



## October---November



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### Doc's Desk

Thus far this year, rabies has almost been a non-issue. We have only recorded 10 cases in five counties (Donley County – 1 skunk; Lamb County – 1 horse, 1 skunk; Parmer County – 3 skunks; Potter County – 1 cat, 1 skunk; Randall County – 2 skunks). I attribute the reduction from last year's 65 cases to a high incidence of rabies cases in 2011 that killed a large number of skunks and a severe drought that reduced food and water resources for the remaining skunks.

Our statewide rabies total is also down by approximately 36%. Again, the most likely reason is the impact of the state-wide drought on the skunk reservoir and the high incidence of rabies in skunks last year. The number of rabid bats confirmed this year is approximately 295, up by 15 cases from a year ago.

So far, no cases of the gray fox rabies variant have been reported since June of 2009. Due to the success of the coyote and fox Oral Rabies Vaccination Programs, (ORVP) a localized skunk ORVP is being conducted in Fort Bend County. If it is effective, we will have another tool to use to control sudden localized increases in rabid skunks.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, we encourage you to enlighten pet owners of the law (and the dictates of common sense) for rabies vaccinations and livestock owners of the advisability to vaccinate certain animals. Due to the confusion that distemper in dogs can cause

with respect to rabies diagnosis, I still strongly encourage dog owners to be sure their animals receive a distemper vaccination in addition to the rabies vaccination at a minimum.

With the livestock show season underway, please consider vaccinating the project animals against rabies due to the frequent human contact they have. As always, horses with a lot of human contact should be vaccinated. In addition, given the cost of disposing of a dead horse, any horse owner without a lot of land for it to be disposed upon, should consider rabies vaccination. It may be a lower cost method of preventing a large disposal fee.

The drought has also had an apparent impact on the prairie dog population in the Region. Some die-offs have been reported and plague surveillance was conducted, but no plague was found.

This year became the most active year for West Nile virus across the state since 2003. It was virtually non-existent over the past couple of years. The reasons for its resurgence are not well understood. The Dallas-Fort Worth area has been the most active. Aerial spraying was utilized to quickly reduce the rate of infection in the human population. As in the past DSHS encouraged the public to practice the **4-Ds**. The last of the **Ds** referring to **DEET** was modified this year. Avoid being out at **Dusk** and **Dawn** if possible. If one must be out, **Dress** appropriately in long sleeves and long

pants. **Drain** standing water. **Defend** yourself: use an effective repellent; be sure to keep effective screens on windows or use air conditioning and keep windows closed to prevent entry of mosquitos; keep weeds and grass mowed to discourage the presence of mosquitos, etc. The cooler weather the Region has experienced reduced mosquito activity, although the potential for mosquitos increased with the late summer/early fall rains. As the mosquito season winds down, vigilance is still required until freezing occurs and the temperatures are consistently below 70° F.

Many of the human cases of West Nile infection reported this year have been the West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease (WNND) form. While only 1 person of 150 infected with WNV develops this severe form, virtually all of those cases are reported since they generally end up in a hospital due to the severity. Conversely, many of the West Nile Fever (WNF) cases will not be detected due to the lack of severity. For current case information, go to [www.txWestNile.org](http://www.txWestNile.org).

It is very interesting that while the number of human WN infections in 2012 is at the highest level in Texas since WNV appeared, the number of horses reported with WNV infections in 2012 is quite low. At present the human total is in excess of 1754 but there have only been 109 horses confirmed statewide. Part of this may be due to owners continuing to vaccinate their animals, while some owners are

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declining to test animals that are exhibiting symptoms of WNV infection. There have only been eight equine cases confirmed in HSR 1 this year in three counties (cases/fatal): Dallam (1/1); Donley (1/1); Gray (1/0), Lubbock (1/0); Randall (4/2). All but two were unvaccinated. The case fatality rate has been 50%, but none of the vaccinated animals succumbed. For one good reason to vaccinate horses against WNV, please see my comments above about rabies vaccination. Disposing of a dead horse is not cheap.

Please practice the 4Ds for yourself and family, and if you have horses, be sure to keep them current on their WNV vaccination.

With the various hunting seasons underway or soon to begin, hunters are advised to use insect repellent when enjoying the great outdoors. When cleaning the results of a successful hunt, some type of impervious glove should be worn to prevent disease transmission through broken skin. I also recommend the use of eye protection to keep fluids out of the conjunctiva. If a hunter develops an illness within a few weeks after a hunt, a visit to a physician will be in order. The patient needs to inform the doctor of the recent excursion into the field so various vector-borne or other zoonotic diseases can be considered. If a feral hog is killed and processed, the personal protection equipment is critically important due to the possible presence of brucellosis in those animals.

