

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Melissa Propp, RN at 308-345-4223

Second Rabies Case Confirmed in Southwest Nebraska

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has confirmed a second positive rabies case in southwest Nebraska. “This second confirmed case also involves a skunk with rabies in Hitchcock County,” states Melissa Propp, RN, Surveillance Coordinator at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department.

“This is the reason we recommend vaccinating our cats and dogs,” explains Wayne Watkins, DVM at Red Willow Animal Clinic in McCook. “All pet owners should double check to make sure their cats and dogs are current on their rabies vaccinations to keep them safe.”

Bryan Buss, DVM, MPH, DACVPM, CDC Career Epidemiology Field Officer at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, also recommends rabies vaccination for your horses, show cattle and show sheep that have frequent contact with humans.

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.

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 it in a plastic bag. Be sure to wash your hands in soap and water after taking off your gloves. Contact your local veterinarian in regards to rabies testing and all livestock rabies exposures must be reported to the State Veterinarian.

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

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](https://www.facebook.com/swnphd) and [Twitter@swpublichealth](https://twitter.com/swpublichealth).

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