

From Doc's Desk

By James Alexander, DVM, MPVM

In 2005 our region experienced a reported rabies case load of 79 animals. That was our high point for the past 15 years. In the four-year period of 2006-2009, our numbers dropped considerably, with 8, 9, 24, and 23 cases reported, respectively. We closed the books on 2010 at 31 confirmed cases, a 35% increase over 2009. The big surprise for the year was the first case confirmed in Crosby County in over 45 years. It was a skunk variant in a horse. Another unusual event occurred earlier in the year when a feedlot steer was diagnosed with a vampire bat rabies strain. The animal had been imported from an area of Mexico where that variant is endemic.

Statewide it appears the number of cases was down for the third year in a row. That is a nice trend, if it can be maintained. While our numbers keep us busy, our colleagues in some of the other regions handled about ten times what we did, so a decrease means a lot to them. In 1997 the statewide total for confirmed animal rabies cases was only 266. We peaked at 1049 cases in 2002, and it has bounced between 741 and 1019 cases since. A new development on the statewide level was the complete lack of confirmed cases of the Texas Fox variant in the western part of the state where it had been endemic. The Oral

Rabies Vaccination Program is underway once again, with prospects of nailing the lid on that variant's coffin like was done for its cousin, the Domestic Dog-Coyote variant in far south Texas.

Our totals for last year by county were: Castro (1 skunk), Childress (1 skunk), Collingsworth (1 dog), Dallam (1 skunk), Deaf Smith (1 cat), Donley (1 steer), Gray (1 horse, 1 steer, 1 cat, 2 skunks), Hale (1 skunk), Hartley (2 skunks), Hemphill (2 skunks), Hutchinson (2 skunks), Lipscomb (1 skunk), Lubbock (1 cat, 1 horse), Ochiltree (1 skunk), Potter (1 skunk), Randall (1 bull, 6 skunks), and Wheeler (1 horse). Randall County was the primary foci of infection last year, which was a continuation of the county's status in 2009.

We already have our first case for 2011, and a community in Carson County had the dubious honor of finding it. This is the first confirmed case in Carson County since three skunks were reported in March and April 2003.

This seemed early, since we have not had a case reported in January since 2002, so I reviewed "first cases" for the past 16 years. When counting all cases, including this animal, the average date for the first rabies case to be reported is February 13. When counting

only indigenous cases (our first case in 1996 was a cow with the Texas fox strain shipped to Sherman County), February 28 would be the average. The large change in the date was because the second case, and our first and only indigenous case in 1996, was in Floyd County on October 5, 1996. Only two cases were reported that year, and only one was a native. How we long for the "good ol' days"!

Our range for date of first reported case is January 9 (2000) to March 21 (2006, 1997) for all cases, and January 9 to October 5 for only indigenous cases.

Please continue to remind pet owners of the law (and the dictates of common sense) for rabies vaccinations and livestock owners of the advisability to vaccinate certain animals. I still strongly encourage dog owners to be sure their animals receive a distemper vaccination in addition to rabies at a minimum. That will reduce the potential for the confusion that occurs when distemper infects dogs. Of course, if they really care about their pet, they should be sure the pet receives all recommended vaccines.

We hope 2011 will be a brighter and safe year for our readers. Please contact us if you need guidance with rabies issues, encounter plague, or find something else interesting.

Inside this issue:

<i>Shelter Standards</i>	2
<i>Microchip Look-Up Tool</i>	2
<i>A Call for Papers</i>	3
<i>Spay Day USA</i>	3
<i>Course Application Form</i>	4
<i>Manual Order Form</i>	5
<i>Tularemia Revisited</i>	6
<i>Resolutions</i>	6

HSR 1 EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

March 30-31: Basic course for animal control officers, to be held in Lubbock at the Lubbock Animal Services Training Facility. The course will be held from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on both days.

April 28: Janet Hurley, Extension program specialist with Texas AgriLife Extension Service's Southwest Technical Resource Center, will be presenting a six-hour course on bat safety. Course location will be announced later.

If you plan to attend either of these, please contact Suzan Norwood at (806) 477-1104.

