

For Immediate Release

July 24, 2015

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Fifth Rabies Case Confirmed in Southwest Nebraska

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has confirmed the fifth positive rabies case in southwest Nebraska. “We are working closely with the Nebraska Department of Health and Humans Services and Center for Disease Control in tracking this rabies outbreak,” states Melissa Propp, RN, Surveillance Coordinator at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department. Previous cases were located in Dundy and Hitchcock County.

“We recommend that residents contact their local veterinarian to make sure your pet’s vaccinations are current,” explains Propp. “This is the best protection for keeping your pets safe.” Animals with rabies may act differently from healthy animals. Wild animals may move slowly or may act as if they are tame. A pet that is usually friendly may snap at you or may try to bite. Some signs of rabies in animals are:

- changes in an animal’s behavior
- general sickness
- problems swallowing
- increased drooling
- aggression

If you discover a dead wild animal that may have infected your pets:

- remove the animal from the area by using a shovel, wearing gloves and placing carcass in a plastic bag
- be sure to wash your hands in soap and water after taking off your gloves
- all measures must be taken to avoid direct contact between the carcass and the person
- tools, cages, gloves and other surfaces potentially contaminated with saliva, nervous tissue or blood can be disinfected with a 10 percent solution of household bleach in water
- contact your local veterinarian in regards to rabies testing
- all livestock rabies exposures must be reported to the State Veterinarian

Rabies is an infectious viral disease that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals. People get rabies from the bite of an animal with rabies. Any wild mammal, like a raccoon, skunk, fox, coyote, or bat, can have rabies and transmit it to people. According to the Center for Disease Control, rabies is a medical urgency. Any wounds should be immediately washed and receive medical attention from a health care professional.

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins and Red Willow counties. For more information call Melissa Propp, RN at 308-345-4223. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th Street, McCook – one block north of Arby’s. You can also follow us on Facebook.com/swnphd and Twitter@swpublichealth.