



From Doc's Desk

By James Alexander, DVM, MPVM

HSR 1 is well ahead of our normal numbers when it comes to action on the rabies front. As of November 10 our total for positive cases stands at 62. This pales in comparison to our colleagues in some other regions, but it is unusual for our part of the state. In the first six months of 2011, our percentage of specimens that were positive exceeded 16%, a higher figure than any other region, although HSR 7 was a close second. Statewide the approximate year-to-date total through October was about 136% of the numbers for the first ten months of 2010. This is down from the 153% comparison through June 30. In terms of numbers, most of the increase has been due to rabid skunks, with 2010 recording 269 and 2011 having at least 508 confirmed through the end of October, an 89% increase. Percentage-wise, the greatest increase has been in the equidae, with 20 horses and one donkey confirmed rabid, a 200% increase from the seven in 2010.

The extreme drought apparently caused some wildlife to approach residences seeking water and food, thereby increasing the probability of animal or human contact with the skunks. Spillover of rabies into non-skunk species in Region 1 resulted in 11 cases being confirmed in 4 cats, 1 cow, 1 dog, and 5 horses.

The cats bring up a topic that

needs to be publicized more. Since 1998, we have had several incidents of skunks trying to carry off and/or kill litters of puppies and kittens. Our experience has been that at least one animal from the survivors will break with rabies and expose one or more people. It has happened again this year. Our three most recent rabid cats were kittens. One was a single stray cat that had been extracted from the mouth of a skunk and taken to a veterinary clinic. The cat was nursed back to health instead of being euthanized. Two people took post-exposure rabies treatment, one due to exposure to the cat and the other due to exposure to the skunk while rescuing the cat. The next kitten was from a litter that had been attacked by something, presumably a skunk. It eventually broke with rabies and exposed two care-givers. The cats remaining on the property were euthanized, which in my opinion was wise. The third kitten was feral and always stand-offish, until the fateful day when it acted friendly and then bit the person who picked it up.

Please encourage clients to euthanize kittens and puppies that have survived attacks on a litter. With prophylaxis costing \$2500 +/- per person for the biologics alone, an owner should be informed of that potential cost before a decision is made to try and salvage a young animal. Kittens and

puppies have no immunity to rabies and an immature immune system that probably will not respond to a vaccination before the rabies virus reaches the brain from the usual bite locations of the neck or head.

Please continue to remind pet owners of the law (and the dictates of common sense) for rabies vaccinations and live-stock owners of the advisability to vaccinate certain animals. I still strongly encourage dog owners to be sure their animals receive a distemper vaccination at a minimum in addition to rabies. 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.

Our rabies statistic are currently: Armstrong (3 skunks); Briscoe (2 skunks); Carson (3 skunks); Castro (6 skunks); Childress (4 skunks); Dickens (2 skunks); Donley (1 horse, 2 skunks); Floyd (1 horse); Gray (1 skunk); Hale (9 skunks); Hansford (1 horse); Hemphill (1skunk); Lamb (1 dog, 1 skunk); Lipscomb (1 skunk); Motley (1 cow); Parmer (1 skunk); Potter (5 skunks, 3 cats); Randall (6 skunks, 1 horse); Swisher (4 skunks); and Wheeler (1 horse, 1 cat).

Here's hoping that the positive numbers "fall" with the season change.

Inside this issue:

<i>ACOs and Continuing Education</i>	2
<i>But It's So CUTE!!!</i>	2
<i>How to Prevent or Respond to a Snake Bite</i>	3
<i>ACO Manual Updates</i>	4
<i>Potentially Helpful Links</i>	4
<i>How to Live a Good Life</i>	5
<i>Poster Contest</i>	5
<i>Innovations to Share?</i>	5
<i>A Dog's Purpose</i>	6
<i>Time's Up!</i>	6

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Animal Control Officers and Continuing Education

By Zoonosis Control staff, Region 4/5N (James Wright, DVM; Angela Hopkins; Samantha Puttick)

Chapter 829 of the Texas Health and Safety Code requires animal control officers (ACOs) to complete the DSHS Basic ACO course and to obtain 30 hours of continuing education (CE) every three-year period after completing the course.

