary officer may cause it to be sold or destroyed.

4. Order on owner

Any magistrate, if satisfied on a complaint made by any person that a dog in a proclaimed district is not kept under proper control, may make an order on the owner or the person in charge of the dog directing that the dog be kept under proper control, and every person failing to comply with the order commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine of two and a half currency points for every day during which the default continues.

5. Duties of owners and persons in charge of diseased or suspected dogs

- (1) Every owner or person in charge of a diseased dog shall immediately cause it to be destroyed, and shall without delay give notice thereof to a veterinary officer.
- (2) Every owner or person in charge of a suspected dog shall immediately cause the dog to be destroyed or to be securely tied or otherwise confined, and shall without delay give notice of the action taken to a veterinary officer.
- (3) Any person who fails to comply with the requirements of subsection (1) or (2) commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding twelve currency points or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or both.

6. Powers in respect of diseased or suspected dogs

An administrative officer, veterinary officer or police officer receiving credible information of, or having reasonable grounds for suspecting, the existence of rabies, shall forthwith cause the matter to be investigated, and for that purpose may cause any dog to be examined and any diseased or suspected dog to be destroyed or otherwise dealt with as he or she may think necessary.

7. Power of Commissioner to issue orders in case of outbreak or expected outbreak of disease

- (1) The Commissioner of Livestock and Entomology may, in case of an outbreak or expected outbreak of rabies in any area in Uganda, issue orders for all or any of the following purposes—
 - (a) providing for the keeping of dogs under control by the owner, or the person in charge of the dogs, in such manner as may be prescribed by the order;
 - (b) providing for the seizure, detention and disposal, including destruction, of dogs not being kept under control in the manner prescribed by the orders;
 - (c) providing for any dogs to be treated in such manner as may be prescribed by the order;
 - (d) providing that no person shall move or cause to be moved any dog out of the area unless he or she has first obtained the written permission of a veterinary officer;
 - (e) providing for the recovery by any veterinary officer of the expenses incurred in respect of the detention of any dog seized and detained and disposed of under such orders from the owner of the dog.
- (2) Such orders shall be notified in such manner as the Commissioner of Livestock and Entomology may think fit, and unless disallowed by the Minister, and until so disallowed, shall have the full force of law, and every person failing to comply with any such order commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding six currency points or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months, or both.

8. Power of Commissioner to authorise laying of poison

- (1) The Commissioner of Livestock and Entomology may, in case of an outbreak or expected outbreak of rabies in any area, after making an order under section [7\(1\)\(a\)](#), lay or authorise any other person

to lay poison in any place or places in the area for the purpose of destroying stray dogs or other animals likely to be suffering from rabies.

- (2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), no poison shall be laid in any place unless the Commissioner of Livestock and Entomology has satisfied the Minister that—
- (a) sufficient notice has been given to persons living in or near any place where poison is to be laid that the poison will be laid;
 - (b) reasonable steps have and will be taken to ensure that no person and no animal under proper control is likely to consume or be otherwise affected by the poison.

9. Prohibition of entry of animals from infected countries

- (1) Subject to the approval of the Minister, the Commissioner of Livestock and Entomology may by statutory order prohibit the entry into Uganda of any animals from any country where rabies is known to exist.
- (2) Any person who brings or who authorises the bringing into Uganda of any animal in respect of which an order made under this section is in force, commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding six currency points or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months, or both.

10. Indemnity and compensation

No action shall lie against the Government or any officer of the Government or any person authorised by any such officer for any act done in accordance with this Act, and no compensation shall be payable to any person for any act done in accordance with this Act; but the Minister may direct compensation to be paid in special cases.

11. Rules

The Minister may make rules for prescribing fees for the inoculation, testing, disinfecting and maintenance of dogs and for better carrying into effect the purposes of this Act.

12. Power to amend Schedule

The Minister responsible for finance may, by statutory instrument, with the approval of Cabinet, amend the Schedule to this Act.

Schedule (Sections 1, 12)

Currency point

A currency point is equivalent to twenty thousand shillings.