

Animal Management:

Management of Equine and Livestock Exposed to Rabid Animals

Vaccination: Livestock – including horses (donkeys, asses and other equines), cattle, sheep, goats, swine, llamas, alpacas, etc. – are susceptible to rabies. Although each year generally fewer than 10 livestock test positive for rabies in North Carolina, pasturing these animals provides ample risk for exposure to rabies. The [NASPHV Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control](#) recommends that all horses should be vaccinated against rabies, and that livestock that have frequent contact with humans (e.g., in petting zoos, fairs, and other public exhibitions), including species for which licensed vaccines are *not* available, should also be vaccinated against rabies.

Livestock with rabies exposures: When livestock are exposed to a known or suspected rabid animal, the recommendations in the NASPHV Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control should be followed. The NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) Veterinary Division is responsible for investigating possible exposures and implementing control measures. The main contact number for NCDA&CS Veterinary Division is **919-707-3250**.

Exposed livestock that have never been vaccinated should be euthanized immediately. Animals that are not euthanized should be confined and observed on a case-by-case basis for 6 months.

Livestock that are current on rabies vaccination with a USDA-licensed vaccine approved for that species should be given a booster vaccination immediately and observed for 45 days. Livestock overdue for a booster vaccination should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration factors such as severity of exposure, time elapsed since last vaccination, number of previous vaccinations, and current health status to determine need for euthanasia or immediate booster vaccination followed by observation or strict quarantine.

Rabies testing: Any illness in an exposed animal should be reported immediately to the local health department and animal health officials. If signs suggestive of rabies develop, the animal should be euthanized. The animal, or the animal's head, should be submitted to one of NCDA&CS's Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratories where the brain tissue will be removed and forwarded to the State Laboratory for Public Health (SLPH) rabies laboratory for testing. [Contact the agricultural lab](#) directly for specimen submission information. For more information on testing see [Testing of Animals](#).

Reporting rabies: Pursuant to 02 NCAC 52C .0603 Reportable Diseases **all persons practicing veterinary medicine in North Carolina are required to report rabies in equines and other livestock to the State Veterinarian's office by telephone (919-707-3250) within two hours after the disease is reasonably suspected to exist** (see www.ncagr.gov/vet/vetdis.htm).

Reporting rabies test results: The SLPH will notify the submitter immediately of any positive or unsatisfactory result or if the test is not performed. The submitter is usually in the NCDA&CS Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory System (NCVDLS) (www.ncagr.gov/vet/ncvdl/).

In addition, the SLPH will also notify NCDA&CS Veterinary Division and NCDHHS Veterinary Public Health of these results.

Follow up: NCDA&CS Veterinary Division is responsible for following up and conducting field investigations of any equine or livestock that are reported rabid, herd mates that may have been exposed to the rabid animal, and any equines or livestock reported to be potentially exposed to rabies through other means. NCDA&CS Veterinary Division will also make quarantine determinations. The main contact number for NCDA&CS Veterinary Division is **919-707-3250**.

When a rabid livestock is diagnosed on a premises, human exposures to rabid livestock are assessed by the local health department, usually by a communicable disease (CD) nurse. Domestic dogs, cats and ferrets exposed to rabid livestock are assessed by Local Animal Control in the county of the incident.