



## From Doc's Desk

By James Alexander, DVM, MPVM

Since rabies has been relatively quiet as of late, I will just provide a brief update and address a new topic. Our total confirmed animal rabies cases for 2010 stands at 31, with the last case reported on 12/15/10, a skunk from Potter County. This animal is the first confirmed case from Potter since a bat was reported in September 2009. It is the first skunk since 2005, when nine were reported from Potter County.

The main topic of interest for this edition is the recent finding of tularemia-positive feral pigs in Texas. According to Dr. Steven Presley, a scientist at Texas Tech's "The Institute for Environmental and Human Health", hunters in Texas should take precautions if they hunt feral swine. Processing or handling the raw meat from feral swine can potentially expose a person to the organism that causes tularemia (*Francisella tularensis*) based on research conducted by Dr. Presley's team. Tularemia is a zoonotic disease, meaning it is shared by humans and animals. Dr. Presley's group sampled over 100 feral swine from three Texas counties: Coryell, Bell and Crosby. Blood samples from swine in the two Central Texas counties averaged 20% positive for tularemia, while 31% of the Crosby County pigs exhibited positive test results. These results indicate a significant exposure of the feral swine to this disease organism. Of greater concern is the additional finding that when four of the Crosby County pigs were tested for the active presence of the organism,

three were positive.

Several forms of tularemia may occur in humans, each being dependent on the route of exposure. Skin ulcers and/or swollen lymph nodes can result if the infected fluid from the animal enters the body through skin cuts or abrasions. An oral cavity or throat infection can develop if undercooked meat from an infected animal is eaten. Inhalation of infected droplets of fluid while processing an infected animal can result in pneumonia, while an eye infection may develop if the droplets enter the mucous membranes of the eye. Even deer flies and ticks are capable of transmitting the bacteria through their bites, usually resulting in skin ulceration or swollen lymph nodes.

Due to the different potential routes of exposure, it is important for hunters to practice good personal safety while hunting or processing feral swine or handling their fresh meat. The use of insect repellent is always recommended anytime someone is going to be entering environments containing ticks or other disease vectors. The use of eye protection and gloves (latex or nitrile) are strongly recommended for people who will butcher feral hogs, and disposable masks can reduce the risk of inhaling infectious fluid droplets. In addition to tularemia, feral swine may also be infected with the bacteria that cause another zoonotic disease, brucellosis. The same protective measures for tularemia will help prevent infection by the brucellosis bacteria. Since eating undercooked

meat from feral hogs can also transmit these two diseases, **thorough cooking is advised.**

While feral hogs from only three counties have been sampled, the magnitude of the positive portion of that population suggests that feral swine from other counties can be expected to also be potential sources of *F. tularensis*. It is estimated that 1.5–2 million feral swine occur in 215 of 254 Texas counties, while 32 of the 50 United States have reported their presence. The overall national population estimate is ~4 million. I believe one of the main reasons the feral hog population is so large is for the same reason we have so many white-tail deer and raccoons—the eradication of the screwworm fly. Screwworms were deadly to wildlife and livestock, and without that pressure wildlife populations have dramatically increased.

Since feral swine are commonly hunted and harvested for human consumption, particularly during the fall and winter deer hunting season, hunters should be made aware of the potential to become exposed to and infected with *F. tularensis* while handling feral swine carcasses and tissues—particularly bodily fluids. Since hunting season is in full swing, please be sure to take steps to protect yourself from disease transmission and accidents if you are a hunter. If you do not hunt, but know or live with a hunter, please share this information.

The Zoonosis team hopes you remain safe as 2010 draws to a close.