HSR 1 ZONOSIS STAFF

James Alexander, DVM, MPVM
Regional Veterinarian
james.alexander@dshs.state.tx.us
Suzan Norwood, Public Health Tech I
suzan.norwood@dshs.state.tx.us
300 Victory Drive
WTAMU Box 60968
Canyon, TX 79016-0968
806-655-7151
806-655-7159 (Fax)

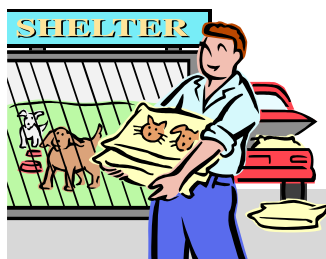
Karen McDonald
Zoonosis Specialist
karen.mcdonald@dshs.state.tx.us
6302 Iola Avenue
Lubbock, TX 79424
806-783-6422
806-783-6424 (Fax)

Shelter Standards Guidelines

Press release from Association of Shelter Veterinarians, December 6, 2010



From James Wright, DVM, MPVM, Regional Zoonosis Control Veterinarian, HSR 4/5N: "Your shelter is 'inspected' every day. Not by DSHS staff, but by your superiors, your citizens, and the visitors who come to the shelter. They draw conclusions about you personally and about the care you give the animals based upon what they see when they visit." Also, "You can have an overcrowded shelter, even when all of the cages are not full. If the number of animals is too large for you to properly care for and does not allow you to properly clean and maintain your shelter, you are overcrowded."



The Association of Shelter Veterinarians (ASV) has just released *Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters*, the first comprehensive report of its kind. The Guidelines are the outcome of two years of work including an exhaustive review of scientific literature by a task force of 14 shelter veterinarians. The authors hope that shelters and communities will look to this document to ensure that all animals in shelters everywhere are properly and humanely cared for. The Guidelines are intended as a positive tool for shelters and communities to review animal care, identify areas that need improvement, allocate resources, and implement solutions so welfare is optimized, euthanasia is minimized, and suffering is prevented.

"The guiding principle was always animals' needs, which remain the same regardless of the mission of an organization or the challenges involved in meeting those needs," said Sandra Newberry, DVM, chair of the Shelter Standards Task Force.

The foundation for the Guidelines is the "Five Freedoms", developed in 1965 in the United Kingdom as a result of a

report by the Brambell Commission (which later became the Farm Animal Welfare Council) to address welfare concerns in agricultural settings. The Five Freedoms are now recognized to have much broader application across species. The Five Freedoms are:

- Freedom from Hunger and Thirst—by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor.
- Freedom from Discomfort—by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease—by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
- Freedom to Express Normal Behavior—by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
- Freedom from Fear and Distress—by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

The Guidelines are intended to apply to the full spectrum of sheltering programs from brick and mortar facilities to grass-roots rescue efforts or home-based programs.

"The guidelines are designed to achieve outcomes that protect the health and well-being of sheltered animals without defining how individual shelters reach those outcomes," said Lila Miller, DVM, a Task Force member and an editor of the report. "The report is designed to allow shelters flexibility in achieving these goals."

The report provides recommendations for 12 broad areas of animal sheltering and care: management and record keeping, facility design and environment, population management, sanitation, medical health and physical well-being, behavioral health and mental well-being, group housing, animal handling, euthanasia, spay/neuter, transport, and public health.

The Association of Shelter Veterinarians (ASV) is an international organization whose mission is to improve the health and well-being of animals in shelters through the advancement of shelter medicine. ASV currently consists of over 750 member veterinarians and 22 student chapters around the globe. A copy of the Guidelines and more information on ASV can be found at www.sheltervet.org.

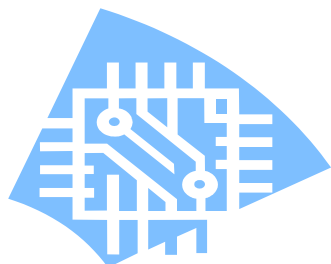
Pet Microchip Look-Up Tool

Are checking microchips a time-consuming hassle for you? There's a website that can help! It's <http://www.petmicrochiplookup.org>.

