

Our File/N/Réf.
Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 14 May 1996

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator, Community Services Committee

FROM/EXP. Acting Medical Officer of Health

SUBJECT/OBJET **ONTARIO REGULATION 567/90 -- IMMUNIZATION OF DOMESTIC ANIMALS AGAINST RABIES**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council authorize the Health Department to proceed with an application to the Ministry of Health to be included in Ontario Regulation 567/90 which requires the mandatory vaccination of cats and dogs against rabies.

BACKGROUND

In February 1995, the Ministry of Natural Resources requested that all jurisdictions in Ontario develop a Raccoon Rabies Contingency Plan in order to prepare for the expected entrance of the disease into Ontario. Chaired by the Environmental Health Directorate of the Health Department, a planning committee was established to develop a plan for Ottawa-Carleton. That plan is now complete. The key components of the plan are prevention, detection, containment, education, and communications. See Annex A for details.

One of the strategies recommended in the plan is for Ottawa-Carleton to implement mandatory rabies vaccination for all cats and dogs residing within the Region. In order to require vaccination, Regional Council must make a request to the Ministry of Health to be included in Ontario Regulation 567/90.

DISCUSSION

Incidence of Rabies

The incidence of animal rabies in Ottawa-Carleton has been very low over the past three years with only one or two positive cases each year, primarily in bats, being reported. This is largely due to the first vaccination program implemented by the Ministry of Natural Resources. Based on American experience, it is believed that this situation could change drastically with the arrival of raccoon rabies into Ontario and Ottawa-Carleton. Raccoon rabies has been spreading through the Eastern United States, moving northward at a rate of approximately 20 to 30 miles per year. See Annex B for a map of predicted spread patterns. It is anticipated that it will arrive in Ottawa-Carleton in 1998. **Due to the large number of raccoons living in urban areas, the risk of exposure for both pets and people to the rabies virus will increase considerably.** In New York City, after raccoon rabies started to penetrate the area, the number of persons receiving post-exposure vaccine increased from 1,125 to 2,905 in one year. There is also evidence of the disease being spread to unvaccinated animals, including cats, dogs, rabbits, and farm animals.

Animal Bites

The Environmental Health Directorate currently investigates an average of 700 biting incidents a year involving cats and dogs. It is estimated that only 40 per cent of dogs and a smaller percentage of cats receive their rabies vaccination. Biting incidents resulted in 55 people being given rabies vaccines in 1995 at a cost of between \$240 and \$440 per case. There have been no human cases of rabies for 30 years in Ottawa-Carleton.

Vaccination

Mandatory vaccination would be facilitated through the following activities which will be the responsibility of the Health Department:

1. In cooperation with the Veterinary Association, organize low-cost vaccination clinics across the Region on an annual basis in accordance with legislative requirements.
2. Ensure that provision is made for free vaccination for those truly not able to pay.
3. Advertise times and locations of clinics.
4. Assist in the operation of the clinics through the provision of administrative support.
5. Enforcement of the regulation in the context of complaints and bite investigations. This will be implemented in accordance with Ministry of Health recommendations. See Annex C.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There would be some costs associated with advertising and staff time in establishing clinics. Costs will be covered under the existing budget.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Consultation was accomplished through the Contingency Planning Committee. Representatives on the committee included the Veterinary Association, local municipal by-law officers, the Humane Society, police forces, Agriculture Canada, Trappers Associations, Ministry of Natural Resources, Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre and the National Capital Commission.

CONCLUSION

Given the relatively low rates of vaccination for pets in Ottawa-Carleton and the additional risk of human exposure to the rabies virus, which will be created when raccoon rabies reaches Ottawa-Carleton, mandatory vaccination of cats and dogs against rabies is a necessary part of the Raccoon Rabies Contingency plan. It will reduce human exposure to rabies and help keep the incidence of human rabies at zero.