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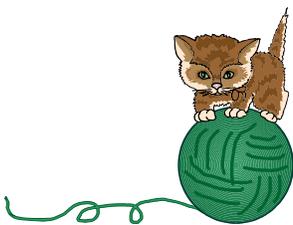
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*"The tail that wagged yesterday in hopes of a future, lies still in the landfill today thanks to those who would not spay or neuter!" - Doc Irene*

*Eight million cats and dogs enter animal shelters each year. Three to four million are euthanized. Yet one in four pet dogs and one in six pet cats have not been neutered.*



No animal deserves a life of foraging for food; dodging cars, bigger animals, and cruel people; or spending their life in a cage, yearning for freedom and companionship. Be part of the solution, not part of the problem.



## Spaying, Neutering Pets is the Right Decision

By Russell Smith, on the Texas Health and Human Services website, "Texas Health Matters"

What's the best way to show love for your new pet? (Hint: It's not homemade dog treats or a stylish IKEA kitty condo.) The better answer, veterinarians and rescue workers say, is to have your pet spayed or neutered.

Of course, most of us know this already. Thanks to Sheryl Crow, Carrie Underwood, and other pet-adoption advocates, we've heard about the eight million cats and dogs that enter animal shelters each year.

We're also aware of the three to four million that are euthanized. And the countless strays that are highly susceptible to such diseases as rabies and are responsible for numerous injuries to humans—not to mention \$20 million per year in animal control expenses.

So why are roughly one in four pet dogs and one in six cats not spayed or neutered? According to veterinarians, a handful of diehard myths and misguided attitudes bear most of the blame:

**Myth 1: Female cats and dogs should have at least one litter before you have them spayed.** According to the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), the exact opposite is true. Early spaying greatly reduces your pet's chances of developing uterine, ovarian, or mammary cancer.

**Myth 2: My dog is my best friend. And no real "bro" would do that to another.** Guys often make this argument regarding male pets. But the concept of reproduction-linked mojo doesn't exist for male

dogs or tomcats. They'll still be the same rough-and-ready dudes after neutering. And, chances are, they'll live longer and healthier lives.

**Myth 3: Witnessing the miracle of birth is a wonderful nature lesson for my kids.** Maybe so, if your kids actually get to see the miracle. More likely, it'll happen under the deck in the dead of the night. Plenty of DVDs and TV nature specials show how puppies and kittens come into the world—in HD, complete with expert commentary.

**Myth 4: An animal's behavior changes drastically after sterilization.** What few changes occur, DSHS notes, are subtle and positive. Male cats and dogs remain active but engage in less fighting, wandering, and other testosterone-fueled risk behaviors. Male cats neutered early are also far less prone to territorial spraying.

**Myth 5: I'm afraid my pet's watchdog instincts will be affected.** Dogs' natural instinct to bark in response to possible danger has nothing to do with their reproductive functions. The instinct is hard-wired into most dogs and won't change as a result of spaying or neutering. Male dogs, though, may be less likely to confront and bite all suspected intruders—good news for the mailman.

**Myth 6: Neutered pets tend to get fat.** Just like people, pets gain weight when they take in more calories than they burn off. And neither of these factors is related to fertility. It's true that intact males wander

more, but you can safely replace that activity with the daily exercise opportunities that everyone should give their pets.

**Myth 7: Spaying and neutering are too expensive.** Over your pet's lifespan, you'll probably spend more on collars than you would on spaying or neutering. These procedures generally start around \$45 for neutering male cats and dogs and can range up to \$200 and more for spaying very large dogs.

If you get your pet from a local animal shelter, significant discounts often are available. Many local organizations also offer free or low-cost spaying and neutering programs. A searchable database of these programs is available on the ASPCA website.

The Animal Friendly Program, a DSHS initiative, helps fund many of these organizations statewide. You can support the fund by purchasing a custom license plate from the Texas Department of Transportation. The plates cost \$30, of which \$22 goes to eligible spay/neuter operations and \$8 to administrative overhead. For information, call the state license plate office at 512-374.5010.

*Editor's note:* To access the HHS "Texas Health Matters" website, go to <http://www.hhs.state.tx.us/TexasHealthMatters/>. The article quoted above was published in the August 2010, week 4, edition.

