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

Second Positive Rabies Case in Southwest Nebraska

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has been notified of a second animal that has tested positive for rabies in the nine-county health district. The positive rabies case was in a skunk in Furnas County.

Summer activities are getting started and SWNPHD would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone about outdoor safety tips for animals and insects you may encounter in southwest Nebraska.

Animal Safety:

“Be mindful of strange animals in your neighborhood or while camping. Especially if the animal is acting strangely. Animals that are normally seen at night but are out in the day or any animal that shows aggression may put you or a loved one at risk,” states Melissa Propp, SWNPHD Public Health Nurse.

- Teach children not to touch or handle wild animals or attempt to pet strange animals.
- If you see an animal that is acting strangely, get everyone to a safe location.
- If you put down an animal that is acting strangely, be mindful in how you handle it. Wear gloves, sanitize tools with a bleach solution and wash your hands thoroughly after handling. If you think the animal may have rabies, contact your local vet to arrange for rabies testing.

Insect Safety:

With the cool wet weather this spring, ticks are in abundance this year. As the weather becomes warmer mosquitoes will be out in greater numbers as well. Both ticks and mosquitoes can carry diseases that can make humans very sick. In southwest Nebraska, tick bites can cause Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever or Tularemia and mosquitoes may carry West Nile Virus.

Tick protection

- Wear an EPA approved bug spray.
- Wear long sleeves and long pants when in areas of high brush or long grass.

- Do a thorough tick check at the end of outdoor activities. Carefully check all areas of the body. Pay particular attention to hairlines, behind the ears, groin, belly button, waistline, and behind the knees.
- Take a shower upon returning indoors to help wash away any unattached ticks and put your clothes in the dryer on the hottest setting for 1 hour.

Mosquito protection

- Wear an EPA approved bug spray.
- Wear long sleeves and long pants during dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Repair any holes in screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.
- Empty standing water and check for any containers that may trap water.

The best way to avoid becoming sick is to prevent bites from ticks, mosquitoes, or animals. If bites from insects do occur, watch for any symptoms and if you become ill notify your medical provider about your exposure from the bite. If you are bitten by an animal contact your medical provider as soon as possible. Contact your local veterinarian and public health department regarding rabies testing and exposures.

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. For more information call Melissa Propp, RN at 308-345-4223. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th Street, McCook – one block north of Arby's. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

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