*Approved by
Geoff Dunkley
Acting Medical Officer of Health*

Purpose of the Contingency Plan

This Contingency Plan is to provide appropriate local agencies and interested organizations with a coordinated plan to cope with the threat posed by raccoon rabies, setting out action to:

- minimize the potential for entry of raccoon rabies into the R.M.O.C;
- slow its spread beyond any initial outbreak, should it occur; and
- inform the public, to enable them to take appropriate action.
- ensure that all agencies and organizations within the R.M.O.C. which deal with wildlife- or rabies-related issues are able to do so in a co-ordinated, efficient and consistent manner.

Questions regarding this Contingency Plan should be directed to:

Andrew Roche, Ottawa-Carleton Health Department, 495 Richmond Rd. Ottawa
(Name and address of Team Leader)

(613) 722-2200, ext. 3655 (613) 724-4191
(Phone and Fax Numbers)

This is the person that will be contacted by the Provincial/Federal agencies when a control issue arises.

This Contingency Plan deals with four basic topics, each with its objective:

- Prevention
- Detection
- Containment
- Communications and Education

1.0 Prevention

Objective:

Prevent raccoon rabies from entering the community or from being spread.

Action 1.1

Describe the most likely means by which raccoons might arrive in your community by:

- identifying main
 - ▶ commercial truck routes
 - ▶ boat routes
 - ▶ train traffic routes
- identifying high volume/high risk areas (e.g. truck depots, railway yards, marinas)
- identifying high risk events (e.g. fall fairs)

The above-noted information is contained in Appendix 4 and should be taken into consideration: 1) by OMNR staff when considering locations for T-V-R and research activities within the RMOC; 2) by any agency contacted with respect to a potential incident, and; 3) by any agency when planning or implementing information strategies, given that high risk areas and populations must be considered.

Responsibility: NCC

Status: Complete

Action 1.2

Identify the local support that can be offered to the provincially-operated program of vaccinating wildlife.

RACCOON RABIES - AVAILABLE TRAPPERS

101 - Clarence Bennett	283-6240 - CA03 1300 30	Not Vacc
108 - Lyle Cavanagh	839-5311 - CA03 0741 18	Not Vacc
118 - Stanislaw Jadowski	822-1948 - CA03 0838 01	Unknown

125 - James MacLaurin		821-4031 - CA03 1607 27	Not Vacc
126 - Daniel Madigan		258-4101 - CA03 1300 07	Not Vacc
129 - Clarence Mussell		826-2214 - CA03 1558 02	Not Vacc
132 - Paul Mussell		826-2214 - CA03 1558 03	Not Vacc
139 - William E. Pratt		489-3801 - CA03 1300 24	Not Vacc
146 - James P. Walker		821-3580 - CA03 1607 25	Not Vacc
153 - Gerald Lee	(h) (w)	224-8111 - CA01 1624 16 953-1434	Vaccinated
167 - Don Vance		832-0907 - CA03 1035 23 839-3317	Vaccinated

It is imperative that all confirmed members of the Point Control and TVR Team be vaccinated against rabies in accordance with the strategy approved by the Ontario Ministries of Health and Natural Resources. The Ministry of Health has advised that it will cover the cost of post-exposure immunization commencing on the first day of trapping during a Point Control Programme.

Responsibility: Rabies Research Unit/AgCan **Status:** Ongoing

Action 1.3

Identify the action that will promote the vaccination of pets.

Action 1.3.1

Conduct rabies vaccination clinics with the support and participation of team members of the Ottawa-Carleton Working Group on Raccoon Rabies including but not limited to: Regional Health Unit, Agriculture Canada, area municipalities, Central Canada Veterinary Association, Humane Society of Ottawa-Carleton.

Responsibility: O-C Health Department **Status:** To be actioned

Action 1.3.2

Promote pet vaccination against rabies as part of the actions outlined under **Section 4.0 - Communication and Education**, including but not limited to the use of following:

print advertisements, displays at relevant pet fairs, and videos.
(See Appendix 7 for available Communications Products)

Responsibility: All **Status:** Ongoing

Action 1.4

Identify what can be done to: a) increase the vaccination rate in dogs and cats; b) reduce the number of stray dogs and cats in order to reduce the potential for disease transmission by those high risk vector animals.

Action 1.4.1

Seek an amendment to the relevant legislation to provide for compulsory vaccination of pets (dogs and cats) against rabies within RMOC, with support from MNR Rabies Unit (Rick Rosatte).