## Sanitation Complaints

By Karen McDonald, Zoonosis Specialist

*"Sanitation is achieving and maintaining a clean environment. Keeping a clean and sanitary environment will decrease odors and disease transmission, increase public appreciation, and reflect the pride and professionalism of the animal control agency."* This is the introduction to the chapter on sanitation in the Zoonosis Control *Animal Control Officer Training Manual*. The majority of the complaints that Zoonosis Control receives on animal shelters has to do with poor sanitation. I'm pleased to say that we don't receive many complaints, but of the ones we do, filthiness is the primary issue. Moreover, the quarantine facility inspections often turn up issues with basic cleanliness, or a lack thereof. This is one of the easiest complaints to correct, or prevent altogether.

### Outside runs and grounds:

The first view that the public has of the animal shelter is the exterior. Understandably, there will be fecal piles in the run first thing in the morning and mid-afternoon after feeding. However, finding two days worth of fecal material dried in the outside runs is not only unsightly but smelly. It is particularly offensive in a run where no animal is present, which is a clear indication that an animal was removed and the officer never took the time to clean the run. Texas Codes Annotated Chapter 169.26 Facilities for the Quarantining or Impounding of Animals, Section (d) (1) states that waste will be removed not less than daily. With multiple dogs to a pen, or if the

shelter uses self-feeders, a twice-daily cleaning is recommended. Certainly a pen should be cleaned immediately upon an animal's removal. If solid waste is being scraped or sprayed onto the ground with a high-pressure hose, this is a direct violation of Section (3), which says the premises shall be kept clean as well. Solid waste should be scraped up for proper disposal before washing the run. The grounds are cleaner, odor-free, and it saves the city on drain maintenance calls.

### Drains:

Several facilities in the region have open drains that run the length of the pens with grates covering them to prevent large items, paws, and pups from falling in. (At least, they're supposed to be covered.) In some cases officers have merely scraped the solids (feces, vomit, and food) into the drains and left it sitting there, as unsightly as it would be in the pen and producing just as much odor for anyone walking nearby. After removing the solids, flush the drains periodically with water to rinse away any standing liquid waste. During one inspection a fecal pile was spotted with pieces of heavy black cord in it that a dog had chewed and passed. It needed to be shoveled up and disposed of in the trash. Cat rooms will have spilled litter on the floor that should be swept up prior to mopping. Flushing such items down the drain will eventually result in a costly maintenance call.

### Standing water:

169.26 (a) (12) (C) states that primary enclosures shall enable the animal to remain dry and clean. Complaints of soaking wet animals, puppies frozen to the floor in the winter, and the inability for a citizen to walk through the facility and keep their shoes dry are all clear indicators of improper washing. Animals should be removed from runs or placed on the other side of the guillotine doors during the wash down. Standing water, both in the runs as well as on the walkways, should be removed with a squeegee. Standing water promotes bacterial growth and disease and odor transmission. It also provides an unsafe walking surface for the ACOs and the public.

### Office and/or reception area:

At some facilities the runs are well maintained, yet the office and/or reception area is completely neglected. There may be a desk and cabinet haphazardly pushed against a bare wall, with a layer of dust and fly carcasses covering both. Cobwebs have collected in the ceiling corners, and the floor is covered with dirt, grass, and anything else that could possibly be tracked in. What would you think, walking into a business office that looked that way? An animal shelter is not a bank or a department store, but it is a city office that provides a service to the public. Greet the public the way you would like to be greeted. Remove the cobwebs, dust, sweep, and mop weekly when you have time between calls. I recently visited a facility that had been repainted, had clean floors, and



First impressions are extremely important, especially in a field where the public is predisposed to be critical.



**ACOs, please read the announcement on the last page!**

put posters up on the wall. What a difference! Any citizen entering the shelter would be more comfortable sitting down and conducting business with those officers.