The law defines an ACO as someone "employed, appointed, or otherwise engaged **primarily to enforce laws relating to animal control.**"

If you do animal control activities, but have other duties in your city or county to the extent that "enforcing laws relating to animal control" is not your primary duty, you may be exempt from the requirements for CE.

Likewise, if you are a staff member of an animal shelter, but are not a "street animal control officer," you may not meet the definition of an ACO. Shelter managers, if your staff

does not do actual animal control, the only time they "enforce laws relating to animal control" may be when the shelter is quarantining a biting animal might be interpreted as "enforcing the law," that activity is probably not your primary job. If that is the case, you and your staff are exempt from the law.

If your situation fits either of the scenarios above, please ask your supervisor for a **memo or note stating that "enforcing laws relating to animal control" is not your primary duty and you are exempt from the training requirements in Chapter 829.** Save that memo in your personal and shelter files so you can easily find it if you are ever questioned about your training status.

Note: Even if you are exempt from the training requirement, we welcome and encourage

you to attend our CE seminars. We believe you will gain knowledge from the presentations and will benefit from meeting other folks who work in the animal control and animal shelter world.

If you meet the definition of an animal control officer, **you are required to obtain CE and to keep records of your CE attendance.**

Who might ask to see documentation of your CE?

1. Your supervisor;
2. Other people in your chain of command;
3. A citizen or a lawyer for a citizen to whom you gave a citation;
4. The DSHS Zoonosis staff. In fact, when we inspect a shelter, we are required to check for required CE. Even if you do not operate a shelter, we may ask for your CE documentation at any time.



"With all thy getting, get understanding" — in this case, continuing education.

Dates to Remember:

- **November 28-December 4:** Puppy Mill Action Week. Sponsor: The Humane Society of the United States, 202-452-1100, www.humanesociety.org/puppymills.

But It's So CUTE!!!

By Suzan Norwood, Public Health Technician, and Karen McDonald, Zoonosis Specialist

Baby raccoons, skunks, kittens, and puppies are cute as a button, but do not be fooled by that sweet, cuddly exterior. All of them can and do bite and/or scratch sometimes, especially if they're scared or injured. And every mammal, of any age, is a potential carrier of rabies.

Wild fur-bearing animals, as defined in §71.001, Parks and Wildlife Code, are specified as beaver, ring-tailed cats, otters, opossums, red and gray foxes, badgers, minks, skunks, civet cats, nutria, raccoons, muskrats and weasels. **A license or permit is required to take, trap, possess, or sell the**

animal or its pelt, so, no, you may not keep them for pets unless you are legally licensed to do so. (This is a state law; counties and municipalities can always be more stringent in the laws they adopt, but they can never be more lenient.) If you find a wild animal, you should immediately contact your local animal control officer or game warden, and inform them. Depending on the circumstances, they can either trap and release the animal, trap it and take it to a licensed wildlife rehabilitation expert, or humanely euthanize it. It should be submitted for rabies testing

if the animal has been in an altercation with a human or with another animal.

Never approach puppies or kittens without asking the owners first. The owner can tell you if that little bundle of fur is likely to be receptive to gentle petting, or if it's more likely to morph into a blur of claws and fangs. And stray animals should never be approached or picked up except by a trained animal control officer or veterinarian.

Don't take chances! Not all rabid animals look like Cujo. Some look more like Benji.



Adorable? Yes. Good pet? NO!

How to Prevent or Respond to a Snake Bite

Excerpted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website

Editor's note: Due to the drought conditions and prevalence of wildfires, snakes have been seen in populated areas more and more. One Region 1 resident was bitten by a rattlesnake that was outside an office building in the middle of town; another was bitten on a schoolyard. Therefore, we are providing you with information from the CDC's website so you will know what to do to prevent or respond to a snake bite.

After a natural disaster, snakes may have been forced from their natural habitats and move into areas where they would not normally be seen or expected.

