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News Release

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Greene County Combined Health District Announces World Rabies Day - Sept. 28, 2009

(Xenia, OH) The Greene County Combined Health District (GCCHD) and Greene County Animal Control, in conjunction with The Ohio Department of Health (ODH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and many other organizations worldwide, are joining in the fight against rabies.

Rabies is a preventable viral disease that causes acute encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). The virus exists in the saliva of mammals and is usually transmitted from animal to animal or from animal to human by biting. The virus can also be spread by licking, when infected saliva makes contact with open cuts or wounds, the mouth, eyes and nose. If left untreated in humans and animals, rabies is fatal. Therefore, to survive a rabies exposure, it is necessary to complete medical treatment under the supervision of a healthcare professional.

Did you know that...

- Rabies is 100 percent preventable, yet results in over 55,000 human deaths in the world each year.
- Rabies is present throughout Ohio and the World.
- The greatest number of human deaths occurs in Asia and Africa where canine (dog) rabies is common.
- The population most affected by human rabies is children. Approximately 50% of all human deaths worldwide occur in victims less than 15 years of age.
- ODH provides testing of rabies-suspect animals.
- In 2008 there were 64 animals that tested positive for rabies in Ohio: 5 raccoons, 55 bats, 3 skunks, and 1 coyote. **In Greene County we did have 1 positive bat.**
- In 2008, the number of bats testing positive (55) was higher than the five-year average (47, range 30-66).

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What can you do...

- All dogs, cats and ferrets should be vaccinated against rabies. Consider vaccinating valuable livestock and horses.
- Pet owners can reduce the possibility of pets being exposed to rabies by not letting them roam free.
- Spaying or neutering your pet may reduce the tendency they might have to roam or fight.
- Enjoy all wild animals from a distance and teach children never to handle unfamiliar animals – even if they appear friendly.
- Do not keep wild animals as pets.
- Bat-proof your home.

Additional information is available at: World Rabies Day Website: www.worldrabies.org;

Ohio Department of Health: <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/dis/zoonoses/rabies/rab1.aspx>;

Centers for Disease Prevention and Control: www.cdc.gov/rabies.

For more information, contact Deborah Leopold, Environmental Health Director, at 937-374-5604.

Greene County Combined Health District – Your center for public health services and information in Greene County for over 80 years.

Healthy People...Healthy Communities

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