

Why Rabies Hereabout?

In order to reply to the questions that come to us by telephone and to assist in neutralizing the ill effects of misinformation that has been disseminated on the subject, the following is offered in the hope that it will tend to expedite the eradication of rabies in dogs in this community.

What Is Rabies?

Rabies is an infectious disease of animals that is in no way directly influenced by climate or season, capable of transmission to man, usually by the bite of a rabid animal. The disease may also be communicated by contaminating wounds of the hands or other parts, with the saliva of animals that are affected with rabies. The existence of rabies is not denied by those who are informed and ample evidence of the nature and existence of the disease is to be found in any well furnished medical library in any civilized country. This disease is practically always, if not always, fatal and all who are unqualified by regular training should carefully avoid influencing dog owners and others regarding any phase of the rabies problem as it exists here at present.

Why Is Rabies Prevalent Now?

Due in part to inadequate regulation of the movement of dogs (strays and others) and because of a lack of concerted action to prevent the spread of the disease, it has become increasingly prevalent throughout the United States. As soon as legislation provides for the enforcement of state-wide quarantine and vaccination as well, rabies will be quickly controlled in Illinois as it has been elsewhere. It is quite probable that conditions are serious enough now that we may hopefully look for remedial measures in this state soon.

How Can the Disease Be Stamped Out?

The control of movement of stray or unwanted dogs from place to place and the annual immunization of all dogs that are licensed or cared for, will positively bring the incidence of rabies to a minimum or stamp it out in any community.

Where Has Rabies Been Stamped Out?

Connecticut was the first state where legislation was enacted for the purpose of eradicating rabies in this country and this became necessary in 1922. A Connecticut regulatory official, Dr. G. E. Corwin, has recently stated that, "At this time there is not a known case of rabies in Connecticut, the last quarantine area having been released some three months ago."

In brief, the Connecticut method considers the administration of a single prophylactic injection of anti-rabies vaccine, properly executed, as protection for dogs so treated, against the attack of known rabid animals, provided quarantine of the known exposed dogs be carried out. Since the vaccination of dogs was started in Connecticut, six vaccinated dogs have been bitten by known rabid dogs and none of these have developed rabies. However, an incident is officially reported from Connecticut wherein a known rabid dog bit two unvaccinated dogs and one vaccinated dog. The two unvaccinated dogs developed rabies and died but the vaccinated dog did not develop rabies and is still living, after two years.

What Vermont Does

During the last year Vermont legislation has provided for the control of rabies. There, no town or city clerk shall issue a license for any dog unless the owner shall

first present a certificate stating that said dog has been vaccinated within six months. Deputy Commissioner, R. S. Going, Department of Agriculture, Montpelier, Vermont, writes under date of December 20, 1927: "A year ago we had a serious outbreak of rabies which rapidly spread throughout the northern portion of Vermont in a very short period of time. As several people were bitten and many cattle, horses and sheep were also bitten, and as the disease appeared to be spreading in spite of local muzzling ordinances, we recommended the passage of a bill by the legislature which was then in session, providing for the vaccination of all dogs in the state.

"The bill was passed and became a law in twenty-four hours from the time it was introduced. The quarantine order issued under this law was immediately sent out . . . The order states in effect, the law relative to vaccinations. After this quarantine was promulgated the possible cases of rabies continually decreased and within a few months rabies was practically stamped out of the state. A few cases came to our notice of dogs that had been vaccinated which afterwards developed rabies, but where those were traced out it was found that the dogs had evidently been exposed or bitten quite a time previous to the vaccination.

"We are sure that had it not been for the vaccination of all dogs in the state the situation last summer would have been very disastrous."

What New Jersey Is Doing

John V. Mulcahy, chief of the bureau of bacteriology, state department of health, Trenton, New Jersey, writes that results similar to those in Connecticut are reported from municipalities in New Jersey where the Connecticut method of control is in operation. In Orange, New Jersey, for instance, this official reports that only "seven cases of rabies were found in non-vaccinated and stray dogs in the year 1924; no cases occurred among the vaccinated dogs." He states further: "The responsibility rests upon each municipality to adopt stringent regulations to control this disease within its confines."

Quoting Doctor Mulcahy again: "From the conclusive evidence of the value of the one-injection method of anti-rabies prophylaxis, both experimentally and based on the practical experience with this method in Japan, Connecticut and in our own state, in preventing rabies in dogs so treated, it would seem that the immunization of dogs by the anti-rabies vaccine is the best practical method to control and eradicate rabies in this state."

What Others Have Done

Space does not permit further elaboration on the effectiveness of anti-rabies vaccination of dogs in conjunction with intelligent control of the movement of stray dogs, but any who are interested may learn much by communicating with health officials of Milton, Massachusetts, from whence the statement was issued that, "The protective inoculation of dogs against rabies is apparently a safe procedure." Shreveport, Louisiana, and Kansas City, Missouri, offer additional evidence of the effectiveness of anti-rabies vaccination.

Muzzled dogs are at the mercy of stray dogs and they are certainly not protected in the least against the possible attack of a rabid dog unless they have been vaccinated against rabies. Muzzles are worthless for the reason that a comfortable muzzle that may be expected to remain in position on all dogs and effectively serve the purpose intended, has not yet been devised.

Prophylactic vaccination in the control of rabies should appeal to all intelligent dog owners who give thought to the possible danger to human beings, wherever an outbreak of rabies runs unchecked among animals. Anti-rabies vaccination is effectual, humane, inexpensive and should be applied to every licensed or owned but unvaccinated dog hereabout, forthwith. One treatment confers immunity for a period of about one year.

North Shore Animal Hospital

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Evanston

On or before May first, 1928, our address will be 1817 Church Street, Evanston, in our especially designed and commodious new hospital.