

NEWS RELEASE

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919-496-3344, martha_mobley@ncsu.edu**Beef cow tested positive for rabies in Franklin County***State vet encourages livestock owners to vaccinate before peak rabies season.*

LOUISBURG – Summer is peak rabies season and State Veterinarian Doug Meckes is encouraging North Carolina livestock owners to consider having their animals vaccinated against disease.

“This year we have seen a rise in the number of reported rabies in livestock at seven cases,” Meckes said. “Last year the state had three cases reported for the entire year. Horses, cattle and goats are naturally curious animals, which puts them at risk for a bite if a rabid animal gets through their fence line.” Rabies is transmitted primarily in saliva through a bite. Livestock infected with rabies usually appear depressed, have a lack of appetite; difficulty eating, drinking or swallowing; profuse salivation; blindness; head-pressing; circling; vocalization; fever; strained defecation; increased sexual excitement or activity; limp tail, anus, or tongue. Constant yawning, itching or nibbling may be a sign of rabies, too. Rabies can be associated with neurological problems such as incoordination, decreased muscle tone and reflexes, shifting lameness, or partial-to-complete paralysis. Horse owners should be aware that rabies can often mimic symptoms of colic in horses.

In the case of the beef cow in Franklin County, the cow was very aggressive and had the “*furious*” form of rabies versus the “*dumb*” form of the disease.

The incubation for rabies is between two weeks and six months. Once symptoms appear, the disease is almost always fatal.

Other ways to protect yourself and animals:

- Do not feed or attract wildlife to your yard or try to capture wild animals.
- Call your local animal control if you notice a nocturnal animal out during the day and demonstrating strange behavior such as no fear of humans or aggressive behavior. Franklin County Animal Control may be contacted at 919-496-3032.
- If you hunt, use gloves while skinning animals, particularly when handling nerve tissue or organs.
- If you are scratched or come into contact with the saliva of an animal you suspect was rabid, seek medical attention immediately.

Livestock owners should discuss with their veterinarians about the risk of rabies in their area and preventive vaccinations.

An upcoming rabies clinic for pets in Franklin County will be conducted by Tar River Animal Hospital on Saturday, July 13, 2019, from 8 - 9 a.m., at the Franklin County Animal Shelter, 351 T Kemp Rd., Louisburg. The rabies vaccination costs \$5.00 cash or check.