A recent item of concern at the moment is a new swine influenza virus that has infected over 300 people in 10 states since its detection last summer. So far no cases have been detected in Texas. Young children have been the primary group that has been affected and the vast majority had been to a livestock exhibition involving swine.

The virus, a member of the Influenza A group, is designated as H3N2v, to differentiate it from other human influenza viruses with the same hemagglutinin (HA) and neuraminidase (NA) designation. So far only very limited human-to-human spread has been detected, but no second generation transmission has been detected.

With the stock show season approaching, people involved in buying show swine for the FFA and 4-H programs need to be aware of this influenza. Hand washing before eating, dipping or smoking after handling or being around swine is certainly recommended to prevent this as well as other zoonoses that swine may carry. The parents of younger club members should be advised to take their children to a physician if any respiratory signs develop after the children have been in contact with swine and to pass that information on the doctor. As with other swine-associated influenza viruses, infection with the virus is not associated with eating cooked pork products.

We hope the remainder of 2012 will be a bright and safe time for our readers. Please contact us if you need guidance with rabies issues, you encounter plague or just find something else interesting.

### **DSHS FREE PUBLICATIONS**

Those who have access to the internet can order DSHS publications online. The Zoonosis Control Branch has pamphlets on a variety of topics, such as mosquito control, rabies, animal bites, plague, encephalitis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and tick borne diseases. You can search for publications by title, subject, keyword, language, format or publications number, and pamphlets will be shipped to you at no cost. To order pamphlets online, visit the website:

<http://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/mamd/litcat/default.asp>



## Hunters and Outdoor Enthusiasts – Take Heed!

Adapted from the November, 2007 issue of our newsletter

Advice given in previous years for hunters, hikers, campers, and other outdoor enthusiasts is always valid, and is something to keep in mind as you get outside to enjoy the cooler weather.

“Outdoor activities bring a greater risk of exposure to diseases transmitted by fleas, ticks, and mosquitoes, and other animals,” said Guy Moore, a wildlife biologist with the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS).

### Keep in mind:

- Animals can transmit such diseases as hantavirus, anthrax, brucellosis, tularemia, plague, and rabies
- Deer can carry anthrax, a bacterium that can cause a severe, life-threatening disease in both humans and animals.
- Wild hogs can carry brucellosis and tularemia, bacterial diseases with symptoms similar to the flu.
- Fleas and some animals can transmit plague
- A bite from an infected tick can cause illnesses such as Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and tularemia.
- West Nile virus, St. Louis encephalitis, equine encephalitis, and dengue fever can be transmitted by mosquitoes.

Protect yourself in the great outdoors by using repellent with DEET, picaridin, or eucalyptus oil; washing your hands thoroughly with soap and water, or using an alcohol-based sanitizer, especially after handling game; and wearing eye protection, a HEPA mask, and latex-type gloves when dressing game or cleaning an area where mice have been. If a hunter develops an illness within a few weeks after a hunt, a visit to a physician will be in order. Happy Hunting!



While you're out watching for game, don't forget to also watch out for creepy crawlies that could make you very sick

**Lubbock Animal Services  
will be hosting the next**

**Texas Department of State Health Services HSR 1  
Animal Control Officer Basic Training Course**

on

**March 20-21, 2013**

**at the Vector Control Building**

**(formerly the Training and Education Building next to the old Animal Services on Ash Ave.)**

**102 Municipal Drive**

**Lubbock, Texas**

This two-day class will consist of 12 hours of lecture, video and guest speaker presentations that will assist attendees in their comprehension of the study material for the state exam on the second day. The cost to register is \$75.

Questions for the exam will come from the DSHS [Animal Control Officer Training Manual](#), so it is advised that attendees purchase one, though it is not required. An order form is attached if needed, along with the class registration form. To register, fax the completed form to **Ms. Tonya Finch** in the Canyon office and call to verify that it was received. The deadline to register is Friday, February 1, 2013. Acceptance packets should be mailed out within a week of that date. Do not send payment for the course until you receive the registration packet. Manual requests, however, should be mailed with the \$40 fee enclosed.

For more information on the course, go to <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/health/zoonosis/education/training/aco/>. A printable version of the manual can also be found online here.

Chapter 829 of the Texas Health and Safety Code requires all ACOs to successfully complete a basic training course within one year of their date of hire. 30 hours of continuing education credit must be attained within the subsequent three year period. For those ACOs that were grandfathered in when Chapter 829 took effect on July 1, 2008, but are no longer in compliance as of July 1, 2011, you must retake the course and exam. It is our hope that officers will attend not just because of the legal requirement, but because it will enhance their level of professionalism, their knowledge base, and safety in the field.

