



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Frederick County Health Department

## *A message from our program:*

October 11, 2024

As a farmer, understanding the risks of rabies exposure in your animals is crucial. Here's what you need to know:

### 1. Which Animals Are at Risk?

- **Mammals:** Rabies affects mammals, including pets and livestock.
- **Wildlife:** In the United States, over **90%** of reported rabies cases occur in wildlife. According to the [CDC](#), common carriers include **raccoons, skunks, bats, and foxes.**
- **Pets and Livestock:** Nearly all pets and livestock that contract rabies were not vaccinated and had contact with wildlife.

### 2. Human Risk:

- While rabies is rare in people in the U.S., about **60,000 Americans** receive post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) each year after a potential rabies exposure.
- **Bats:** Contact with infected bats is the leading cause of human rabies deaths in the United States. Bites or scratches from bats can be difficult to detect.

### 3. Recognizing Rabies in Animals:

- Animals with rabies may exhibit unusual behavior:
  - **Aggression:** Some become aggressive and may try to bite.
  - **Excessive Drooling:** This is sometimes depicted as "foaming at the mouth."
  - **Other Signs:** Timidity, slow movement, or abnormal tameness.
- **Remember:** Not all rabid animals show these signs, so be cautious around any wildlife.

### 4. Preventive Measures:

- **Vaccination:** Ensure your pets and livestock are up to date on rabies vaccinations.
- **Avoid Wild Animals:** Never feed or approach wild animals, including baby animals.
- **Stray Dogs and Cats:** Be cautious when encountering strays, especially while traveling in countries where dog rabies is common.
- **Report Strange Behavior:** If any animal acts unusually, contact your local animal control officer.

Remember, early detection and preventive measures are essential for protecting your animals and yourself from rabies. Stay informed and prioritize vaccination to keep your farm safe!

For more information on how to protect farm animals, click [here](#).

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