

Animal Management:

Management of Livestock & Horses that Bite Humans

Livestock – including horses (donkeys, asses and other *Equus*), cattle, sheep, goats, swine, llamas and alpacas – are susceptible to rabies. Although each year generally fewer than 10 livestock test positive to 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, including species for which licensed vaccines are *not* available, that have frequent contact with humans (e.g., in petting zoos, fairs, and other public exhibitions) should be vaccinated against rabies as well.

People will occasionally get bitten by a horse, goat, swine or other livestock. If the animal is healthy, has normal behavior and no history or evidence of an exposure (e.g., bite wounds) to a rabies vector species, then the livestock can be observed for a **15-day confinement period**. Animal Control in the county of the biting incident should be contacted to implement and enforce the confinement and develop the conditions of the confinement agreement. The biting animal must be isolated from other animals and all people (except its caretaker) and not moved off the premises for the duration of the confinement period. Animal Control will make unannounced visits and a final visit after the 15th day to ascertain that the animal is normal and healthy, at which time the confinement order can be lifted. Animals that become ill or aggressive or that die during the 15-day confinement period must be euthanized and [tested for rabies](#).

If the animal remains healthy during the 15-day confinement, the person who was bitten does not require post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). If the animal is submitted for rabies testing and found to be positive or the test is inconclusive or not performed, the bitten person should receive PEP without further delay. If the test is negative, PEP is not needed.

Algorithm: When Livestock & Horses Bite Humans

