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For Immediate Release
Contact: Melissa Propp, RN at 308-345-4223

Positive Rabies Case in Southwest Nebraska

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has confirmed a positive rabies case in an animal in the health district. The rabies exposure was from a skunk in Keith County, and only involved domestic animals. No human exposure occurred from this case.

In skunks as in other warm-blooded animals, rabies is a severe, rapidly progressing neurological disease. It spreads through saliva, most commonly through contact with an infected wild animal.

Rabies should be suspected in all animals that show a sudden change in behavior that is different from normal, such as animals normally active at night being seen during the day. Signs of rabies in animals may include any of the following:

- Increased aggression
- Odd behavior changes, nervousness, irritability
- General sickness
- Difficulty eating or drinking
- Excessive drooling

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), rabies is a medical emergency. Any person with a suspected exposure should wash wounds immediately with soap and water and seek medical attention from a healthcare professional right away. Rabies is a deadly viral infection that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals if not treated quickly after an exposure.

“Even animals that may look friendly should be treated with caution if you are unfamiliar with them. Teaching your children about animal safety is extremely important to prevent any possible exposure to rabies,” explains Melissa Propp RN, Clinic Manager with SWNPHD.

The best method to prevent rabies exposure is to ensure that pets, livestock, and horses are protected against rabies with current vaccinations. Contact your local veterinarian, local healthcare provider or public health department regarding rabies vaccination, testing, and exposures.

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 and Instagram or call 308-345-4223, one number three locations, McCook, Imperial, and Ogallala.

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