



Oct. 16, 2007

### **Skunk killed by Rottweiler on FM 1902 tests positive for rabies**

A skunk killed by a Rottweiler in the backyard of a home on FM 1902 in Burleson tested positive for rabies.

The dead skunk was shipped to Austin on Oct. 15. On Oct. 16, the laboratory confirmed the positive test.

Burleson animal control officers responded to a report of an injured skunk in the 8300 block of FM 1902 on Saturday, Oct. 13. The skunk was dead when officers arrived. The normal procedure for the exposure of a domestic animal to high risk wildlife, such as a skunk, is to ship the wild animal to Austin for rabies testing.

There is a second dog, a terrier mix, in the home with the Rottweiler. That dog was not exposed to the rabid skunk, but it has been exposed to the Rottweiler in the three days since the skunk was killed.

The dog's owners have several options. The first is to release the Rottweiler to the City for euthanasia and rabies testing. The second option is to isolate the dog for 45 days, if the dog is current on the rabies vaccination, or 90 days if the animal is not current on the vaccination.

In the 45-day scenario, the dog will be given a booster shot. If there are any changes in the dog's normal behavior during that 45-day period, the owner must call the dog's veterinarian to have the animal euthanized and sent to the Texas Department of State Health Services for rabies testing.

In the 90-day scenario, the Rottweiler will receive three booster shots. The requirements for euthanasia and rabies testing are the same.

If the owners choose not to turn the Rottweiler over to the City for euthanasia and testing, both dogs should be isolated and go through the booster shot procedure.

As of Tuesday afternoon, the animal control officers had been unable to contact the dog's owners.

Burleson animal control officers emphasize properly vaccinating pets against rabies. There is no iron-clad guarantee that a pet cannot become infected with rabies, even with the vaccination, but it makes contracting the often-fatal disease less likely.

Burleson's animal care and control ordinance requires that all dogs and cats be vaccinated against rabies annually and that pets wear their rabies vaccination tag at all times.

People can limit exposure to rabies by avoiding interaction with wildlife. Although some people like to set food out for wildlife, especially raccoons, it is a practice that rabies control authorities warn against because it attracts animals at high risk for rabies into residential areas where both people and pets can be exposed.

Signs of rabies in an animal include changes in their behavior, general sickness, problems swallowing, and an increase in drool or saliva (which makes a rabid animal look like it is foaming at the mouth). A wild animal will appear abnormally tame or sick. A rabid animal may bite at everything if excited or animals may have difficulty moving or appear to be paralyzed.

Rabies is caused by a virus. An animal, or human, gets rabies through the saliva from a bite. Rabies is not transmitted through the blood. Any mammal can contract rabies. That category includes raccoons, skunks, foxes, bats, dogs, cats, cattle, and humans.

Burleson's animal services division is the rabies control authority for the Burleson city limits. Questions about rabies or steps to ensure pet safety should be directed to the Burleson Animal Shelter at 817-447-5426.

For more information about this press release, call the public information office at 817-447-5400, ext. 286.