



Bob Wise
Governor

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES



Paul L. Nusbaum
Secretary

ORAL RABIES VACCINATION PROGRAM MEMORANDUM

To: West Virginia Active Rabies Surveillance Counties and Interested Parties
From: West Virginia Oral Rabies Vaccination Program
Date: April 11, 2001
Re: February and March 2001 Active Rabies Surveillance Project Update

Project Update

The West Virginia Oral Rabies Vaccination Program is off and running, and active surveillance efforts in 19 counties are under way. Dr. Andrew Sattler, the state health department veterinarian working on the project, conducted an initial site visit to nearly all counties in the active surveillance region during the month of March. Some topics covered in these initial site visits included proper techniques for specimen collection and brainstem removal, and manual or electronic collection of latitude and longitude coordinates. Personnel from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will complete the initial site visits and will begin conducting follow-up visits to assist local health departments with surveillance.

February and March Data

Even though the program is just getting started, it is important to take a look at the data. Tables on page two of this memorandum indicate that six specimens were tested from the active surveillance area in February. None of these specimens included latitude and longitude coordinates. After training, March data indicates an increase to 24 surveillance specimens from this region, with an overall data completeness rate of 71%. The data completeness rate is likely to continue to improve since most of the counties have now been trained on manual coordinate collection. Some counties are using a GPS unit to collect this data, and we anticipate providing GPS units to all West Virginia counties without a GPS unit in the near future.

Latitude and Longitude Collection in All West Virginia Counties

Before the active surveillance project began, most specimens in West Virginia were tested for rabies because of a human or pet/domestic animal exposure. West Virginia counties have not previously collected latitude and longitude coordinates on these specimens. Active surveillance counties are now also collecting raccoon, skunk, and fox specimens from animals that are exhibiting abnormal behavior, or roadkills. These counties should collect latitude and longitude coordinates so that the leading edge of the rabies epizootic can be precisely located.

Thus far, active surveillance counties appear to be providing latitude and longitude coordinates on only those specimens from which a brainstem sample was extracted. However, human and pet/domestic animal exposure specimens are also important in the project data. *We are therefore requesting collection of latitude and longitude coordinates on all raccoons, skunks, and foxes submitted for testing, regardless of whether the head or a brainstem sample was sent to the state lab.*

One goal of this project is to enable all West Virginia counties to collect and submit latitude and longitude coordinates on all terrestrial animals tested for rabies in the state, beginning with January 1, 2001 cases. Counties not in the active surveillance area should therefore collect this data on all terrestrial animals submitted for rabies testing. Regional Epidemiologists or District Sanitarians will conduct trainings on manual collection of this data. A GPS unit may also be used in place of manual determination. Surveillance project funding will be used to provide a GPS unit to all counties without such a device in the near future.

(continued on page 2)



Laboratory reports on all positive terrestrial animal rabies cases reported since January 1, 2001 have been sent to the Regional Epidemiologists or George Sabota, the Wheeling District Sanitarian. These reports will be used during the training sessions to collect latitude and longitude data on first quarter 2001 positive cases. We encourage all counties to take advantage of this training and begin providing this data in the future.

Public Awareness Activities

Diana Sears at the Nicholas County Health Department conducted an inservice on March 1 for the Department of Transportation garages in her area. Approximately 50 state road workers attended this inservice. She discussed the active surveillance project, proper techniques for handling roadkill, and what to do if attacked by a potentially rabid animal. She also distributed pamphlets at this inservice. Diana has also contacted the local veterinarian to discuss the project and provide materials to be displayed in the veterinarian's office lobby.

An article appeared in Logan County's local newspaper discussing the project, and the Logan County Health Department placed an ad in the paper notifying the public to be on the lookout for surveillance specimens.

Articles discussing the project have also appeared in the *Charleston Gazette* and the *Charleston Daily Mail*.

We are certain that these aren't the only public awareness activities that have been conducted, and we will continue to highlight these activities as we hear of them. This information will be provided to generate ideas that other counties may be able to implement in their areas.

ACTIVE SURVEILLANCE COUNTIES: Don't forget to return the Log of Public Awareness Activities found in the rabies project binder that was distributed to active surveillance counties at the February 21 meeting in Flatwoods! Your activities could be highlighted in next month's memorandum!

May We Suggest. . .?



The time is drawing near for county Assessors' offices to begin mailing property tax and dog tax forms to their citizens. The time frame will vary from county to county, but a partnership between the local health department and the Assessor's office could result in a county-wide public awareness campaign in which rabies project materials could be mailed with the tax forms. The brochure and flyer provided in the rabies binder at the February 21 meeting in Flatwoods may be used, or many counties may have already developed their own public awareness materials.

WEST VIRGINIA ACTIVE RABIES SURVEILLANCE - FEBRUARY 2001 Number of Satisfactory Specimens Submitted and Completeness of Data							
County	Raccoons Tested	Skunks Tested	Foxes Tested	Total Tested	Total With Complete Data	Percent Completeness	Total Pos.
BOONE	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
BRAXTON	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
CALHOUN	3	0	0	3	0	0%	0
CLAY	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
DODDRIDGE	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
FAYETTE	1	0	0	1	0	0%	0
GILMER	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
KANAWHA	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
LOGAN	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
MINGO	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
NICHOLAS	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
PLEASANTS	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
RITCHIE	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
ROANE	1	0	0	1	0	0%	0
TYLER	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
WEBSTER	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
WIRT	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
WOOD	1	0	0	1	0	0%	0
WYOMING	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
TOTAL	6	0	0	6	0	0%	0

WEST VIRGINIA ACTIVE RABIES SURVEILLANCE - MARCH 2001 Number of Satisfactory Specimens Submitted and Completeness of Data							
County	Raccoons Tested	Skunks Tested	Foxes Tested	Total Tested	Total With Complete Data	Percent Completeness	Total Pos.
BOONE	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
BRAXTON	1	1	2	4	3	75%	0
CALHOUN	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
CLAY	1	0	0	1	1	100%	0
DODDRIDGE	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
FAYETTE	0	0	1	1	0	0%	0
GILMER	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
KANAWHA	5	0	0	5	2	40%	0
LOGAN	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
MINGO	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
NICHOLAS	2	0	0	2	2	100%	0
PLEASANTS	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
RITCHIE	1	0	0	1	0	0%	0
ROANE	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
TYLER	5	0	0	5	5	100%	0
WEBSTER	2	1	0	3	3	100%	1
WIRT	0	0	1	1	0	0%	0
WOOD	1	0	0	1	1	100%	0
WYOMING	0	0	0	0	-	-	0
TOTAL	18	2	4	24	17	71%	1