

Rabies Case Tests Positive
Recorded Information Line - 01/10/05

Claudia Edwards, Public Health Director for the Broome County Health Department, reported that on Thursday, December 30, 2004, New York State Police responded to a call reporting a fox fighting with a dog in a neighborhood in Endwell. The fox was killed by the police officer and taken to a veterinarian under contract to the health department to be prepared for rabies testing. The specimen was shipped to the New York State Department of Health Laboratory and results were positive for rabies. The dog owner and a friend may have been exposed to fox saliva when tending to the pet. As a result both are receiving post-exposure treatment. The dog had a history of rabies vaccinations and only required a rabies booster, thus avoiding a six-month quarantine.

Ms. Edwards reminds people to avoid direct contact with unfamiliar or wild animals and to never bring them into your home. Protect your pet(s) by never allowing them to roam free. Consider keeping them indoors at night and make sure they get a rabies vaccination. Rabies vaccination is mandatory by Public Health Law for dogs, cats and ferrets once they are four months old. If an unvaccinated animal is exposed to a potentially rabid animal, the owner may either have the animal humanely put down or confine it to a cage for six months.

Since 1991, when the first rabid raccoon was found in Broome County, it has been determined that rabid animals can be expected throughout Broome County, not only in specific geographic areas. Because rabies exists in Broome County, **all** county residents should avoid wild animals, stray pets and pets they do not know. Individuals tending to a pet after an animal attack should wear gloves to avoid being exposed to saliva from a potentially rabid animal. After removal of the gloves, hands should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

If you are bitten, scratched or have contact with an animal you believe to be rabid, immediately wash the wound, seek medical attention, and report the incident to the Broome County Health Department at 778-2887. After normal business hours, residents with urgent inquires can call Broome County Emergency Dispatch at 778-1911. A dispatcher will then contact Health Department staff for you.

Residents who have not had their dogs, cats or domesticated ferrets vaccinated are encouraged to make an appointment with a veterinarian or attend one of Broome County sponsored clinics. The first rabies clinic in Broome County will be held on Saturday, February 19, 2005 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Town of Chenango Fire Station, 1135 Front Street, Binghamton. Please watch the newspaper or go to the Broome County Government website at www.gobroomecounty.com in February for the 2005 rabies clinic schedule.