

### Micotil 300® alert

The recent deaths of two US cattlemen who accidentally injected themselves with a livestock drug are a reminder to farmers and ranchers to use caution when medicating animals. Micotil 300® is an antibiotic used to treat cattle and sheep for respiratory infections such as pneumonia. If injected into humans, the drug can cause cardiac arrest. The lethal dose is unknown and there is no antidote for the drug.



Safety precautions to prevent accidental injection of Micotil 300® include:

- Keep out of reach of children.
- Never use automatic powered syringes.
- Never carry a loaded syringe in your coat or pocket.
- Keep needle tip covered until just before administering.
- Inject livestock secured in a chute so they can't move.
- Exercise extreme caution to avoid accidental self-injection.
- When practical, consider using another less hazardous antibiotic.

Elanco, the manufacturer of Micotil 300®, advises users, in case of human injection, to contact the Emergency Medical System immediately, apply ice to the injection site and not to massage the injection site.

### Power Line Safety from page 3

- Do not clear storm-damaged trees, limbs or other debris touching power lines. Call SaskPower at 1-888-757-6937 to report the problem.
- Do not attempt to cut down trees or prune limbs that may fall into power lines. Call SaskPower at 1-888-757-6937 to investigate the situation.

For more information about SaskPower's Farmyard Power Line Relocation Program, call 1-888-SKPOWER (1-888-757-6937) or visit [www.saskpower.com](http://www.saskpower.com).

### Welcome new Ag Health and Safety Network members!

- R. M. of Wawken, #93
- R. M. of Willowdale, #153
- R. M. of North Qu'Appelle, #187
- R. M. of Monet, #257
- R. M. of Good Lake, #274
- R. M. of Lakeside, #338
- R. M. of Hoodoo, #401
- R. M. of Leask, #464
- R. M. of Nipawin, #487
- R. M. of Monet, #257

Network News now reaches 25,000 Saskatchewan farm families living in 156 member R. M.'s.

### Not waving but drowning . . .



Thanks to Sean Boggust, age eight, of Paynton, SK for this timely safety tip. Kids, send us your safety tip to win a free farm safety colouring book.

### Moved? Retired? Not Farming?

To remove your name from our mailing list, please complete and send to the Editor.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_ P.C. \_\_\_\_\_

R.M. \_\_\_\_\_ R.M. # \_\_\_\_\_

### From the Editor

We welcome your comments and submissions. Send correspondence to:

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## Rabies in Rural Saskatchewan

### The problem

Saskatchewan has the third highest number of rabies cases in the country, topped only by Ontario and Manitoba. That should concern producers because when the disease affects livestock or pets, it poses a significant threat to human health. Two Canadians have died recently from rabies, a 52-year-old man in British Columbia in 2003 and a nine-year-old boy in Quebec in 2000.

### What is rabies?

Rabies is a disease caused by a virus that affects the nervous system and the brain. All warm-blooded animals are susceptible. Once symptoms appear, rabies is always fatal. Rabies is a reportable disease, meaning that a suspected case must be reported to a federal veterinarian or a Medical Health Officer.

### Where is it found?

For most of the past century, the majority of rabies cases in Canada were reported in dogs. Currently, over ninety per cent of all reported cases occur in wildlife. Only a few species play a major role in transmitting the disease to humans and domesticated animals. In Saskatchewan, the common transmitters of rabies are skunks and bats. Farm animals contract rabies from wildlife or from stray dogs and cats.

Documented Rabies Cases in Saskatchewan (1998-2003)							
	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03	Total
Dog	1	2	5	2		1	11
Cat	2	2	3		1		8
Cattle	1	8	7	2	4		22
Horse	2	2	1	3	1		9
Goat			2				2
Pig						1	1
Skunk	61	118	142	26	20	18	385
Bat	8	4	11	13	1	4	41
Raccoon		1					1
Antelope	1						1
Total	76	137	171	46	27	24	481

Statistics from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Animal Health and Production Division

### How is rabies spread?

All tissues of an infected animal contain rabies virus, with the highest concentration found in the brain and spinal cord, salivary glands and saliva. Rabies is most commonly spread when a rabid animal bites, or less commonly scratches, another animal or a person and virus enters the victim's body.



Photo courtesy of Dr. W.F. Wood, Humboldt State University, CA.