Picking up the animals is just a small portion of your job duties. You have, at a minimum, three days that you are responsible for the welfare of the animals you take in. They deserve to be clean and comfortable. As for the citizens, they are at the shelter for an even shorter time. Leave them with a favorable impression, when possible. From the introduction to the manual, *"Gaining the respect of the people in the community is the first step in getting public support and cooperation for the animal control agency."* Housing their animals in a clean building is the first step in gaining that respect.



"He is your friend, your partner, your defender, your dog. You are his life, his love, his leader. He will be yours, faithful and true, to the last beat of his heart. You owe it to him to be worthy of such devotion." - Author Unknown

## I Rescued a Human Today...

Janine Allen, CPDT

Her eyes met mine as she walked down the corridor peering apprehensively into the kennels. I felt her need instantly and knew I had to help her. I wagged my tail, not too exuberantly, so she wouldn't be afraid.

As she stopped at my kennel I blocked her view from a little accident I had in the back of my cage. I didn't want her to know that I hadn't been walked today. Sometimes the shelter keepers get too busy and I didn't want her to think poorly of them.

As she read my kennel card I hoped that she wouldn't feel sad about my past. I only have the future to look forward to and want to make a difference in someone's life.

She got down on her knees and made little kissy sounds at me. I shoved my shoulder and side of my head up against the bars to comfort her. Gentle fingertips caressed my neck; she was desperate for companionship.

A tear fell down her cheek and I raised my paw to assure her that all would be well. Soon my

kennel door opened and her smile was so bright that I instantly jumped into her arms. I would promise to keep her safe. I would promise to always be by her side. I would promise to do everything I could to see that radiant smile and sparkle in her eyes. I was so fortunate that she came down my corridor. So many more are out there who haven't walked the corridors. So many more to be saved. At least I could save one. Yes, I could save one.

I rescued a human today.

*Let your local school districts know about the DSHS "Rabies Awareness & Prevention Poster Contest". The contest is open for K-8th grade, and prizes will be awarded!*

## Poster Contest Announcement

By **Bonny Mayes, MA, and Ernest Oertli, DVM, PhD, Zoonosis Control, Austin**

The Department of State Health Services Zoonosis Control Branch (<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/health/zoonosis/>) is conducting the Spring 2011 statewide "Rabies Awareness & Prevention Poster Contest" for K-8th grade. There are prizes provided by the Zach Jones Memorial Fund (<http://www.zachjonesmemorial.org/>): there will be one prize for the top-ranking kindergarten

poster and a first, second, and third place prize for each age group (grades 1-2, 3-5, and 6-8).

Rabies is endemic in Texas. Skunks and bats are the most commonly affected species, and school grounds are the number one location in Texas for exposure to rabid bats. Bat bites are not always noticeable, and many people are unaware that exposure to bats poses a

risk. Most of these rabies exposures are preventable through education. Information about the contest can be downloaded from the DSHS Zoonosis Control website. You can view the winning posters submitted for the previous contests at this same site.

Please contact us if you have any questions!



Do you have a story to tell? Share it with us!!

## So, What Have You Been Up To?

Have you had anything new or unusual come up on the job lately? Done something you're really proud of, perhaps? What about coming up with a creative solution to an old problem?

If you have a story, we'd love for you to share it. Sometimes we have plenty of information to

put in our quarterly newsletter; other times we're scrambling to fill in the blank spaces. Stories from you, the ACOs and veterinarians in our region, would not only help us fill those blanks, but it would provide some interesting, humorous, or educational storylines for the readers.

A few lines or a few paragraphs, it's your choice. Photos are welcome, too.

We're looking forward to hearing from you!