Per Lauren Odum, shelter territory representative with Intervet

Shering-Plough Animal Health, this site will let you know which company a chip is registered with and save time on a bunch of phone calls. At last check, Avid was the only company not participating in this.

Ms. Odum reported that she "heard of a situation where a shelter took in a dog with a Home Again chip, but it was registered with another company. This site could have saved them a MAJOR headache!"



Checking microchips is now easier!

A Call for Papers for The 61st Annual Diseases in Nature Conference

The 61st Annual James Steele Conference on Diseases in Nature Transmissible to Man (DIN) will convene June 15-17, 2011 in Corpus Christi, Texas at the Omni Bayfront Hotel, 900 N. Shoreline Blvd., Corpus Christi, TX 78401. (<http://www.omnihotels.com/Home/FindAHotel/CorpusChristiBayfront.aspx>)

The conference focuses on zoonotic diseases, environmental diseases, biosecurity, and public health preparedness topics of interest to a wide variety of health, public health, and academic professionals. Conference attendees include representatives from veterinary medicine, human medicine, public health, laboratory science, and academia, among others.

On behalf of the planning com-

mittee, we invite you to submit an abstract for either an oral or poster presentation for consideration by the Curriculum Committee. **The deadline for submissions is February 28, 2011.** The Curriculum Committee will consider presentations of research, epidemiological data, and other aspects of zoonotic and environmental diseases relevant to the veterinary, medical, and public health communities. Presentations and posters may include disease reviews, individual case studies, outbreak investigations, basic and applied research projects, and surveillance program reports. Oral presentations run 30 minutes, to include a few minutes for questions and discussion.

Submitters selected for oral presentation will receive complimentary conference regis-

tration. Submitters selected for poster presentation will receive half-price registration (\$100). For those papers with multiple authors, only the presenter will be eligible for complimentary or reduced cost registration.

Submission instructions and a sample submission form may be found on the [DIN Conference website](#). Please complete and e-mail the abstract to Eric.Fonken@dshs.state.tx.us with a cc: to jim.schuermann@dshs.state.tx.us and bonny.mayes@dshs.state.tx.us.

Signed,

Eric Fonken, State Conference Coordinator

Jim Schuermann, Co-Coordinator

Bonny Mayes, Co-Coordinator



It's time to make your plans to attend the 61st Annual Diseases in Nature Conference! This year's meeting will be held in Corpus Christi.

If you want to submit an abstract for either an oral or poster presentation for the DIN Conference, the deadline is February 28.

How to Participate in Spay Day

Condensed from information on the website of **The Humane Society of the United States**

The 17th Annual Spay Day takes place on February 22, 2011, with events and activities in honor of Spay Day taking place throughout February. (Eligible event organizers will receive funding from the Spay Day Online Pet Photo Contest to spay or neuter even more animals after Spay Day is over.)

Spay Day 2011 is partnered with The Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association.

There are several ways to participate:

Organize an event: Host an event on the last Tuesday of February (Spay Day) or any

time during the month of February. You can organize a spay/neuter event, ask your legislator to pass a Spay Day resolution, host a fundraiser, or otherwise educate the public about Spay Day.

Volunteer at an event: Volunteers are often needed for a variety of important tasks, such as assisting with greeting and checking in clients, monitoring recovering animals, staffing information tables, hosting fundraising parties, and helping to publicize the event.

Enter the Spay Day Online Pet Photo Contest, which runs from January 19-March 4,

2011.

Become a corporate sponsor: E-mail HSUS at corprelations@humanesociety.org to learn more.

Offer your skills: Veterinarians, and veterinary technicians, are vital to the success of Spay Day.

Cover Spay Day in the media: If you are a reporter, publicizing local events will be extremely helpful to all involved.

For more information, go to the HSUS website: http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/spay_day/.



Neutering pets is the kindest thing you can do, for the pets and for the community.





