

ISVMA Membership Renewal & Prospect Letters Sent

ISVMA member veterinarians should have received their membership renewal packets three weeks ago. If you have not received yours, please contact the ISVMA office at (217) 523-8387.

Yesterday, membership information was mailed to all ISVMA prospective members. Every licensed, practicing veterinarian in Illinois should have the materials necessary to become a member (or renew their membership) in ISVMA.

If you have associates that did not receive a renewal letter, it could be they are not ISVMA members. If they haven't joined ISVMA, encourage them to do so by filling out the online application form at www.isvma.org/application.htm.

Would you like to know if one of your colleagues has become an ISVMA member? You can look up their membership status at www.isvma.org/findadoctor.htm.

ISVMA membership renewals are due July 1, 2005.



Confirmed Case of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHD) in Indiana

The following advisory was sent from the Office of the Board of Animal Health (BOAH) in Indiana. If you have questions you may contact Dr. Norman as indicated below. If you think that you may have a case of this disease contact the Illinois Department of Agriculture at 217-782-4944 (24/7). This is considered a Foreign Animal Disease and as such is reportable. The USDA web site referenced below is being updated and will contain the most current information.

CONTACT:

Sandra K.L. Norman, DVM
Companion Animal Division Director
Indiana State Board of Animal Health
phone: 317/227-0300; email: snorman@boah.in.gov

VETERINARY ADVISORY

(9 June 2005)—A case of rabbit hemorrhagic disease (RHD) has been identified in domestic rabbits on a Vanderburgh County, Indiana farm. While highly infectious to domestic breeds, the virus is not known to harm humans, other animals or wild rabbit species, including American cottontail and jack rabbits.

The Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH) and USDA Veterinary Services are pursuing the source of infection as a foreign animal disease investigation.

The ongoing investigation currently indicates that rabbits from the infected site were not sold into pet shop or exhibition circles. The animals were sold primarily as a food source for large snakes. While not yet confirmed, the epidemiology indicates the sick rabbits may have originated from a Kentucky flea market/swap meet.

BOAH has been in contact with state and national rabbit industry representatives, as well as state 4-H. A press release has been issued to advise rabbit owners on clinical signs to be reported to their local veterinarian.

You may receive inquiries or calls about sudden death in rabbits from your clients. Please take time to assess their situation to determine if the problem could be RHD, because high temperatures can cause heat-related deaths. The presence of clear or bloody, foamy discharge from body cavities is key to the differential.

If you believe a client's rabbit has died of RHD:

- 1. Encourage the owner to keep the carcass and other potentially infected animals on his/her site. This virus is highly resistant to physical and chemical agents and could be detrimental to your clinic environment.**
2. Also advise the client to practice sound biosecurity and not risk exposure spreading the disease by other physical means (such as moving contaminated organic material, cages, bedding, etc.)
3. Contact BOAH (24 hours a day/7 days a week) at 877/877-3038 for assistance from a foreign animal disease diagnostician. Samples will be collected and submitted to the USDA laboratory.

More information about RHD is available on the USDA website at:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/pubs/fsheet_faq_notice/fs_ahrabbitd.html

Future communication on the situation will be released, when warranted, by BOAH on their web site at: www.boah.in.gov click on Press Releases.

Rabies Update

A cat which was reported in the press as positive for rabies in Mclean County tested negative at the CDC. Two laboratories in Illinois reported atypical staining of the brain tissue when tested for rabies. Therefore, this specimen was sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as the referral laboratory for the state of Illinois. The final result on the cat is negative and this cat will not be counted as a case of animal rabies for 2005.

A skunk tested positive for rabies in DeKalb County on May 24. This is the second county reporting terrestrial animal rabies in 2005 and the fourth skunk testing positive so far in 2005. This skunk was reported to animal control by several families because it was walking through the neighborhood in broad daylight. It was aggressive to the animal control officer and was euthanized and tested for rabies.