## WINTER AND HOLIDAY HEALTH HAZARDS FOR ANIMALS

By Pam Wilson, RVT, Med, CHES

With the arrival of the winter months and holiday season, there are additional health hazards, which are of concern for animals; some are potentially fatal. A few of these health risks could be brought into the home inadvertently, thereby increasing a pet's possibility of exposure. To keep the season safe, protect animals from contact with or ingestion of the following:

1. Antifreeze—this mixture contains ethylene glycol, a product that can cause lethal kidney failure and metabolic acidosis (accumulation of acid in the blood and body tissues) if ingested. It has a sweet taste that attracts animals and can be toxic in small doses (i.e., 1-2 tablespoons can produce toxicity in a medium-sized dog). Antifreeze can be toxic even when diluted in water.

At least one brand of antifreeze is available that uses propylene glycol for the active component as an alternative to ethylene glycol. Larger quantities of the propylene glycol-based antifreeze usually have to be swallowed to produce toxicity as compared to ethylene glycol-based antifreeze. Additionally, propylene glycol-based antifreeze does not metabolize in the animal's system to form products that cause kidney damage; however, it can still cause illness and death via metabolic acidosis.

An antidote is available for antifreeze poisoning, but early recognition of ingestion and immediate intensive treatment are imperative for the survival of the animal. The best medicine, though, is to prevent animals from being in contact with this toxic substance by having antifreeze changed by a professional who knows how to properly dispose of it. If individuals change their own antifreeze, they should not drain it into the sewer or leave it sitting out in a pan for any amount of time (all it takes is a few seconds for an animal to ingest it). It is worth noting that some snow globes may contain this product as well, so keep them out of reach from your pets.

2. Baking chocolate—this form of chocolate contains a higher concentration of stimulant (theobromine) than regular chocolate. One-fourth pound can be toxic if eaten by a small dog, such as a poodle.
3. Mistletoe—the berry of this plant is the most toxic component, especially if it is chewed instead of swallowed whole. If the berry is ingested in sufficient quantity, it can cause gastrointestinal and neurological symptoms, including convulsions.
4. Poinsettia—whether or not this plant is toxic has been debated for years. The most recent findings are that it contains no toxic chemical. However, as with any plant that an animal is not accustomed to eating, it can cause diarrhea and vomiting (a protective mechanism to eliminate the foreign substance). Animals tend to be attracted to poinsettias, so it is a good practice to keep these plants out of their reach.
5. Ivy—this plant is not acutely toxic, but it can cause gastrointestinal upset if ingested.
6. Christmas cactus—this plant is nontoxic, but it can cause vomiting and transient diarrhea if consumed.
7. Tinsel—cats in particular are attracted to playing with Christmas tree tinsel. If ingested, it can cause an intestinal blockage or intussusception (prolapsing of one part of the intestine into the cavity of an immediately adjoining part). If indoor cats are present, it would be prudent to avoid using strands of tinsel. It would also be advisable to place breakable ornaments at the top of the tree. An investment in shatterproof ornaments might also be worthwhile.
8. Glow jewelry<sup>1</sup>—dibutyl phthalate is a chemical contained in glow-in-the-dark jewelry, which are popular items at a variety of festivities. Although the chemical may have the potential to cause death via respiratory paralysis, cats generally will only ingest a minimal amount due to its unpleasant taste and the fact that only a small amount of the chemical is present in the jewelry. Cats that have bitten into the jewelry may exhibit heavy salivation, hyperactivity, and aggressive behavior, but they typically recover within minutes. Immediately after the cat happens to ingest this chemical, it helps to feed it small quantities of milk, canned food, or tuna juice to dilute the chemical in its mouth. Wash off any drops of the chemical that might be on the cat's coat and flush the cat's eyes with water if there has been ocular exposure. There is no known antidote for dibutyl phthalate; cats that have ingested large quantities should be closely monitored and given supportive treatment if warranted.
9. Cold—the U.S. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's *Animal Welfare Act* recommends that ambient temperature should not drop below 50 degrees Fahrenheit, especially when sick, aged, or young animals are present. Additionally, animals should always be provided with adequate protection and shelter from the direct effect of wind, rain, or snow. Remember, animals in Texas are not acclimated to cold weather, so they must be protected from extreme weather conditions accordingly.

