

**Illegal import of meat including bushmeat into Switzerland by private air travel**

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Illegal imports of meat can present substantial risks for public health and for the introduction of exotic animal diseases. Studies conducted in different European countries have estimated the volume of meat imports including bushmeat from non-EU countries into Europe by private air travel at a few tonnes weekly. The objective of this study was to estimate the amount of meat illegally imported into Switzerland by private air travel. Because meat from wild animals (bushmeat) has a great potential for the introduction of exotic diseases, the amount of illegally imported bushmeat was estimated separately. Data were obtained by participating in several intervention exercises at the two international airports of Switzerland where meat imports are regularly seized, and by analyzing data on seizures from the last four years. A stochastic model with the software @Risk was then applied to estimate the total amount of illegally imported meat. A wide array of animal species including domesticated and wild species were imported into Switzerland. The total weight of annual meat seizures was estimated at 5,500 kg from which 1.3% was bushmeat. The main contributors to illegal meat imports from domestic species were Eastern European countries and for bushmeat Western African countries and particularly Cameroon. The total annual inflow of illegal imports was estimated by the model to be 1,013 tonnes (95% CI 166-5,494) for meat and 8.6 tonnes (95% CI 0.5-88.5) for bushmeat, respectively. This study only addressed the entry for illegal meat import via private air-travel and did not look into the other channels like air or sea freight or road. To get a broader picture of the magnitude of illegal meat imports into Switzerland and to obtain an accurate risk estimate of these products for public health, a larger study is recommended which would cover all possible modes of entry.