Both LaSalle and DeKalb County are reporting terrestrial animal rabies in

2005. This reinforces the message that pets should be vaccinated for rabies and owners of valuable livestock and horses should also consider the need for rabies vaccination for their animals. Persons who have contact with wildlife or extensive contact with domestic animals which may not be vaccinated for rabies should receive rabies pre-exposure vaccination. Anyone bitten by a wild or domestic animal should seek medical advice about whether rabies post-exposure treatment is needed.

Domestic animals bitten by a skunk which cannot be tested should be assumed to have been exposed to rabies. Veterinarians should work with their local animal control for proper management of these exposed domestic animals.

An exposure to rabies in a person who has been pre-exposure vaccinated for rabies still means that the exposed individual needs two rabies vaccination boosters for treatment after the rabies exposure.

Veterinarians and their staff should work with local health care providers (physician's) to obtain needed pre-exposure vaccination or booster vaccination for rabies. Local health care providers can order rabies vaccine for administration.

American Heartworm Society Announces New Guidelines

BALTIMORE – ACVIM Forum – (June 2, 2005) – During the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine Forum (ACVIM), the American Heartworm Society announced the latest in research guidelines that will help veterinarians more effectively educate pet owners and manage heartworm disease. The “2005 Guidelines for the Diagnosis, Prevention and Management of Heartworm Infection in Dogs,” and the “2005 Guidelines for the Diagnosis, Prevention and Management of Heartworm Infection in Cats” will be posted at www.heartwormsociety.org and updated on an ongoing basis. Highlights include the recommendation of annual testing, retesting when switching products, and support of the recommendation for year-round prevention.

“The goal of our organization is to educate the veterinarian profession and our membership,” says Charles Thomas Nelson, DVM and President of the American Heartworm Society. “In this day and age, veterinarians continue their education in so many ways, including on the Internet,” Nelson says. “Because some veterinarians may only go to one, large multi-state meeting all year, we needed to make sure the information is accessible to the entire profession,” he added.

“Each year, dogs and cats die needlessly from complications to this very preventable disease,” says Nelson. “These new guidelines are based upon the latest, ongoing research conducted around the world,” he adds. The research is done by several sources and the AHS compiles it to create the guidelines. These sources include pharmaceutical companies, private laboratories and practicing veterinarians and parasitologists at several universities.

The American Heartworm Society wants veterinarians and pet owners to know the following:

Annual Testing is Necessary

In the past, if a dog had been on preventive methods routinely, it was not necessary to test every year, perhaps only every two to three years. But because of some concerns with breaks regarding animals on preventives that still contracted heartworms, the AHS recommends a more conservative testing routine. It may be too difficult to document when an animal hasn't been checked in three years, and therefore annual testing will ensure that an infection is caught in plenty of time to effectively manage it.

Switching Prevention Methods Requires Additional Testing

Pet owners sometimes switch between prevention medications, for any number of reasons. In these instances, there are specific time periods to retest in order to ensure the products have been effective. When switching from one product to another, it is necessary to test more often.

Year-Round Prevention is Supported

Most veterinarians recommend year-round heartworm prevention, even in seasonal areas. One reason for this is compliance – making sure the medicine has been given properly by the pet owner. Surveys show that probably only 75 percent of the doses that are prescribed are given. But, even if doses are accidentally skipped, the drug is still beneficial to the pet. If given consistently over a 12-month period, it's possible to actually stop worms from developing into adults. Also, monthly heartworm preventives have activity against intestinal parasites which inadvertently infect three to six million people every year. These preventives protect pets and people.

Education is Key

Getting the word out to the entire profession and to the general public is a goal of the American Heartworm Society. Therefore, you can find the guidelines posted on the website at www.heartwormsociety.org.

"We wanted to make these guidelines available to everyone, so that the entire veterinary profession and the pet-owning public will have access to information based on research on the ways to diagnose, prevent and manage this disease," concludes Nelson.

Mosquitoes may keep biting, but the American Heartworm Society guidelines can help take some of the sting out of heartworm disease.