If you know or suspect that an animal has ingested any of the above items (1-8), immediately consult a veterinarian, animal emergency clinic, or poison control center. The Central Texas Poison Center can be reached at 1-800-764-7661 (1-800-POISON-1). The ASPCA National Animal Poison Control Center can be reached at 1-800-548-2423.

Thanks is given to Dr. John C. Haliburton, former Head of Diagnostic Toxicology for the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory in Amarillo, for his assistance and expertise in preparing this article.

<sup>1</sup>Rosendale, ME. *Veterinary Medicine* 1999; August:703.



## If I Didn't Have a Dog...or Cat...

Author Unknown

If I didn't have a dog...or cat...

I could walk around the yard barefoot in safety.

My house could be carpeted instead of tiled and laminated.

All flat surfaces, clothing, furniture, and cars would be free of hair.

When the doorbell rings, it wouldn't sound like a kennel, and I could get to the door without wading through fuzzy bodies who beat me there.

I could sit on the couch and my bed the way I wanted, without taking into consideration how much space several fur bodies would need to get comfortable.

I would have money, and no guilt to go on a real vacation.

I would not be on a first-name

basis with six veterinarians, as I put their yet unborn grandkids through college.

The most used words in my vocabulary would not be: out, sit, down, come, no, stay, and leave it ALONE.

My house would not be cordoned off into zones with baby gates or barriers.

I would not talk "baby talk": "Eat your din din," "Yummy yummy for the tummy"...

My house would not look like a day care center, toys everywhere.

My pockets would not contain things like poop bags, treats, and an extra leash.

I would no longer have to spell the words B-A-L-L, W-A-L-K,

T-R-E-A-T, O-U-T, G-O, R-I-D-E, and C-O-O-K-I-E.

I would not have as many leaves INSIDE my house as outside.

I would not look strangely at people who think having ONE dog/cat ties them down too much.

I'd look forward to spring and the rainy season instead of dreading "mud" season.

I would not have to answer the question, "Why do you have so many animals?" from people who will never have the joy in their lives of knowing they are loved unconditionally by someone as close to an angel as they will ever get.

How EMPTY my life would be!!

Visit the webpage for the CDC Division of Global Migration and Quarantine at <http://www.cdc.gov/animalimportation/index.html> for additional information. You can also check out our website at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/health/zoonosis/animal/pets/entry/>.



There are laws in place to cover bringing dogs and cats into the state of Texas, whether from other countries or other states.

## Texas Entry Requirements for Dogs and Cats

From the HSR 9/10 newsletter of May-August 2010

*Editor's Note: While our region is not exactly a hub for dogs and cats coming in to the U.S. from other countries, we do occasionally field phone calls from veterinarians who are working with military personnel and their families to import a pet that was adopted while the service member was stationed overseas. This information is being provided to assist with those questions.*

Although not required by Texas law, most airlines require a health certificate issued by a veterinarian within seven to ten days prior to travel. Check with your airline for their exact requirements. To enter Texas and be in accordance with its state law, **all dogs and cats three months of age or older must be vaccinated against rabies and be accompanied by a rabies vaccination cer-**

**tificate** dated and signed by the veterinarian who administered the immunizations. Veterinarians in Texas are restricted to using vaccines approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA); however, **for entry purposes only**, dogs and cats traveling into the state may be inoculated against rabies with killed, modified live, or recombinant vaccine. Once in Texas, if a USDA-approved vaccine was not used, compliance must be achieved. For entry into Texas, the following criteria must be met: 1) at the time of vaccination, the animal was at least the minimum age prescribed for the vaccine; and 2) the vaccination was not given more than 12 or 36 months (depending on the vac-

cine used) prior to travel.