Responsibility: O-C Health Department **Status:** Ongoing

Action 1.4.2

Promote responsible pet ownership, with particular emphasis on vaccination and control of domestic pets.

Responsibility: Area municipalities **Status:** Ongoing

Action 1.4.3

Encourage municipal by-law enforcement units in the Region to adopt by by-law and proactively enforce mandatory permanent (tattoo or microchip) identification of cats and dogs, and the licensing/registration of all cat and dog breeders. The intent is to have available to agencies with a mandate in that regard information concerning as many sources of pets as possible and to ensure, in the long term, that owners keep their pets under control.

Responsibility: HSOC **Status:** Ongoing

Action 1.4.4

Suggest that an Ottawa-wide census to obtain information with respect to the cat and dog population be conducted every three years, possibly through a student employment programme.

Responsibility: HSOC **Status:** To be actioned

2.0 Detection

Objective:

To discover an outbreak as early as possible.

Action 2.1

Identify the people usually responsible for responding to reports of potentially rabid wildlife and cats/dogs. Use the flow charts to help with this. This represents the "normal" level of monitoring.

The agencies usually responsible for responding to these reports are referred to in the attached Response Flow Charts (Appendix 6). The contact persons associated with each agency are listed in Appendix 3.

Generally speaking, reports of potentially rabid animals where there was no human involvement, should be referred to the District Veterinarian at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada - Phone (613) 998-8784. Reports where there was human involvement should be referred to the Medical Officer of Health at the Environmental Health Directorate of the Ottawa-Carleton Health Department - Phone (613) 722-2200.

Responsibility: O-C Health Department **Status:** Complete

Action 2.2

Based upon information about the relative risk for rabies (from the Provincial Raccoon Rabies Task Force), identify (with the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada representative) any areas in which a higher level of monitoring is required. For example, a higher level might be submitting for testing any raccoon that demonstrates clinical symptoms and has been found near a high risk area (e.g. truck depot).

Responsibility: NCC/AgCan **Status:** To be actioned

Action 2.3

Identify the ways in which outbreak detection will be facilitated and key staff will become sufficiently aware of their responsibilities and their best courses of action (e.g. who to call for advice or help).

Action 2.3.1

Ensure prompt and effective response and reporting on the part of the First Contact which could involve any organization in the Region, but most likely the Humane Society of Ottawa-Carleton. Appropriate staff of all stakeholder organizations must be sufficiently knowledgeable to make case-by-case decisions regarding handling of suspect raccoons. A standard response protocol and associated form will be developed for that purpose.

Responsibility: OCWC/City of Ottawa _____ **Status:** To be actioned _____

Action 2.3.2

Conduct both in-house training by the respective organizations and cross-organizational training between members of the Preventative Education Committee (PEC) so as to ensure an integrated and consistent response by those organizations having the most public contact with respect to wildlife.

Responsibility: PEC _____ **Status:** To be actioned Fall 1996 _____

Action 2.3.3

Identify the reporting and action processes to all other related organizations, e.g. police departments (especially 911 operators), pest control companies, local government offices. (Possibly including the distribution of a sticker, showing the relevant phone number.)

Responsibility: OMNR - Kemptville Office _____ **Status:** Ongoing _____

3.0 Containment

Objectives:

- To slow the spread of infection from a point outbreak; and
- to eliminate the focus of infection.

Action 3.1

Ensure that the public is well aware and has ready access to the "first contact agency", i.e. the agency that is prepared to respond with effective advice or action to any individual's call for assistance.

Action 3.1.1

Prepare a public fact sheet listing first agency contact name, address and phone number per Raccoon Rabies Fact Sheet Number 7. Provide copies of the fact sheet to all team members, including local veterinarians and the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police Services, for distribution to the public as appropriate and required.

Responsibility: OMNR - Kemptville office **Status:** Complete

Action 3.1.2

Provide to all team members of the Ottawa-Carleton Working Group on Raccoon Rabies, for internal use primarily, the "Wildlife Conflict Protocol", attached as Appendix 5, which outlines the general approach and procedures with respect to response to wildlife conflict calls, including first contact response in the event of suspect raccoon rabies cases. A copy will also go to the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Police Services given that that agency is often contacted outside of regular office hours or in cases of animal-related emergencies.

