



# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of STATE PUBLIC HEALTH VETERINARIANS, INC.

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December 20, 2005

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** State Public Health Veterinarians  
State Epidemiologists  
State Veterinarians  
Other Parties Interested in Rabies Prevention and Control

**FROM:** Mira J. Leslie, D.V.M., M.P.H, Chair  
Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control Committee

**SUBJECT:** *Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control, 2006*

The National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians (NASPHV) is pleased to provide the 2006 revision of the Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control for your use and for distribution to practicing veterinarians, wildlife rehabilitators, animal welfare organizations, and officials in animal control, public health, wildlife management, and agriculture in your state. This cover memo summarizes the changes that were made to the document this year and provides updates on other rabies issues.

## COMPENDIUM CHANGES

A statement has been added to the opening paragraph clarifying that the document is a national guideline to describe standard principles and practice in rabies prevention and control, and is not law or regulation unless adopted as such. The Compendium is updated annually to incorporate recent issues and maintain the most current science based information.

Part I A.7. describing appropriate laboratory specimen submission has been clarified. Freshly collected brain tissue should be stored and shipped with ice packs to reduce decomposition. The direct immunofluorescent antibody test can be performed on previously frozen tissue, however freezing is not routinely recommended because test results may be significantly delayed due to the time needed to defrost the brain. Repeated freezing and thawing may destroy tissue structure and prevent test interpretation. Rabies test specimens should not be placed in any type of fixative. In the event that rabies was not considered during specimen collection and the only tissue available is fixed, contact the state or local health department to arrange special testing of these specimens. This usually requires sending tissue to a national reference laboratory, delaying test results significantly.

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Two new sections have been added to Part I B. (7. and 8.) outlining rabies prevention and control measures that should be considered 1) during outbreaks due to an introduced, non- indigenous or newly host adapted rabies virus variant or 2) when handling displaced animals in crises such as natural disasters. The measures listed are fundamental and may not be comprehensive for all events.

Part III: Rabies Vaccines Licensed and Marketed in the U.S., 2005 has been updated to include Imrab 1 TF produced by Merial. PRORAB-3F produced by Intervet is no longer available.

Additional references have been added to provide scientific support for information provided in the document.

## RABIES UPDATES

The Division of Global Migration and Quarantine, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is revising procedures for the importation of dogs and other animals. A notice will be posted in the Federal Register soliciting input.

As of December 20, one fatal human case of rabies virus infection was reported in 2005. The 10-year-old Mississippi resident was infected with a bat rabies virus variant. The 14-year-old Wisconsin girl who survived clinical rabies in October 2004 has made significant progress in her recovery.

With the epizootic of West Nile virus nationwide, there has been a dramatic increase in acute, fatal, neurological illnesses in animals, particularly horses. Infection with rabies and West Nile viruses are indistinguishable clinically. Anytime an animal dies or is euthanized due to an undiagnosed neurological illness, rabies should be considered to allow for appropriate testing and public health follow-up before disposal of the animal.

CDC's Rabies Laboratory is attempting to collect specimens to evaluate the potential for rabies transmission via milk from lactating animals. When rabies is suspected in a lactating animal, milk and mammary tissue should be collected and stored. If the animal tests positive, the milk and mammary tissue should be shipped on dry ice to:

Rabies Laboratory  
DASH, Bldg. 4, Rm. B32  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road, NE  
Atlanta, GA 30333  
(404) 639-1050

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Although an uncommon occurrence, rodents (particularly groundhogs), beavers, and lagomorphs are occasionally diagnosed with the raccoon variant of rabies virus in the Eastern U.S. In order to better evaluate the potential for these animals to transmit rabies, the Rabies Unit of CDC would like to receive the entire head of any rodent or lagomorph testing positive for rabies. Rabies diagnostic laboratories should store the heads of highly suspect rodents and lagomorphs until testing is completed, and send the specimens to CDC at the above address for further analysis if results are positive.