Founded during the Heartworm Symposium of 1974, the American Heartworm Society was formed to facilitate and encourage the generation and dissemination of information about heartworm disease and encourages adoption of standardized procedures for its diagnosis, treatment and prevention. The American Heartworm Society stimulates and financially supports research, which furthers knowledge and understanding of the disease. Its headquarters are located in Batavia, IL.



About the Photo in This Issue...

The Burrowing Owl is a small ground-dwelling Owl with a round head and no ear tufts. These small (8.5 – 11 inches) owls are comparatively easy to see because they are often active in daylight, and are surprisingly bold and approachable. The females are usually darker than the males.

Burrowing Owls fly with irregular, jerky wing beats and frequently make long glides, interspersed with rapid wing beats. They hover during hunting and courtship, and may flap their wings asynchronously (not up and down together).

Burrowing Owls feed on a wide variety of prey, changing food habits as location and time of year determine availability. Large arthropods, mainly beetles and grasshoppers, comprise a large portion of their diet. Small mammals, especially mice, rats, gophers, and ground squirrels, are also important food items. Other prey animals include: reptiles and amphibians, scorpions, young cottontail rabbits, bats, and birds, such as sparrows and horned larks. These owls are quite versatile in the ways they capture prey. They chase down grasshoppers and beetles on the ground, use their talons to catch large insects in the air, or hover in mid-air before swooping down on unsuspecting prey. They also watch from perches and then glide silently toward their target. Burrowing Owls are primarily active at dusk and dawn (crepuscular), but will hunt throughout a 24-hour period, especially when they have young to feed.

Unlike other Owls, they also eat fruits and seeds, especially the fruit of *Tesajilla* and prickly pear cactus.

The nesting season begins in late March or April. Burrowing Owls are usually monogamous but occasionally a male will have 2 mates. Courtship displays include flashing white markings, cooing, bowing, scratching and nipping. The male performs display flights, rising quickly to 100 feet, hovering for 5 to 10 seconds, then dropping 50 feet. This sequence is repeated many times. Circling flights also occur. Burrowing Owls nest underground in abandoned burrows dug by mammals or if soil conditions allow they will dig their own burrows. They will also use man made nest boxes placed underground. They often line their nest with an assortment of dry materials. Adults usually return to the same burrow or a nearby area each year. One or more "satellite" burrows can usually be found near the nest burrow, and are used by adult males during the nesting period and by juvenile Owls for a few weeks after they emerge from the nest. 6 to 9 (sometimes up to 12) white eggs are laid a day apart, which are incubated for 28-30 days by the female only. The male brings food to the female during incubation, and stands guard near the burrow by day. The care of the young while still in the nest is performed by the male. At 14 days, the young may be seen roosting at the entrance to the burrow, waiting for the adults to return with food. They leave the nest at about 44 days and begin chasing living insects when 49-56 days old.

Burrowing Owls are found in open, dry grasslands, agricultural and range lands, and desert habitats often associated with burrowing animals, particularly prairie dogs, ground squirrels and badgers. They can also inhabit grass, forb, and shrub stages of pinyon and ponderosa pine habitats. They commonly perch on fence posts or on top of mounds outside the burrow.

Burrowing Owls have been reported to nest in loose colonies. Such groupings may be a response to a local abundance of burrows and food, or an adaptation for mutual defense. Colony members can alert each other to the approach of predators and join in driving them off.

Burrowing Owls are present in North America, and breed across the grassland regions of southern Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. They occur in all states west of the Mississippi Valley, breed south through the western and mid-western States. A separate subspecies is found in Florida and the Caribbean Islands. They extend south into Mexico, Central America and South America but populations have declined in many areas due to human-caused habitat loss or alteration. Birds from the northern part of the U.S. and Canada are migratory.

Burrowing Owls are listed as endangered, threatened, or a species of special concern in most states and provinces where they occur.

This photo was in Punta Gorda, Florida in December 1999.



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.

ISVMA values your membership and does not want to send you any unwanted email. If you would like to be removed from this member service, please email info@isvma.org