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: March 30-31, 2011

(Please Print Clearly)

Name (Mr., Mrs., Ms.) _____ DOB _____

Animal Control/Shelter Agency Name _____

Delivery Address (for ground delivery of pre-course packets) _____

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
Canyon, TX 79016-0968

OR FAX to:

(806) 655-7159

For more information call: (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 infor-



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 1½-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

_____ Training Manual(s) X \$40.00 each = \$_____ (Check or Money Order Enclosed)



300 Victory Drive
 WTAMU Box 60968
 Canyon, TX 79016-0968
 Phone: 806-655-7151
 Fax: 806-655-7159

E-mail: james.alexander@dshs.state.tx.us

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

TOP TEN NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR PETS (AND YOU) — by Sarah Lane

1. I will take my pet to a veterinarian for a yearly examination. Maintaining their health will not only save me money in the long run, but my pet will live a longer and happier life as well.
2. I most certainly will keep my pet's vaccinations up-to-date. A lot of ailments can be avoided and my pet deserves to be treated with the resources available today.
3. I will not feed my pet people food. Their digestive system is not meant to handle it and they will become "lurkers" around my kitchen and dining room table.
4. Feeding my pets good quality food in appropriately designated amounts will keep them healthy. They like routine feeding times and habits and will come to count on my discipline.
5. I will take my pets to training classes and use the techniques suggested so that they are well-behaved animals. They will come to know what's expected from them, and this will make my life and theirs less chaotic.
6. I will keep my pet thoroughly groomed, which includes brushing, clipping, or whatever else is necessary to keep them and my household more comfortable. This will reduce the amount of dander and hair that lingers, and keep longer-haired animals cooler in the summer.
7. I will not ignore my pets. They need exercise just as much as I do. Keeping them locked up in a postage stamp-sized backyard is not daily exercise.
8. I will be consistent when relating to my pet what is expected of them concerning their behavior with appropriate awards and punishment. I will not harm my animals when they misbehave, but rather my tone of voice will inform them of wrong-doings.
9. I will say no to exotic pets and animals; they're called wildlife for a reason.
10. I will take care to remove all dangerous objects, hazards, and chemicals from within the reach of my animal in my home. I might even keep a pet first aid kit handy in case they get hurt.

BONUS: I will love my pet! After all, it is I who decided to have them in the first place, and they depend upon me for their well being.
 © 2008 by ClassBrain.com

Tularemia and Feral Swine Revisited

By James L. Alexander, DVM, MPVM, HSR 1 Regional Zoonosis Control Veterinarian; and Karen McDonald, Zoonosis Specialist

Our December newsletter contained an article on tularemia being found in feral hogs in a couple of Texas counties. The story achieved a fairly wide distribution, based on comments we are receiving. We have heard that some processors are having second thoughts about handling feral swine because of what they apparently perceive to be a new danger associated with the animals. This is impacting the efforts to reduce the population, since the hunters/trappers want an outlet for the animals they capture.

In reality, nothing has changed about the feral hog population. Before tularemia was found to be present in them, it had been there but just not recognized. The same precautions mentioned in the

article are the same steps we have been advocating for years with respect to the brucellosis risk posed by these same animals. *The only change is the level of awareness of the potential for tularemia to be present.*

Anyone who has been involved in feral hog work does not necessarily need to cease. They just need to be aware and are advised to institute the precautions they should have been using in the past, or, if they desire, handle them in the same way as in the past but remain aware of the potential for exposure. The main point was to encourage people to be careful in handling *any wild game* and to alert their doctor to the possibility of a rare disease if the person becomes ill after contact with a game ani-

mal.

The article was meant to serve as a reminder to people of standard precautions to take when hunting (use insect repellent) or handling any wild game meat (wear gloves, protect the face) and cook it thoroughly if it is going to be eaten. These are the same precautions we have recommended for years.

To put this into perspective, consider the message issued during the summer months for preventing infection with the West Nile virus. It would be absurd to tell you to stay indoors and not enjoy your usual summer activities because of the mosquitoes. Instead, we provide you with some common sense precautions to follow to help you stay safe while outside. This article's objective

was no different: "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."

I hope this clarifies the issue. Nothing has changed except the level of awareness of a potential for disease exposure which has always been present. The recommended practices for protection have always been advocated, but now there is further evidence of the rationale for them.

If you have any questions concerning these issues, please feel free to contact me at james.alexander@dshs.state.tx.us or 806-655-7151.