

# Rabies

(Continued from Page A1)

that many of the rabid animals from his county have been well-furred and apparently healthy. Thus far, his county is the "hot spot" for rabies in Pennsylvania, accounting for 65 of the 136 cases statewide this year.

Of this total, raccoons have been the primary carriers, responsible for over 100 of the cases, says Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture spokesman Bob Bunty. Other carriers have included skunks, bats, foxes, cats, dogs, woodchucks and even flying squirrels.

"We're well on the way to passing last year's total of 170 cases," remarks Bunty.

Though Franklin County currently has the dubious distinction of being Pennsylvania's rabies capital, things seem to be winding down, according to Ron Schmuck.

"Rabies really got started in my end of the county (southern half) about a year ago in March," Schmuck recalls, "and this spring we averaged about 15 to 30 calls a day." The game protector says the number of cases has declined steadily this summer, and he's hopeful that rabies has run its course in Franklin County.

Unfortunately, a decrease in Franklin County rabies activity may only be the signal to look elsewhere for further outbreaks.

"The disease is moving north and east because of the topography" says Jones, pointing out that rabies has not yet crossed the South Mountain, and those cases reported to the east in

Adams County have come from the south in Carroll County, Maryland. The disease seems to be moving south and west out of Virginia, as well, Jones points out, stating that the outbreak is moving at a rate of about 25 to 50 miles per year.

Though the disease's current course would seem to target those counties north and east of Franklin as future sites of the epidemic, Dale Sheffer, the Game Commission's director of the Bureau of Game Management, is hesitant to plot its course. Sheffer points out that vacationers who transport pets from one area to another may unknowingly spread rabies if their pet comes into contact with an infected animal.

Practically speaking, rabies is transmitted only when the saliva from an infected animal is introduced into an open wound on another warm-blooded animal, says Jones. And though the disease is incurable, it is quite easily prevented.

The first step after being bitten by a suspected carrier is to cleanse the wound thoroughly with soap and water, Dr. Jones advises.

If the offending animal is a dog or cat, Jones recommends a 10-day observation period to determine if the animal has the disease. Since dogs and cats will shed the virus only three to five days before exhibiting symptoms, the 10-day wait will tell the tale, according to Dr. Jones.

But when wildlife is involved, Dr. Jones advises that the animal should be dispatched immediately and subjected to laboratory testing. Care should be taken not to shoot the animal in the head or otherwise damage the brain as this

area is critical to the testing procedure. Test results should be available within 24 hours, and Jones recommends that treatment begin with 72 hours when the case does not involve a domesticated animal held for observation.

Prevention of the disease after exposure involves a five-shot series of vaccine over a one-month period. Injections of vaccine are given on days zero, three, seven, 14 and 28. In addition to the initial dose of vaccine administered on day zero, a dose of immune globulin is given. This component of the treatment is very important, according to Jones, because 10 to 12 days will pass before the body develops rabies antibodies from the vaccine. Immune globulin acts as insurance during this period.

Dr. Jones reports that there is no record of anyone contracting rabies after receiving this series of injections.

All animals involved in non-human exposure (exposure involving farm animals or pets) are currently being tested at the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's lab in Summerdale, located across the Susquehanna River from Harrisburg. Animals responsible for human exposure should be submitted to the State Health Department lab in Lionville, located in Chester County. An additional Health Department testing center is located in Allegheny County in the Pittsburgh area.

Because of the current volume of testing being done, Dale Sheffer advises that only those animals involved in direct contact with humans or other animals be tested.

Sheffer points out that only one out of every four suspected carriers tested actually has rabies, and other diseases such as distemper may cause similar symptoms in wildlife.

Ron Schmuck advises handling all suspect carcasses with disposable rubber gloves that can be buried with the animal. Pouring gasoline, kerosene or ammonia over the burial site will discourage other animals from digging up the carcass, says Schmuck.

There is no need to dispose of shovels or other implements used

to handle carcasses, says Dr. Jones, since the fragile rabies virus dies as soon as the saliva dries. This usually takes only five or 10 minutes, reports Jones.

Pointing out that most cases of human contact with rabies involve dogs and cats, Dr. Jones urges pet owners to make sure that all their dogs and cats are vaccinated. Jones emphasizes that this includes all farm cats, since vaccination will prove less costly than treatment programs for children who frequently interact with pets on the farm.

## Rabies clinic slated for York County

STEWARTSTOWN — The Stewartstown Community 4-H Club will sponsor a Rabies Vaccination Clinic on Friday, July 13, at the Eureka Fire Company building. Hours of the clinic are 5:30 through 8:30 p.m.

Three veterinarians are

scheduled to be on hand throughout the three-hour clinic, which is opened to the public. Cost of the rabies vaccine shots is \$4.00 per animal.

The Eureka company building is located just north of Stewartstown, on Route 24.

# USDA milk order hearing on Wednesday

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Department of Agriculture will hold a public hearing at 9 a.m. Wednesday on a proposal to amend the classified pricing provisions of

all 45 federal milk marketing orders.

Edward T. Coughlin, a dairy official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the hearing will be held at the Ramada Hotel Old Town, 901 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria, Va.

Coughlin said proposed amendments would provide a separate pricing class for milk used to produce butter and nonfat dry milk. The minimum price under federal orders for the new class would be the lower of the Minnesota-Wisconsin manufacturing grade milk price or a butter-nonfat dry milk formula price.

The hearing was requested by the National Milk Producers Federation, Washington, D.C., an association that represents most of the dairy cooperatives in the nation.

Presently milk used for butter and nonfat dry milk is classified with milk used to produce hard cheeses and priced at the Minnesota-Wisconsin price. The National Milk Producers Federation claims that at times the market value of milk used in butter and nonfat dry milk drops below the Minnesota-Wisconsin price, and contends that at such times federal order prices for these uses should be lower, Coughlin said.

Federal milk marketing orders cover about 68 percent of all domestic milk production and 80 percent of the milk used for fluid purposes. The orders set minimum prices regulated handlers must pay dairy farmers for their milk. The orders do not set the prices consumers pay for milk or dairy products at retail outlets.

The proposal to amend the orders was scheduled to be published in the June 27 Federal Register. Copies also may be obtained from any of the milk order market administrators, or from Dairy Division, AMS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

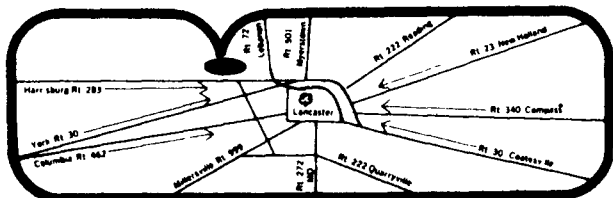
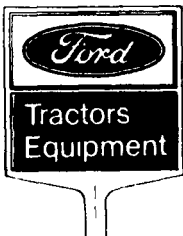
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