If you have questions, please call Dr. James Alexander or Tonya Finch in the Canyon office at 806/655-7151, or Karen McDonald in Lubbock at 806/783-6422.

We look forward to seeing you there.



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES
ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING MANUAL
ORDER FORM

The Animal Control Officer Training Manual is available through the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). The manual contains a basic course section, plus various state laws relating to animals. The manual is intended as a study guide for students attending a basic training course and as a reference manual for animal control agencies.

Students attending an animal control officer basic course will be tested on the material presented in the manual. Therefore, it is highly recommended that students study the manual thoroughly before attending a course.

Each manual costs \$40.00. (A 3-ring binder is not included; however, the manual is 3-hole punched and ready for insertion in a 1 1/2-inch binder of your choice.) Make checks or money orders payable to the Texas Department of State Health Services and mail it with the following form to the local DSHS Zoonosis Control Regional Office covering your county:

Texas Department of State Health Services
Zoonosis Control
WTAMU Box 60968
Canyon, TX 79016-0968
Telephone: (806) 655-7151, x. 1104

(Complete, detach, and submit the following form with your check.)

Send Animal Control Officer Training Manual(s) to:
(Please Print or Type)

Agency or Individual Date of Order

Mailing Address Delivery Address (NO Post Office Boxes)

City County State Zip Code

Contact Person ( ) Area Code & Phone Number



## Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Zoonosis Control (ZC) Animal Control Officer (ACO) Basic Training Course

### Application to Attend

Enrollment based on space availability. Course date you would like to attend: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please Print Clearly)

Name (Mr., Mrs., Ms.) \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_

Animal Control/Shelter Agency Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address (Street or PO Box) \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

(Please provide the address where course information/materials and test results should be sent.)

Phone Number (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Ext. \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to:**

Texas Department of State Health Services  
Zoonosis Control  
WTAMU Box 60968  
300 Victory Drive  
Canyon, TX 79016

**OR FAX to:**

(806) 655-7159

**For more information call:**

Tonya Finch (806) 655-7151

**Cost of attending a course is \$75.00. Information on how to submit payment will be provided by the Zoonosis Control Regional office. Do not send payment with this application.**

**Students will be tested over the material contained in the DSHS *Animal Control Officer Training Manual*. Students should study the entire manual thoroughly prior to attending a course.**

**Contact your Zoonosis Control Regional office or <http://TexasZoonosis.org> for further information on the manual and how to obtain a copy.**



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Dallam	Sherman	Haskell	Ochiltree	Lipscomb	
Hartley	Moore	Hutchinson	Roberts	Hemphill	
Oldham	Patterson	Carson	Gray	Wheeler	
Deaf Smith	Randall	Armstrong	Danley	Collingsworth	
Farmer	Castro	Swisher	Eriscose	Hall	Childress
Bailey	Lamb	Hale	Floyd	Motley	
Cochran	Heckley	Lubbock	Crosby	Dickens	King
Yeakum	Terry	Lynn	Garza		

## Feral Hogs

Information from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Brochure

### Do feral hogs carry disease?

In general, diseases from wild hogs do not pose a significant threat to humans; however, some diseases can be transmitted to livestock and wildlife. It is important to keep all livestock vaccinated, especially where large feral hog populations are concentrated.

Various diseases of wild hogs include pseudorabies, swine brucellosis, tuberculosis, bubonic plague, tularemia, hog cholera, foot and mouth disease, and anthrax. Internal parasites include kidney worms, stomach worms, round worms and whipworms. Liver flukes and trichinosis are also found in hogs. External parasites include dog ticks, fleas and hog lice.

### What is pseudorabies and swine brucellosis?

Pseudorabies, also known as "mad itch", is a swine herpes virus that may affect the respiratory, nervous and reproductive systems. Despite its name, it is not a rabies type disease but derives its name from the symptoms similar to a rabid animal. It is transmitted primarily through breeding but may also be transmitted through respiratory secretions of the infected animal. Infected adult swine typically develop flu-like symptoms whereas young pigs can have severe respiratory and digestive symptoms and ultimately die. Pseudorabies poses no threat to humans but may be fatal to domestic livestock and pets.

Swine Brucellosis is an infectious, bacterial, reproductive disease that can cause abortion, low conception rates and other problems. It is transmittable to humans, known as undulant fever, and causes flu-like symptoms such as fever, chills, aches and pains. It is treatable with specific antibiotics.

### How do I keep from contracting diseases?

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department recommends all hunters use disposable plastic or rubber gloves when field dressing or cleaning wild swine. Bury or burn the gloves and entrails and then wash your hands with soap and hot water. And finally, make sure the meat is thoroughly cooked.

