## News from the Wyoming Livestock Board and the Wyoming Department of Health

Wednesday, May 3, 2006

## **State Revises New Rabies Rules**

CHEYENNE – Wyoming's recently developed rabies rules are being revised through the state's emergency rule process to clarify the relationship between relevant state and local authority, and to allow some professional judgment and flexibility in certain situations.

Designed to encourage people to have their pets vaccinated and to help protect the public from rabies exposure, the Wyoming rabies rules were developed under authority of the State Veterinarian with concurrence of the Wyoming Livestock Board. Wyoming Department of Health officials were also consulted.

"Some local jurisdictions have their own rabies exposure and prevention rules, including requiring vaccination for pets, but many do not," said Dr. Walt Cook, assistant state veterinarian with the Wyoming Livestock Board. "The emergency adjustment to the state rules clearly establishes that when they exist, local rules will govern when they're consistent with these rules."

The recently approved rules required that any unvaccinated animal that bites a human be euthanized for immediate rabies testing. This emergency adjustment allows for the Wyoming State Veterinarian or a designee, such as local, licensed veterinarians, to recommend quarantine with a 10-day observation or euthanasia following an evaluation of the situation in conjunction with a public health authority.

"This change will allow flexibility in those situations where common sense demands it," said Dr. Dwayne Oldham, Wyoming state veterinarian.

The original rules were developed to more clearly define policies and protocol for decisions being made by the State Veterinarian in consultation with the Wyoming Department of Health. The rules were made available for public comment from October 25 to December 16, 2005. Invitations for public comment were distributed to all county commissioners, Wyoming veterinarians and many other groups and individuals. A public comment period is also planned for the emergency revisions to the rules.

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