

Have You Contacted Your Legislator?

In the previous issue of the E-SOURCE veterinarians were urged to contact their legislators regarding House Bill 315 (the ASPCA's legislation that raises the tax on rabies vaccine to fund a statewide program for low cost spay/neuter. ([see the previous issue here](#)))

Please call your legislators to relate the ISVMA position on House Bill 315. Once you have made your call, please e-mail or fax ISVMA to let us know which legislators you spoke to and what, if anything, you learned from your conversation that will assist us in our effort to find a more appropriate solution to pet overpopulation.

E-mail ISVMA at info@isvma.org or fax contact information to (217) 523-7981.



Kitten's Tragedy Prompts State Policy Change

By JANETTE RODRIGUES, The Virginian-Pilot
© February 9, 2005

CHESAPEAKE - A Chesapeake woman's outrage over the needless death of her kitten has prompted state officials to make sure veterinarians inform pet owners about the limitations of the rabies vaccine.

The state Board of Veterinary Medicine voted unanimously last week in Roanoke to require vets to tell people in writing that it takes 28 days for a dog or cat to build up an immunity to the disease after receiving the vaccination.

The board will send e-mails and letters this week suggesting that, as soon as possible, vets should change the first-time rabies certificate they issue.

Sharon Green, who campaigned for the change, said Tuesday that the information will prevent others from going through what her family did in October.

She had to have their 6-month-old kitten, Martha, euthanized after she was bitten by a wild animal within the 28-day period.

"Martha was a little angel that was sent here for a purpose," Green said. "If God gives animals wings, believe me, she has earned her wings." A pet bitten by an unknown animal before it can produce sufficient antibodies to combat rabies is automatically considered by local and state health officials to be infected.

Green was shocked to learn that. She found that other pet owners also were unaware of the time limit. She began a letter-writing and Internet campaign at mysmizmar.com to have vets include the information on rabies certificates.

Dr. Steve Escobar, president of the Virginia Veterinary Medical

Association, approached the state board with Green's concerns after an informal survey of the group's members found that they need to do more to alert pet owners.

"A guidance document is going to be sent to all veterinarians in Virginia, requesting that they put this information on their rabies certificates," he said.

The guidance document should be available this week on the board's Web site, www.dhp.state.va.us/vet.

The state is fast-tracking the regulation change, so it should officially go into effect in six months to a year, said Elizabeth Carter, executive director of the board that oversees Virginia's nearly 3,000 veterinarians.

Normally, such an action takes 18 months to three years.

"Rabies is a serious issue, and the clients need to be aware of the 28-day period," Carter said. "It's important to the board that everyone realize when the inoculation becomes effective."

Escobar has already added the information to the certificate given to pet owners by his office. He said it took his office technician about five minutes to change the electronic form that his office uses.

"We are a responsive group," he said of animal doctors. "I don't think you will find any veterinarians making a fuss about doing this."

Green, who lauded the veterinary association and the board for responding so quickly to her campaign, is still a little giddy over her success. She had never done anything like lobby for change in public health policy.

"I was so excited when Dr. Escobar told me," she said. "I was almost in tears I was so happy."

Reach Janette Rodrigues janette.rodriques@pilotonline.com.



Remember to Register for the MVVMA Annual Meeting

The Mississippi Valley Veterinary Medical Association changed their long-standing tradition of holding their Annual Meeting in the fall in order to avoid conflict with the ISVMA's Annual Convention which has transitioned to November meetings (formerly February). Please note that there will be no MVVMA Annual Meeting in the fall.

101st Mississippi Valley Veterinary Medical Association Meeting

March 2 (Wed) & 3 (Thurs), 2005

**Par-A-Dice Hotel
East Peoria, IL**

If you wish to download the meeting program in Microsoft Word format please [click here](#).

If you wish to **register** for the meeting please [click here](#).

Registrations Still Available for ISVMA Spring Seminar!

The Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association (ISVMA) is proud to offer an excellent continuing education seminar designed to develop vital communication skills essential for each member of your practice team. Nationally acclaimed consultant Karyn Gavzer will present: **"It's Not What You Say; It's How You Say It – Tips and Strategies for Effective Client Communications."**

For more information on this tremendous program or to register please visit:

www.isvma.org/springseminars.htm

REMEMBER TO REGISTER EARLY TO GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY!

*There are only 150 spaces available at each of three regional locations for this very popular and useful program.

About the Photo in This Issue...

As you drive by the fields and pastures of the eastern Great Plains between May and September, you notice certain birds perched on the fences and power lines. Two species will look somewhat similar because each has a black "V" on a yellow breast. The robin-size one with a long skinny bill and white outer tail feathers will be one of the two species of Meadowlark (Western or Eastern). The sparrow-size one with the typical finch's seed-cracking beak will be a Dickcissel.

Both will commonly sing as you go by, but the songs are totally different. The Eastern Meadowlark has a clear, descending, melodious whistle. The Dickcissel, on the other hand, makes two or three dry chirps followed by a trilled **yerp-yerp-yerp**. If you can sit and listen, he will sing all day long.

In fact, the male dickcissel does little more than feed himself and try to attract a mate. The female is totally responsible for building the nest, incubation and feeding the young. Dickcissels typically make a woven grass cup type of nest in short woody vegetation or on the ground. They will often nest twice in a season. The young of the second brood may not fledge until August, making the Dickcissel a very late nester for the prairie.

Dickcissels winter from southern Mexico to northern South America.

This singing male Dickcissel was photographed in Macon County, IL during July 2004.

Contact Us

Please feel free to forward this issue of the E-SOURCE to veterinarians that are not receiving ISVMA's electronic newsletter. Any ISVMA member may subscribe to the E-SOURCE for free:

If you wish to add your name to the recipient list, send an e-mail to info@isvma.org and ask to receive the E-SOURCE newsletter.

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