If the animal is a dog that is arriving from another country and is less than three months of age, the U.S. Public Health Service requires that it be confined at home until it reaches three months of age, at which time the animal must be vaccinated against rabies and confined for an additional 30 days. Regardless of the animal's age, if the initial vaccination was given less than 30 days prior to arrival in the U.S., the animal will be required to be confined for the balance of the 30 days. Confinement restrictions may not apply to animals that have been in a rabies-free area for at least six months prior to arrival or since birth.

## Do You Meet the Definition of an Animal Control Officer?

By the Staff of HSR 4/5N (James Wright, DVM, MPVM; Angela Hopkins; and Samantha Puttick)

Animal Control Officers are required to meet certain training requirements. We are obligated to check your training status when we inspect your shelter or drop in to visit. Please look at the definition below to determine if you meet the definition of an animal control officer.

HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE  
 TITLE 10. HEALTH AND SAFETY OF ANIMALS  
 CHAPTER 829. ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER TRAINING

Sec. 829.001. **DEFINITIONS.** In this chapter:

(1) **"Animal control officer"** means a person who:

- (A) is employed, appointed, or otherwise engaged primarily to enforce laws relating to animal control; and
- (B) is not a peace officer.

Sec. 829.002. **TRAINING REQUIRED.** A person may not perform the duties of an animal control officer unless:

(1) the person:

- (A) completes a basic animal control course under this chapter not later than the first anniversary of the date the person assumes animal control duties; or
- (B) completed a personnel training course on or before June 30, 2008, under Section 823.004 as it existed on that date; and

(2) the person completes 30 hours of continuing education under this chapter during each three-year period following:

- (A) the date the person completes the basic animal control course; or
- (B) June 30, 2008, if the person completed a personnel training course under Subdivision (1)(B).

If you do not feel you meet the definition of an animal control officer, you will need to provide written proof from your supervisor stating that fact; you should keep that statement readily available in your personal records so when we ask to see your training documentation, you can demonstrate that the training requirement does not impact you. This may be the case for many people who work in animal shelters. **HOWEVER**, be sure to read the section on euthanasia training further down in this e-mail.

If you do meet the definition, you need to be able to demonstrate that you have passed the ACO Basic Course and that you have met the continuing education (CE) requirement. Note that the three-year period in which you must accumulate 30 hours of CE started on June 30, 2008 (if you completed your basic course prior to that time) or on the date you completed your basic course (if it was after June 30, 2008).

The three-year period that began on June 30, 2008, ends on June 30, 2011 (next summer). By that time you should have credit for 30 hours of CE. If you are deficient in this requirement, **you are not legal** to perform the duties of an animal control officer. **Your job could be in jeopardy.** The only way you can again become legal will be to attend and pass another ACO Basic Course. However, you will have to wait until one is available, apply to attend, and pass it. Your boss might choose to just hire somebody else.

What does it take to demonstrate that you have met your basic training requirements? We will look for proof of completion of a DSHS or DSHS-approved ACO Basic Course (typically a certificate), plus proof of attendance (for example, certificates, letters of attendance, or a verification statement from a professional organization) for all the DSHS-approved CE courses you attended. Remember: the CE must be DSHS-approved.

We suggest that you keep a folder with all your certificates and other documentation in it. That way, each time you attend a CE session, you will have a specific place to store the certificate or other proof of attendance. In addition, all your CE documentation will be in one place and will be easy to find when we ask for it. **Reminder—it is your responsibility to keep track of your proof of CE.**

By the way, at the end of the three-year period, your "CE account" resets to zero, and you start accumulating another 30 hours for the next three-year period. There is no provision to "carry over" CE hours.

In addition to containing a section on training for Animal Control Officers, the Health and Safety Code also requires that anyone who euthanizes animals in a shelter must complete a training course in proper methods and techniques of euthanasia.

### Section 821.055. Training for Euthanasia Technicians

(a) A person may not euthanize an animal in the custody of an animal shelter unless the person has successfully completed, not more than three years before the date the person euthanizes the animal, a training course in the proper methods and techniques for euthanizing animals.

Note that the training must not have been more than three years in the past.

