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For Immediate Release

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Positive Rabies Case Reported

A positive case of rabies in an animal has been reported to Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD). This positive rabies test was from a dog in Perkins County. Rabies is a severe, rapidly progressing neurological disease. It spreads through saliva (spit), most commonly through contact with an infected wild animal.

“This is the first confirmed case of rabies in southwest Nebraska this year,” explains Melissa Propp RN, Clinic Manager for SWNPHD. “We would like to remind everyone about the importance of vaccinating pets since they are more likely to come into contact with wild animals. Staying up to date on rabies vaccinations helps keep you and your pets safe.”

What to watch for

Watch for odd behavior changes in pets that have possibly been around wild animals. They may suddenly have difficulty eating or drinking, or start drooling excessively. They may also show a sudden change in behavior, like acting aggressive, snarling or snapping, or nervousness.

Keep you and your pets away from wild animals that are normally active at night but are seen during the day, or that have lost their fear of humans.

What to do if bitten

If your pet is bitten or has contact with an animal showing signs of rabies, contact your veterinarian. If your pet is up to date on rabies vaccination, they may need a booster shot. If your pet is not vaccinated, they will need to be isolated for several months to watch for symptoms. If an animal bites you, wash the wounds immediately with soap and water and seek medical attention right away.

If it is safe to do so, catch the animal and work with your local veterinarian to get it tested for rabies. When handling the dead animal, wear gloves and eye protection and use long-handled tools to move the animal so you can avoid any contaminated body fluids.

The best method to prevent rabies is to make sure that pets, livestock, and horses are protected against rabies with current vaccinations. Talk to your veterinarian if you are unsure if your pets are up to date.

For more information contact Melissa Propp, RN at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow SWNPHD on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram or view the website at www.swhealth.ne.gov. ###