How to Prevent Snake Bites:

- Be aware of snakes that may be swimming in the water to get to higher ground and those that may be hiding under debris or other objects. (In this area, floods are few and far between. Instead, we need to be alert to snakes coming around houses, city parks, etc., in search of water and a more readily accessible food supply.)
- If you see a snake, back away from it slowly and do not touch it.

Signs of Snake Bites:

If you have to walk in high water (or tall weeds and grass), you may feel a bite, but not know that you were bitten by a snake. You may think it is another kind of bite or scratch. Pay attention to the following snake bite signs.

Depending on the type of snake, the signs and symptoms

may include:

- A pair of puncture marks at the wound
- Redness and swelling around the bite
- Severe pain at the site of the bite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Labored breathing (in extreme cases, breathing may stop altogether)
- Disturbed vision
- Increased salivation and sweating
- Numbness or tingling around your face and/or limbs

What to DO if You or Someone Else is Bitten by a Snake:

- If you or someone you know are bitten, try to see and remember the color and shape of the snake, which can help with treatment of the snake bite.
- Keep the bitten person still and calm. This can slow down the spread of venom if the snake is poisonous.
- Seek medical attention as soon as possible.
- Dial 911 or call local Emergency Medical Services (EMS).
- Apply first aid if you cannot get the person to the hospital right away: 1. Lay or sit the person down with the bite below the level of the heart; 2. Tell him/her to stay calm and still; and 3. Cover the bite with a clean, dry dressing.

What NOT to Do if You or Someone Else is Bitten by a Snake:

- Do not pick up the snake or

try to trap it. (This may put you or someone else at risk for a bite.)

- Do not apply a tourniquet.
- Do not slash the wound with a knife.
- Do not suck out the venom.
- Do not apply ice or immerse the wound in water.
- Do not drink alcohol as a pain killer.
- Do not drink caffeinated beverages.

The CDC website doesn't suggest it, but other sources state that if you have a smart phone or other digital camera and can safely do so without risking a bite, snap a quick photo of the snake to show to emergency responders. Do NOT approach the snake, and under no circumstances put yourself in a position where you are between the snake and its best means of escape. Snakes bite when they feel threatened, and if a snake feels cornered, you'll be the one who suffers for it.

And while Westerns have popularized the methods of "first aid" listed under the DO NOT category, current medical wisdom shows that applying a tourniquet can cut off circulation, leading to gangrene; slashing the wound with a knife is ineffective and adds yet another wound to deal with; "sucking out the venom" doesn't work, may cause more harm to the bite victim, and could also introduce venom through the mouth tissues of the would-be rescuer; and alcohol and caffeine speed up circulation, thus speeding up the spread of venom through the bloodstream.



Snakes don't like to be startled, any more than we do. The difference: they bite whatever startles them.

Watch your step when you're out walking, especially if you're in tall weeds or grass, even if you're in town. Snakes and other critters are coming closer to civilization in order to get food and water.



Rattlesnakes are the most prevalent venomous snakes in our area.

ACO Manual Updates

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

Hello, ACOs.....

Due to the actions of the legislature last spring, certain parts of our ACO Manual need to be updated. **You need to print and install these changes in your ACO Manual!!!**

Go to the Manual web site: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/health/zoonosis/education/training/aco/manual/onLine/>.

You should see this:

Texas Department of State Health Services Animal Control Officer Training Manual

The Animal Control Officer (ACO) Training Manual is a study reference prepared by the Texas Department of State Health Services' Zoonosis Control Branch (ZCB). The online manual contains chapters covered in the ZCB's Basic ACO Training course, including such topics as animal identification, capture and restraint, transportation, impoundment, and disposition, plus health, safety, sanitation, records, controlled substances, animal cruelty, investigations, and communication skills. There are copies of the full set of laws pertinent to animal control.

Additionally, the manual is an excellent reference tool for animal control agencies. The manual is available at this website at no charge or can be ordered from the ZCB Regional Office for your area at a cost of \$40.00. Please note that the manual is copyrighted and cannot be reproduced by any means without permission from the Department of State Health Services.