### Course of the disease

The disease usually appears two to eight weeks following exposure. It may appear in as short as ten days or may take up to several years, depending on the severity of the wound and its distance from the brain. Symptoms seen in rabid animals vary greatly, making early detection difficult. The disease appears in one of two forms:

- The classic or "furious" form of rabies, marked by restlessness, excitability and aggressive behaviour
- The depressed or paralytic form of rabies, marked by behavioral change, muscle weakness and incoordination.

In the late stage, both forms of the disease involve muscle spasm on attempts to swallow and convulsive

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seizures. Death occurs due to respiratory paralysis twelve to forty-eight hours after the onset of symptoms.

## What should you do if you suspect an animal may be infected?

If you suspect a domestic animal has rabies, treat it with caution and confine or isolate it. Report your observations to a veterinarian or notify the local Canadian Food Inspection Agency district office, listed in the blue government pages of your phone book. A veterinarian will assess the situation and recommend further action.

If you suspect that wildlife harassing your animals may have rabies, consider killing the wild animal, being careful not to shoot it in the head. Don't take chances and don't endanger yourself. Use gloves to handle potentially rabid animal carcasses. Deliver the dead animal to the nearest district veterinarian or to the local medical health officer. The only accurate test for rabies is through microscopic examination of brain tissue. If an animal is suspected of having rabies, the head will be sent to the Animal Disease Research Institute in Lethbridge, AB for testing.

## What should you do if you have been exposed to rabies?

An infected animal may not show signs in the early stages of the disease. All bites from foxes, skunks, bats and raccoons are considered to be an exposure to rabies unless:

- the area is known to be rabies free
- the animal is available for testing and found to be rabies free.

Exposure is also considered to have occurred if a potentially rabid animal's saliva (or other infectious material such as brain tissue) comes into contact with a cut, scratch, or abrasion of the skin; or with the mucous membranes of the person's eyes, nose, or mouth. Immediate first aid and medical treatment are crucial if you have been exposed to rabies.

## Farm Injury Control Summit

If you'd like to help advance the goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on Saskatchewan farms, plan to attend the sixth annual Farm Injury Control Summit on Monday, November 8 in Saskatoon at the Delta Bessborough Hotel.

The theme of this year's conference is "Rights and Responsibilities of Farm Owner/Operators to Ensure a Safe Workplace." Keynote speaker Harry Stilborn, a Saskatchewan Labour Occupational Health Officer for agriculture, will discuss how occupational health and safety legislation applies to farms and ranches.

Participants will receive a complimentary copy of Saskatchewan Labour's "Farm Safety Guide," a new publication that features a ten element program to help producers protect themselves, family members and employees from farm injuries and illness. The \$20 Summit registration fee includes a hot buffet lunch.

## First aid and medical treatment

If you have been exposed to a potentially rabid animal:

- Remove clothing that may be contaminated.
- Flush the wound immediately with lots of water.
- Clean the wound thoroughly with soap and water.
- Go to your physician or to the nearest hospital emergency department to report your exposure and receive treatment. Vaccination is started as soon as possible, ideally within twenty-four hours.

## How to avoid rabies on your farm

- Make your farm less attractive to stray dogs, cats, racoons and other wildlife by eliminating nesting, hiding and roosting places and by screening potential entry points to barns and other buildings.
- Never feed stray animals or wildlife and don't leave pet food or garbage in open, unsecured containers.
- Have dogs and cats routinely vaccinated for rabies. Dogs and cats under one year of age are given a one-year vaccination. Previously vaccinated animals are given a three-year vaccination.
- Never pick up a sick or injured bat.
- Warn children to stay away from stray animals, not to try to capture a wild animal and not to touch the dead carcass of any animal.
- Consider vaccinating livestock if they are often exposed to potentially rabid animals. Pastured animals are generally at greater risk although rabid animals, especially stray dogs and cats, may enter a barn and expose animals to rabies. Vaccines are licensed for cattle, sheep and horses.

Generally, production animals such as herds of dairy cows or flocks of sheep are not vaccinated because the potential risks are lower than the annual costs of vaccination. Horse owners may choose to vaccinate their animals because of the close and frequent contact they have with them. Your veterinarian can help you decide about vaccination.

Download a brochure at <http://iareh.usask.ca/rhep.php>. To register, or for further information, contact I.A.R.E.H., tel: (306) 966-8286, or e-mail: [siever@sask.usask.ca](mailto:siever@sask.usask.ca).