Responsibility: O-C Health Department **Status:** To be actioned

Action 3.1.3

Prepare and have available an information package ready for distribution to the media upon confirmation of the first positive case.

Responsibility: OMNR - Kemptville office **Status:** Complete

Action 3.2

Ensure that each individual and agency with a responsibility in the process of responding to an incident is capable of quickly taking the appropriate action.

Action 3.2.1

Ensure that all agencies involved have copies of all relevant materials and that appropriate staff within their respective agencies have a thorough understanding of the flow charts and have ready access to names, telephone numbers, etc. for each agency identified on the flow charts. Team members of the Ottawa-Carleton Working Group on Raccoon Rabies, with the Health Department taking the lead, will meet on an annual basis, or as required, to ensure continued dialogue and updating of information with respect to the Raccoon Rabies issue.

Responsibility: All agencies **Status:** On-going

Action 3.3

Identify the action(s) that will be needed to support a raccoon rabies infection point control programme in Ottawa-Carleton.

Action 3.3.1

Obtain and retain a copy of the generic Outbreak Plan prepared by the OMNR Rabies Research Unit. That document forms the basis of an Action Plan for the Ottawa-Carleton area which includes: enlisting of local trappers, training of existing trapping resources (by-law officers), media relations strategies. The Contingency Plan for the Ottawa-Carleton area will be reviewed by the Working Group annually or as required.

Responsibility: O-C Health Department **Status:** Complete

Action 3.3.2

Secure funding for TVR and Point Control Programmes.

Responsibility: Rabies Research Unit **Status:** Complete

Action 3.3.3

Prepare/have available public educational material which is specific to "what to do and what not to do" during the implementation of TVR and Point Control Programmes.

Responsibility: OMNR - Kemptville office

Status: Complete

Fact Note: If an outbreak should occur, the following actions will be necessary to contain and prevent the further spread of infection: raccoons, foxes and skunks within a pre-determined radius of the reported case will be live-trapped and humanely euthanized. In a zone, also of pre-determined radius, just beyond the aforementioned area, animals will be trapped, vaccinated and released, in order to create a buffer zone of immunized animals, thus containing and eliminating the outbreak.

4.0 Communication and Education

Objectives:

- To facilitate prompt, effective action in response to individual rabies events; and
- to facilitate effective communication throughout the network of organizations and public for dealing with rabies response and control.

Fact Note: Your local offices of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Health Department can provide information on the educational materials that are available.

Action 4.1

Identify the needs for creating levels of awareness and knowledge that will enable achievement of the objectives.

Action 4.1.1

Develop and implement proactive education and communication strategies, particularly with the media, politicians, animal rights groups, rehabilitators, and wildlife removal companies, well in advance of any incident of raccoon rabies. Strategies will address, as appropriate, such relevant issues as the importance of pet vaccination, handling of human/wildlife conflict situations, problems with forced removal of wildlife, responsible rehabilitation practices, etc.

Responsibility: ALL **Status:** Ongoing

Action 4.1.2

Review the Provincial Raccoon Rabies Communications Plan and the educational materials that support it to determine how best to integrate it locally. Appendix 7 contains a list of available communications products endorsed by the members of this contingency planning group. Refer also to the "Questions and Answers" document provided by the OMNR.

Responsibility: All **Status:** Complete

Action 4.1.3

Encourage that each agency involved in rabies control: a) has an internal Communications Strategy that clearly identifies its role, responsibilities, personnel involved, and method for delivery; and, b) reports, on an annual basis, to the Ottawa-Carleton Working Group on Raccoon Rabies (on the whole) as to the status of their respective Communications Strategies.

Responsibility: All

Status: Ongoing

Action 4.1.4

Suggest that each agency involved in rabies control implements in-house training and, ideally (see 2.3.2), cross-organizational training with respect to communications. The goal is to establish both thorough training while ensuring, through a network, that consistent and cohesive support for region-wide communications exists.