Below is the entire text for the Animal Control Officer Training Manual which was fully revised in 2008. Please note the subsequent section that contains the September 1, 2009 details.

At the bottom, you will see the changes that became effective in 2009 and the ones that are being made in 2011.

Important: If you have not installed the 2009 changes, you need to install them before you install the 2011 changes. How can you tell if any updates have been installed? First, you can check the Change Documentation Sheet (after the manual's title page) to see if/when any updates were incorporated. Just to be sure,

you can also look at the Table of Contents in your Manual. At the bottom of the page will be the words Zoonosis Control—1/08 or Zoonosis Control—9/09. If it says Zoonosis Control—1/08, you need to install the 2009 updates before you install the 2011 updates. If it says Zoonosis Control—9/09, you are ready to install the 2011 updates.

Click on the changes you need and print them. Follow the Update Instructions. Be sure to document that you made the changes and the date you did so on the Change Documentation Sheet.

[Cover \(PDF\)](#)

[Spine \(PDF\)](#)

[Title Page \(PDF\)](#)

[Change Documentation Sheet \(PDF\)](#)

[Table of Contents \(PDF\)](#)

[Basic Chapters](#)

[Texas Laws](#)

[Glossary](#)

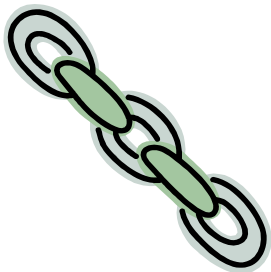
[2009 Updates—September 1, 2009 Instructions](#)

[2011 Updates—September 1, 2011 Instructions](#)



Keep your manuals updated! It's fast, free, and NECESSARY!

One of the most important aspects of any job is keeping current on the rules and regulations that govern that position. In animal control, various changes in legislation might well impact you and your agency.



Each bit of information is a link in the chain of professional growth.

Potentially Helpful Links

- ◆ For the new Dog or Cat Breeder Act: <http://www.license.state.tx.us/bre/bre.htm>. The Act, despite having passed in the House and becoming effective June 17, 2011, is still a work in progress. "AS AMENDED BY ACTS 2011, 82nd LEG., HB 1451, SECTION 5 READS: Notwithstanding Chapter 802, Occupations Code, as added by this Act, a dog or cat breeder is not required to (1) hold a license under that chapter to act as a dog or cat breeder before September 1, 2012; or (2) comply with the standards adopted under Subchapter E, Chapter 802, Occupations Code, as added by this Act, before September 1, 2012."

How to Live a Good Life

By a dog

If a dog was the teacher, you would learn things like:

- ◆ When loved ones come home, always run to meet them.
- ◆ Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joyride.
- ◆ Allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your face to be pure ecstasy.
- ◆ Take naps.
- ◆ Stretch before rising.
- ◆ Run, romp, and play daily.
- ◆ Thrive on attention and let people touch you.
- ◆ Avoid biting when a simple growl will do.
- ◆ On warm days, stop to lie on your back on the grass.
- ◆ On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shady tree.
- ◆ When you're happy, dance around and wag your entire body.
- ◆ Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.
- ◆ Eat with gusto and enthusiasm. Stop when you have had enough.
- ◆ Be loyal. Never pretend to be something you're not.
- ◆ If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it.
- ◆ When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by, and nuzzle them gently.
- ◆ Be always grateful for each new day and for the blessing of you.
- ◆ Enjoy every moment of every day.



It's almost Thanksgiving. Let's be thankful for the simple things in life.

ATTENTION: Teachers and Community Leaders! 2012 Rabies Awareness and Prevention Poster Contest

Teachers can save lives through education. In Texas, school grounds are the number one location for exposure to rabid bats, and many teachers have firsthand knowledge of this fact. Make a difference by becoming more knowledgeable yourself and making your "kids" smart about this fatal disease and preventive actions they can take at school and home. Using this poster contest can generate enthusiasm (and some very neat prizes for the winners!) while educating them about how to protect themselves, and their pets, from rabies! Details can be found at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/health/zoonosis/>. This would be a perfect activity for schools participating in C-Scope as an informational text or procedural text assignment. Poster submission deadline is **April 6, 2012**.

