



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**The Department of Livestock Reports Skunk Tests Positive for Rabies in Big Horn County**

**Helena, Mont.** – On Tuesday February 12th, the Montana Department of Livestock (MDOL) reported the first case of terrestrial (non-bat) rabies in the state in 2020. The rabies-infected skunk was captured in Big Horn County. There are no known cat, dog, or human exposures at this time.

The Department of Livestock has issued a 60 day county-wide quarantine for dogs, cats and ferrets (MCA Title 81, Chapters 2 and 20). The quarantine is in effect from Tuesday, February 12<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup>. The terms of the quarantine include:

1. All non-vaccinated or not currently vaccinated dogs, cats, and ferrets in Big Horn County are to remain in the county for a period of not less than sixty (60) days from the date of the last known terrestrial rabies.
2. Any dog, cat or ferret in Big Horn County having been properly immunized against rabies for the first time, may be released from the quarantine area after a period of twenty-eight (28) days from the date of vaccination.
3. Any dog, cat or ferret in Big Horn County that is past-due on the rabies vaccine, may be immediately released from the quarantine area following administration of a booster vaccine.
4. Written notification from MDOL will be provided when this quarantine is released.

Rabies is a fatal disease of mammals that is virtually 100% preventable in domestic animals through the administration of rabies vaccine. The last documented cases of terrestrial (non-bat) rabies in Big Horn County occurred in 2014.

“These cases are a reminder of the presence of rabies in skunk and bat populations in Montana and the importance of keeping dogs and cats currently vaccinated for rabies,” says Dr. Anna Forseth with the

Department of Livestock. “Non-vaccinated animals that are exposed to rabid or potentially rabid wild animals may be subject to an extended isolation and quarantine.”

Residents are encouraged to report any contact between a pet and a wild animal, including skunks and bats, to Animal Control or the Department of Livestock to ensure potential rabies exposure are assessed for risk and managed accordingly.

For further information contact: Anna Forseth, Program Veterinarian: ph. 406-444-2939.

The mission of the Montana Department of Livestock is to control and eradicate animal diseases, prevent the transmission of animal diseases to humans, and to protect the livestock industry from theft and predatory animals. For more information on the Montana Department of Livestock, visit [www.liv.mt.gov](http://www.liv.mt.gov).