Responsibility: PEC/O-C Health Department

Status: Ongoing

Action 4.1.5

Identify key audiences locally and ensure that they have been considered. This should include a schedule of when they should be contacted, by whom, and with what information.

Responsibility: PEC/O-C Health Department

Status: Ongoing

Action 4.1.6

Establish a media relations team with representatives from the various agencies to serve as spokespeople. The following Key Messages are considered to be an integral part of the collective communications strategy within the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton and form the core of that strategy:

Key Message 1: Have pets vaccinated annually.

Submessage: Annual pet vaccination will help break the chain of infection from wildlife to humans.

Key Message 2: Avoid contact with stray animals, unfamiliar domestic animals, or wild animals.

Submessage: Discourage children from coming into contact with unfamiliar animals.

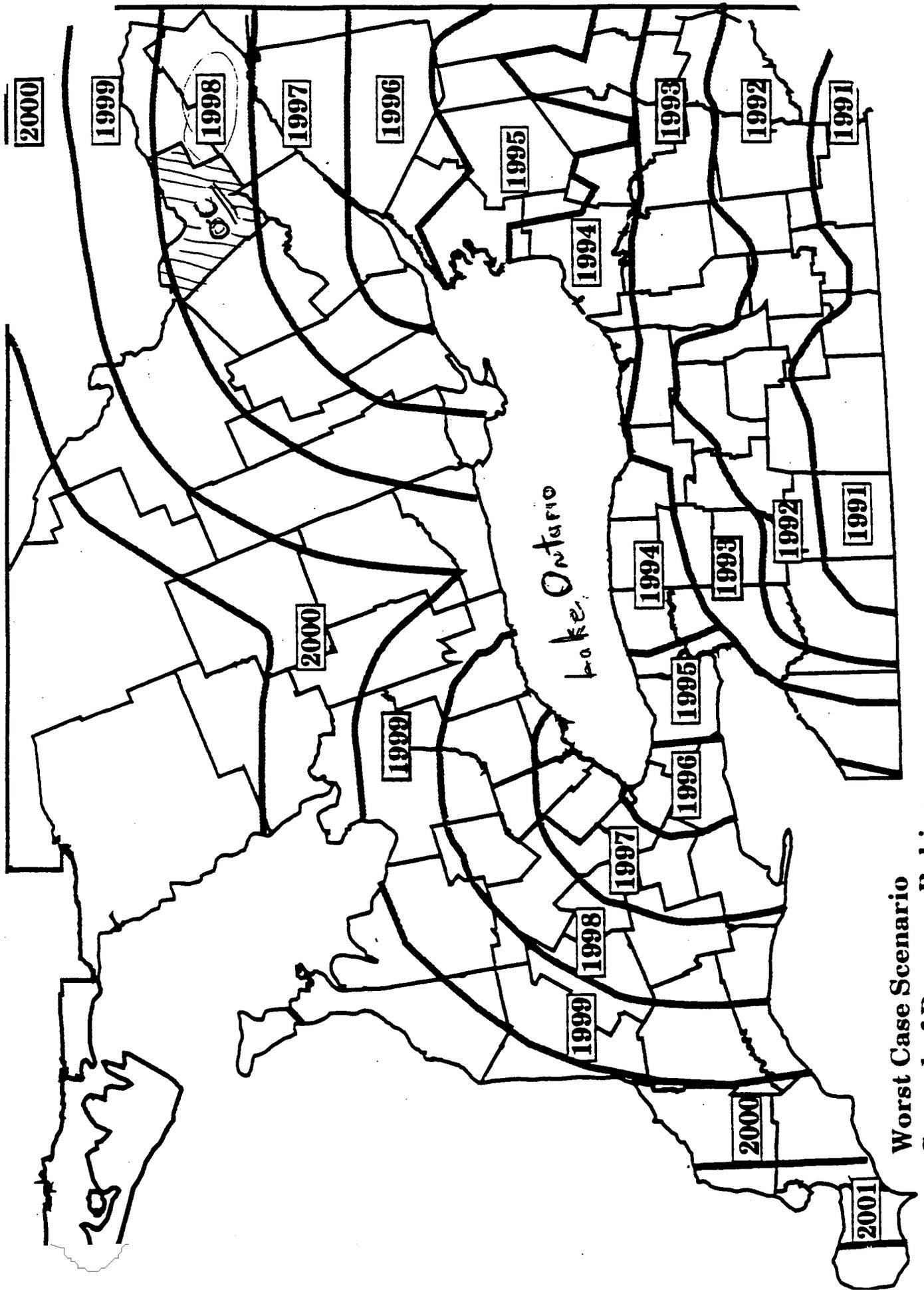
Submessage: Report any incidents of stray animals or animals acting strangely to the first contact agency in your municipality.