### Thank you!

For support in publishing Network News, the Agricultural Health and Safety Network wishes to thank: **Saskatchewan Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization**

## SARM 90th Anniversary Scholarship

The R. M. of Buchanan, #304, boasts this year's winner of the SARM 90th Anniversary Scholarship. Joshua Hrynchyshyn lives on a mixed farm northwest of Buchanan with parents, Rodney and Teresa, and two younger brothers. Joshua's farm safety essay was judged the best of nearly seventy submitted by Saskatchewan Grade 12 students.

In his essay, Joshua highlighted the importance of machinery safety on their farm. "My Dad always takes, and stresses the importance of taking, refresher courses on equipment. Doing this will help your memory stay fresh about the proper handling of the equipment to avoid accidents. . . .

Knowledge and common sense are the keys to safety when operating machinery. Everyone in our family knows how to shut down all of the tractors, combines etc., how to work the hydraulics, and how to disengage the PTO in case of an accident.

On our farm, when we are fixing something and a shield has to be taken off, we always make sure we put it back on, even if we are in a rush. Shields are a very important part of machinery, a part that can save an arm, leg or life. Also, whenever we are fixing a piece of machinery, we never let someone sit in the cab or at the operating controls. We always block equipment behind or in front of the wheels, and never rely on jacks for safety. Also, anyone that is greasing the hoists on the trucks or PTO shafts always puts a block on them for safety. I am always reminded by my Dad to never walk under front-end loaders. We always walk around them, even though a

quick run under would be faster. The same goes for the wings on the cultivator."

In his application Joshua described his role on the family farm. "At the sheep barn, I help to feed, sort, vaccinate, dock tails, castrate, tag and record, and assist with birthing and getting the pens ready. Now that spring is coming, I will be running the grain cleaner, fencing, getting equipment field ready, picking up repairs and chemicals and running a tractor. I will also help to haul grain and weed the shelterbelt this summer." Sounds like Joshua will be missed at home when he leaves for university. He has been accepted into the U of S College of Kinesiology and will apply the \$1,000 award toward his tuition.

Rural Grade 12 students planning to enrol in post-secondary education are eligible for the scholarship, awarded at the SARM annual meeting in March. Applicants submit a 1,000 word essay on "The Importance of Health and Safety on Our Farm" or "Safety and Health Hazards on Our Farm." Applications for the 2005 scholarship must be postmarked on or before January 21.

To enter, download the application form at <http://iareh.usask.ca/rhep/scholarships.php> or pick one up from your R. M. office.



Joshua Hrynchyshyn, winner of the 2004 SARM Scholarship

## Farmyard power line safety



The best way to control a hazard is to eliminate it. When it comes to farmyard power lines, that's now possible and we're beginning to see the results.

Researcher Louise Hagel of the Saskatchewan Farm Injury Surveillance Program reports that while six overhead power line electrocutions occurred on farms between 1990 and 1998 (four grain auger incidents and two grain bin incidents), none were reported between 1998 and 2001. Hagel points out that recent statistics are needed to confirm the trend

but surmises that farmyard power line relocation is a major factor in reducing these deaths.

## SaskPower's farmyard power line relocation program

This cost-shared program replaces overhead power lines with underground cables at a reasonable cost. Farmyards with any of SaskPower's primary lines (up to 25,000 volts)

are eligible. At a farm customer's request, SaskPower buries the lines. The customer is responsible for 25 per cent of the total cost, to a maximum of \$500. SaskPower funds the remainder.

If your farmyard is eligible, the primary line(s) are installed underground using the most economical methods, without compromising SaskPower construction and safety standards. The existing overhead transformer and pole remain in service. If you prefer, a padmounted transformer can be installed at an additional cost.

Power line relocations are carried out subject to annual construction schedules on a first-come, first-served basis.

## Powerline safety tips

- Electricity seeks every available path to the ground. When a person or other object gets too close or touches a power line, an instant flow of electricity is created.
- Lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes and hay can all conduct electricity.
- Steer clear of overhead power lines whenever you operate machinery.
- If you approach a downed power line, keep a safe distance away. Within the surrounding area, equipment and other objects could become energized if brought into contact with the line. Call SaskPower immediately at 310-2220 (toll free province-wide number) to report a downed power line.