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PRESS RELEASE

"Is it a RABIES year for Franklin County?" Report all animal bites to the health department!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dog bites, cat bites, cows or horses, wild animals: Any of them can get and transmit rabies. Already this year we have had three reports of rabies and multiple animal bites. Every animal bite or scratch that breaks the skin and may include contact with saliva requires an investigation to rule in or rule out rabies transmission. The risk of transmission to humans by unvaccinated animals is real and frequently results in an expensive series of vaccinations for the exposed person.

Rabies is a deadly communicable disease. Only one person in the United States has ever survived rabies infection. Because of the severity of rabies, any animal that potentially has acquired rabies must be treated and/or quarantined. This includes vaccinated animals, although the risk is lower when fully vaccinated. Treatment for humans consists of four or five rabies vaccinations over three weeks time at a cost well over \$1000.00.

Don't put yourself at risk and teach your children how to protect themselves.

Practice the following:

1. **Do not attempt to play or interact with stray or wild animals.** Rabies is not always recognizable. Some rabies have classic symptoms, like aggression or foaming at the mouth, but just as often, there may be "Dumb" rabies, without those symptoms. These animals may appear depressed, tired and overly tame. Report animals that appear to have unusual behavior as they may be very sick.
2. **Keep all pet vaccinations up-to-date, including barn cats or other "Pets".**
3. **Keep hands and face away from animals, even gentle pets. Leave them alone when they are eating.** Even the gentlest pets can be protective of their owners, their food, or their home. Avoid aggressive play with your pets. Don't wrestle or tease.