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# Bollinger County Placed on Rabies Alert - Notifies Local Vets

SEPTEMBER 15TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Bollinger County Placed on Rabies Alert - Notifies Local Vets

**Advance, Missouri** - On September 2, 2015 Dr. Brett Ward of Helping Hands Veterinary Clinic received a letter from the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.

The letter states that an 8-week-old puppy from Bollinger County tested positive for RABIES on August 26, 2015. Because rabies in a domestic animal represents a serious and imminent public health threat, the Missouri Dept. of Health and Senior Services placed Bollinger County under a RABIES ALERT!

The puppy belonged to a resident of Bollinger County and was one of a litter of four. Around July 20<sup>th</sup> of this year a skunk was observed under the front porch of the owner's home where the puppies and their mother were located.

Skunks are known carrier of Rabies in Missouri and it is presumed that's how the puppy was infected. The puppies were adopted to three families and on August 21<sup>st</sup> the puppy in question became sick, was subsequently euthanized and submitted to the Missouri State Public Health laboratory for rabies testing.

A positive rabies test resulted on August 26<sup>th</sup> whereby 12 people who had contact with the puppy were notified and are receiving anti-rabies series of shots.

The remaining puppies were euthanized and tested negative. As you know, these results do not mean that the puppies were not infected with the rabies virus.

Instead, the results indicate that since there was no rabies virus in the brain, there was also no rabies virus in the saliva. Therefore, these puppies could not have infected anyone who came in contact with them.

With that being said, the three puppies were not infectious when tests were performed, however they could have gone on to develop rabies over the next several months and become infectious at that time.

No one wants to have puppies euthanized, but this option must be employed at times to protect the health of the public according to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.

According to the MDHSS, RABIES occurs naturally in Missouri wild animals and occasionally in domestic animals. In 2014, a total of 27 rabid animals were detected. They included 9 skunks, 16 bats, and 2 cats. Missouri has averaged about 50 rabid animals per year over the past ten years. The main animals were bats and skunks. Statewide to date in 2015, a total of 21 rabid animals have been detected, including 13 bats, 6 skunks, and 2 dogs.

Please be responsible and vaccinate your dogs and cats against rabies. It serves as a buffer between the wildlife reservoir and the human population. Two individuals have died in recent years from rabies in Missouri.

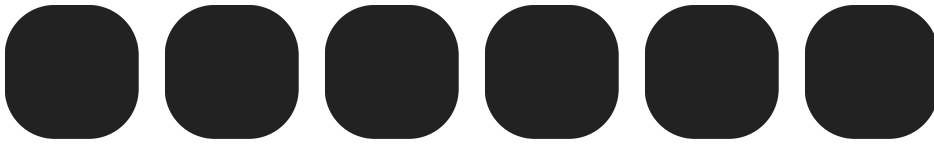
See your local Veterinarian for RABIES vaccinations immediately. Most cities and counties have ordinances that require the vaccination annually.

If you need to get your pet vaccinated please contact your local Veterinarian. Dr. Brett Ward with Helping Hands Veterinary Clinic will be glad to schedule you an appointment as soon as possible. To contact them call (573) 321-2021.

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