Your community's children can help educate the rest of your residents about the dangers of rabies. Just think how much of the taxpayers' money might be saved by avoiding post-exposure treatment!

Do You Have Any Innovations to Share?

Oscar Galan of Tulia has reported that they are now taking pictures of all the animals they pick up and will put them into a digital frame that will rotate through the photos. Instead of Oscar having to go to the shelter every time someone is looking for a lost dog, the owners can go to the police department and check the photo display.

This saves time, prevents agitating the animals that are in the shelter each time someone comes in, and allows for a quick update when an animal is located and returned to the owner.

Do any of you have any innovations that you have put into practice that have proven to be

helpful? Or maybe you've tried something that sounded good at the time and turned out to be more of a problem than a solution. Either way, if you'd like to share that information with our readers, please contact us. We can either write up an article about it, or publish your article, with your very own byline.



We can help each other out by sharing ideas, even if you may think you're the only one who hadn't thought of it yet. Sometimes it's the obvious that escapes us longest.



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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	Briscoe	Hall	Childress
Bailey	Lamb	Hale	Floyd	Matney	
Cochran	Beckley	Lubbock	Crosby	Dickens	King
Yeakum	Terry	Lynn	Garza		

A Dog's Purpose: Wise Words from a Six-Year-Old Boy

Being a veterinarian, I had been called to examine a ten-year-old Irish wolfhound named Belker.

The dog's owners, Ron, his wife Lisa, and their little boy, Shane, were all very attached to Belker, and they were hoping for a miracle.

I examined Belker and found that he was dying of cancer. I told the family we couldn't do anything for Belker, and offered to perform the euthanasia procedure for the old dog in their home.

As we made arrangements, Ron and Lisa told me they thought it would be good for six-year-old Shane to observe the procedure. They felt Shane might learn something from the experience.

The next day, I felt the familiar catch in my throat as Belker's family surrounded him. Shane seemed so calm, petting the old dog for the last time, that I wondered if he understood what was going on. Within a few minutes, Belker slipped peacefully away.

The little boy seemed to accept Belker's transition without any difficulty or confusion. We sat together for a while after Belker's death, wondering aloud about the sad fact that animal lives are shorter than human lives. Shane, who had been listening quietly, piped up. "I know why."

Startled, we all turned to him. What came out of his mouth next stunned me. I'd never heard a more comforting explanation.

He said, "People are born so that they can learn how to live a good life—like loving everybody all the time and being nice, right?" The six-year-old continued, "Well, dogs already know how to do that, so they don't have to stay as long."

Requests for Information

- ◆ "I would like to know which municipal and non-profit shelters are using social networking (Facebook) to help with adoptions and rescues. Have your adoptions and rescues increased since implementing the use of social networking? Please respond to ctrego@coppelltx.org or 972-304-3515. Thanks so much!" - Charlene Trego, Animal Services Officer, City of Coppell Animal Services

Time's Up: Are You Still in Compliance?

Karen McDonald, MS, Zoonosis Specialist

Chapter 829 of the Texas Health and Safety Code, Animal Control Officer Training, grandfathered in any animal control officer (ACO) that had successfully passed the basic exam at any time prior to July 1, 2008. All were considered in compliance with the law and at a zero balance for continuing education (CE) credit. Each would be required to attain 30 hours of CE within three years. (Any ACO who successfully passes a basic exam must

meet that requirement within three years of the date of their basic exam, for those who took the test after July 1, 2008.) For those that were grandfathered in, June 30, 2011 was the deadline. Are you still in compliance?

If you accumulated at least 30 hours of CE by June 30, 2011, your CE count returned to a zero balance, you maintain your status as a currently trained ACO, and your three-year period began again on

July 1, 2011.

If you failed to accumulate the required 30 hours, your CE count returned to a zero balance, you lost your status as a basic trained officer, and you must retake a basic course, successfully passing the exam again, in order to be in compliance.

Failure to comply with the requirements of this chapter is a Class C misdemeanor.



Laws are not suggestions. They're requirements.