Key Message 3: Report any human exposure incidents (bites, scratches, etc.) to the Regional Health Department.

Submessage: In addition to reporting the incident to the Health Department, seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Refer also to Appendix 8 for Detailed Key Messages from each agency.

Responsibility: OMNR/OCWC/City of Ottawa/Health Dept. **Status:** Ongoing



**Worst Case Scenario
Spread of Raccoon Rabies
At ~60 Km Per Year**



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Ministry Ministère
of de
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Public
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Branch

Telephone: (416) 327-7423
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June 17, 1994

TO: ALL MEDICAL OFFICERS OF HEALTH

ATTENTION: DIRECTORS OF INSPECTION
RABIES COORDINATORS

Dear Doctor:

RE: Changes to Ontario Regulation 567 (Rabies - Immunization) and Regulation 950
(Proceedings Commenced by Certificate of Offence) under the Provincial Offences Act

Section 1 of Regulation 567 (Rabies Immunization - a Regulation made under the Health Protection and Promotion Act) states that "Every owner or person having the care and custody of a cat or a dog three months of age or over that is kept in a health unit listed in Column 1 of Table 1 shall ensure that the cat or dog is immunized against rabies on and after the date set out opposite thereto in Column 2 of Table 1."

The provisions of section 3 under Regulation 567 were recently amended to provide that "Every owner or person having the care and custody of an animal that is required to be immunized against rabies under section 1 or subsection 2(1) shall ensure that the animal is reimmunized against rabies by the date specified in the certificate of immunization issued with respect to the animal."

New Schedule 40.1 amends Regulation 950 under the Provincial Offences Act to provide short form wording for failure to immunize or reimmunize a cat or dog against rabies in accordance with Regulation 567 under HPPA. The new schedule is set out below.

SCHEDULE 40.1

Regulation 567 of Revised Regulations of Ontario, 1990 under the Health Protection and Promotion Act

ITEM	COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	SET FINE (INCLUDES COSTS)
1.	Fail to immunize cat against rabies	section 1	\$90.
2.	Fail to immunize dog against rabies	section 1	\$90.
3.	Fail to reimmunize cat against rabies per certificate	section 3	\$90.
4.	Fail to reimmunize dog against rabies per certificate	section 3	\$90.

This amendment will allow for the fining of those persons having the responsibility to ensure that their cat or dog (that is kept in the affected health unit) is immunized or reimmunized against rabies. This amendment means that summary conviction under the Health Protection and Promotion Act is no longer the only legal recourse available. Initial immunization is to occur by the "effective date" (Column 2 of Table 1) and reimmunization according to the date described on the vaccination certificate issued by the veterinarian. The amount of the fine is \$90, including costs and applies only to cats and dogs.

Judgement should be exercised in the issuance of the fine. For example, monitoring of households for the presence of unvaccinated cats and dogs is not recommended or encouraged. However, application of the fine should be considered during the investigation of a (suspected) rabies incident. A warning could be issued with a target date of one to two weeks for the owner to provide proof of immunization before relying upon the new set fine provisions. Failure to provide proof then could result in penalties.

The two amendments from the Ontario Gazette are attached and should you wish further information, please do not hesitate to contact Chuck LeBer or Steve Styliadis at (416) 327-7423.

Sincerely,



C. LeBer, DVM, DVPM
Senior Veterinary Consultant
Food Safety/Water Quality Unit
Disease Control Service