Rabies Law Signed

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required under the new law to be performed under the supervision of a trained veterinarian with the exception of Department of Agriculture certified owners of kennels, who are permitted to vaccinate their own animals.

Rabies among wildlife has become an increasingly serious problem. For 30 years prior to 1982,



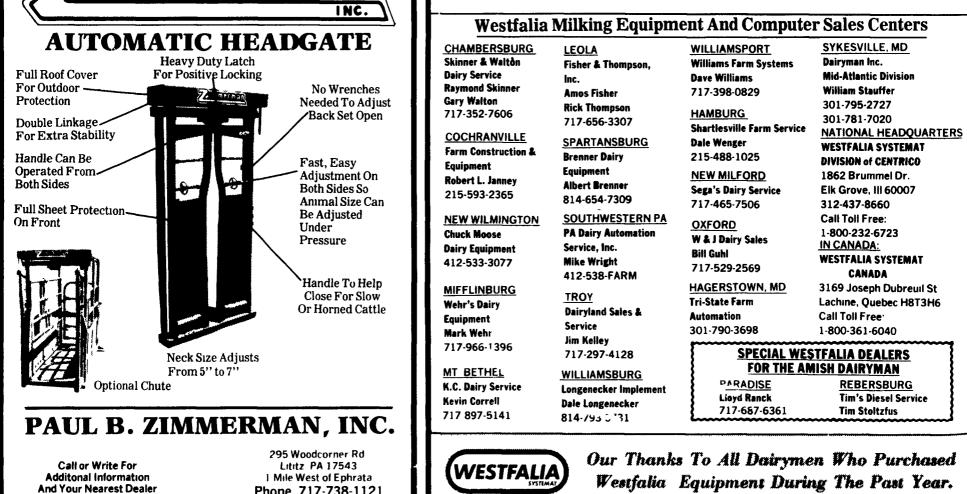
there was an average of 20 to 30 confirmed animal rabies cases in Pennsylvania annually. The number shot up to 74 cases in 1982 and has increased steadily, reaching 450 in 1985 and totaling 561 so far this year.

The current outbreak spread into Pennsylvania from Virginia and Maryland. Most of the Pennsylvania cases have occurred in the south central portion of the state, affecting for the most part raccoons, skunks, bats and various other wild animals.

"By no mans can we legislate the elimination of rabies," Thornburgh said, "but Senate Bill 562 will go a long way towards keeping the disease from spreading from the wilds into our homes."

The legislation also requires the state Department of Agriculture to continue efforts to prevent and





control rables in cooperation with the Department of Health and the state Game Commission.

Department of Agriculture will continue to assist in establishing low-cost anti-rabies clinics. Also, the department may now contract

with Wistar Institute in Philadelphia for a comprehensive ate Game Commission. multi-year wildlife vaccine Under the measure the research program. A \$273,000 appropriation is included for this purpose.

Earlier this year, the Governor's Office of Policy Development took

the lead in setting up an interagency task force to coordinate the state's anti-rabies program. A toll-free hotline (1-800-692-7254) was established to answer questions regarding rabies and to refer situations to the proper state or local agency.



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