When we inspect or visit, we will look for proof of training of staff conducting euthanasia. Just as for Animal Control Officers, we recommend that euthanasia staff maintain a folder to keep their training documentation. Failure to have proof of your training could not only cost you your job, it could also lead to your being prosecuted for a Class B misdemeanor.

Please attend required training and CE seminars or meetings, and maintain proof that you did. Do not put us in the position of having to report to your supervisor that you do not meet the training requirements of an Animal Control Officer or a person conducting euthanasia.



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Dallam	Sherman	Hansford	Ochiltree	Lipscomb	
Hartley	Moore	Hutchinson	Roberts	Hemphill	
Oldham	Patterson	Carson	Gray	Wheeler	
Deaf Smith	Randall	Armstrong	Dawley	Collingsworth	
Parmer	Castro	Swisher	Eriscose	Hall	Childress
Bailey	Lamb	Hale	Floyd	Matley	
Cochran	Beckley	Lubbock	Crosby	Dickens	King
Yeakum	Terry	Lynn	Garza		



**A DOGGY WONDERLAND**

Dog tags ring, are you listenin'?  
 In the lane, snow is glistenin'.  
 It's yellow, NOT white—I've been there to-  
 night,  
 Marking up my winter wonderland.

Smell that tree? That's my fragrance.  
 It's a sign for wand'ring vagrants;  
 "Avoid where I pee, it's MY pro-per-ty!  
 Marked up as my winter wonderland."

In the meadow Dad will build a snowman,  
 Following the classical design.  
 Then I'll lift my leg and let it go, Man,  
 So all the world will know it's  
 Mine-mine-mine!

Straight from me to the fencepost,  
 Flows my natural incense boast;  
 "Stay off of my TURF, this small piece of  
 earth,  
 I mark it as my winter wonderland."



**There will be an ACO basic course in Lubbock in March. Details will be in the January newsletter!**

## To those who ever ship a rabies specimen...

By James Wright, DVM, MPVM, Regional Zoonosis Control Veterinarian, HSR 4/5N

Every once in a while, we have someone call our office for help in finding a result on a rabies specimen they shipped to the DSHS Rabies Lab in Austin. We are always glad to help.

In our efforts to find a lost specimen or test result, we have discovered a few hints that may help you folks who ship specimens. Here they are:

1. Do not ship via overnight carrier on the day before a weekend or holiday.
2. If you ship by overnight carrier, expect the test result to be called to you before 3:00 p.m. the second day after shipping. NOTE: We are working on a potential arrangement with an overnight carrier that will allow

"next day" test results, and possibly the ability to ship the day before weekends and holidays. It might even be less expensive. We will notify you if this system actually comes to pass.

3. Always keep the shipping documents you receive from the carrier. If you ship via UPS or FedEx, you can get on the company's web site and track the shipment.
4. Right now, if you have dependable bus service, the bus is the preferred shipping carrier. You should get the results by 3:00 p.m. the next day, if you ship via bus. NOTE: We have seen some veterinarians, especially those who live in a town

- without bus service, prepare the specimen and lab submission documents, package them for shipping, and have the animal "owner" take the package to the bus depot and pay the bus fare. If you use this method, be sure to tell the owner to ship it "priority" and to keep the shipping documents.
5. If you expect a test result and it has not been reported to you by 3:00 p.m. on the expected day, start looking for it right then. Call us. We will be happy to help. **Please do not wait till 4:00 or 4:30 to start looking for a result.**
6. If you need a result on a weekend or holiday, call us.

We will work with the lab staff to get the test completed. Because this testing will require considerable extra effort on the part of the lab staff, we would like to be sure that it is a true emergency, i.e. someone who will be starting the rabies post-exposure series that weekend if the result is positive.

Our lab staff in Austin do a super job for us. They are available 24 hours per day to offer their help. We really do appreciate their excellent work. Please consider the hints above to help the staff help us.

Thanks!