**One Health News Bits**

**August 10, 2011**

[**Hot, dry weather contributes to rise in rabies cases**](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dcqMBXzCwNCasfvFCidalECicNTGAg?format=standard)

State health officials have confirmed 48 rabies cases in the Texas Panhandle this year, compared with 20 cases at the same time last year, the vast majority of them in skunks. Hot, dry weather that has wild animals coming in closer to communities in search of food and water may be driving the rise in diagnosed cases, said James Alexander, a zoonosis veterinarian for the Texas Department of State Health Services. [Amarillo Globe-News (Texas)](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dcqMBXzCwNCasfvFCidalECicNTGAg?format=standard) (8/3)

[**Minn. veterinarians report a dramatic rise in tick-borne diseases**](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dcqMBXzCwNCasfvECidalECicNKDlv?format=standard)

The number of dogs in northern Minnesota that are contracting Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses has risen dramatically since the first cases were diagnosed there in 2005, said veterinarian Eric Thorsgard, who diagnoses about one case per day in the summer months. Greater awareness and diagnoses, outdoorsy lifestyles and climate change that results in higher numbers of deer ticks are also driving a rise of tick-borne diseases in the region's people, scientists say. [Minnesota Public Radio](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dcqMBXzCwNCasfvECidalECicNKDlv?format=standard) (8/3)

[**Calif. city's firefighters add lifesaving gear for pets**](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dcwrBXzCwNCasGssCidalECicNYPYC?format=standard)

The fire department in Monterey Park, Calif., has added lifesaving oxygen masks and equipment for domestic animals to several of its rigs, a move the department says can help both pets and people heal in the aftermath of a fire. "When people lose their homes to fires and other disasters, knowing that first responders are there to help prevent them from losing a loved one (furry or not) can be the greatest gift of all," the department said in a statement. [Pasadena Star-News (Calif.)](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dcwrBXzCwNCasGssCidalECicNYPYC?format=standard) (8/6)

[**Growing snakehead populations threaten U.S. lakes**](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dcwrBXzCwNCasGsuCidalECicNsrsm?format=standard)

Snakeheads feed ravenously on smaller fish, can survive icy winters and even live out of water for several days, and the fish has made the list of 10 species that could invade the Great Lakes. The fish have been found in the waters of nine U.S. states; plans to eradicate the species, like those aimed at the Asian carp, are on the back burner due to a lack of funding. [Detroit Free Press](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dcwrBXzCwNCasGsuCidalECicNsrsm?format=standard) (8/6)

[**Veterinary school adds counselor to aid grieving pet owners**](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dcwrBXzCwNCasGsoCidalECicNCAxw?format=standard)

People whose pets are diagnosed with cancer and other devastating illnesses face intense emotions and hard choices, a situation social worker Christy Beckhoff faced in her own life and one that convinced her to take a new position counseling pet owners at Ontario Veterinary College. There, she works to help owners through difficult situations, such as being present while a pet is euthanized. "Often, people encounter individuals who minimize their relationship or grief over an animal," Beckhoff said. [The Guelph Mercury (Ontario)](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dcwrBXzCwNCasGsoCidalECicNCAxw?format=standard) (8/6)

[**Dogs provide much-needed therapy to help patients heal**](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dcwrBXzCwNCasGstCidalECicNhTnn?format=standard)

MetroWest Medical Center in Natick, Mass., has 37 dogs on its roster of therapy pets, under a program created in 2002 to reduce patients' stress and help them recover from or cope with their illnesses. The dogs, which must learn several task-specific commands including ignoring potentially dangerous objects and sudden loud noises, help calm anxious patients and spark greater communication and verbal skills in depressed and elderly patients. [Boston Herald/The Associated Press](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dcwrBXzCwNCasGstCidalECicNhTnn?format=standard) (8/7)

[**Canine bone-cancer study could aid treatment for children**](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dczMBXzCwNCatxfRCidalECicNTeYg?format=standard)

Humans and dogs are the only species that spontaneously develop bone cancer with any frequency, and the cancers are similar in both species. Research from the College of Veterinary Medicine and Masonic Cancer Center at the University of Minnesota has identified a gene pattern present in a highly aggressive form of canine bone cancer, and researchers say the findings may help improve treatment for children stricken with the same disease. [U.S. News & World Report/HealthDay](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dczMBXzCwNCatxfRCidalECicNTeYg?format=standard) (8/8)

[**Summer is the peak time for Giardia**](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/ddaKBXzCwNCatJvbCidalECicNAYtU?format=standard)

Giardiasis cases are on the rise at veterinarian Duane Woodburn's practice in Annapolis, Md., and it's not unusual for dogs and cats to pick up the intestinal parasite this time of year. Animals tend to be outside more often in the warmer months, making them more likely to come into contact with infected wildlife droppings or contaminated water. Symptoms of the illness can range from occasional vomiting to severe intestinal distress. [WUSA-TV (Washington, D.C.)](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/ddaKBXzCwNCatJvbCidalECicNAYtU?format=standard) (8/8)

[**Deer may have caused Oregon E. coli outbreak tied to strawberries**](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/ddaKBXzCwNCatJuTCidalECicNIGIn?format=standard)

Investigators in Oregon say deer may be to blame for an outbreak of E. coli O157:H7 tied to strawberries that caused illness in 15 people and one death. Officials traced the strawberries back to one specific farm where deer tracks and feces were discovered in strawberry fields. Tests will be conducted on soil, fecal and plant samples to further investigate the outbreak. [FoodSafetyNews.com](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/ddaKBXzCwNCatJuTCidalECicNIGIn?format=standard) (8/9)

[**Aggressive vaccinations in the U.S. largely limit rabies to wildlife**](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/ddaKBXzCwNCatJuSCidalECicNCsCy?format=standard)

Fewer than five Americans die from rabies each year thanks to the availability of early treatment for exposure to the disease, and aggressive pet vaccination programs in the U.S. have largely confined rabies to wildlife. Other countries aren't as fortunate: 95% of human deaths from rabies occur in Asia and Africa, where dogs spread the majority of the cases, according to the World Health Organization. [The Washington Post/The Associated Press](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/ddaKBXzCwNCatJuSCidalECicNCsCy?format=standard) (8/9)

[**Study: Reading to dogs helps children improve skills, confidence**](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dddRBXzCwNCatYvvCidalECicNXQTM?format=standard)

Reading aloud to dogs helps young children develop their skills and confidence in front of a nonjudgmental audience, according to a small pilot study at the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University. Researchers split second-grade students into two groups, with one reading to dogs and the other reading to humans who corrected their mistakes. At the end of the study, the children who read to dogs had improved their reading speeds while the other group's words-per-minute decreased. [The Boston Globe/Daily Dose blog](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dddRBXzCwNCatYvvCidalECicNXQTM?format=standard) (free registration) (8/10)

[**Report: Tracking canine cases of Lyme disease could protect people**](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dddRBXzCwNCatYvnCidalECicNUdes?format=standard)

Tracking rates of Lyme disease in dogs may prove helpful in protecting people from contracting the tick-borne disease, according to a report from scientists at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Tracking rates of disease in dogs through blood tests would give officials a sense of how high the risk is to humans in specific regions, said the researchers. [U.S. News & World Report/HealthDay](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/dddRBXzCwNCatYvnCidalECicNUdes?format=standard) (8/10)