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Dec. 1, 2023

Animal health officials advise pet owners to take proactive measures against a canine respiratory syndrome in New Mexico

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ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. – In collaboration with state and federal animal health officials, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) is advising pet owners on how to protect dogs against a canine respiratory syndrome.

NMDA's Veterinary Diagnostic Services Division is working closely with the Office of the State Veterinarian at the New Mexico Livestock Board, the New Mexico Department of Health, the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the New Mexico Veterinary Medical Association and the New Mexico Board of Veterinary Medicine to develop a coordinated response to the canine respiratory syndrome.

It has not been confirmed if this syndrome is a new disease or a combination of ailments common to dogs.

To help mitigate the risk of this illness to dogs, New Mexicans are encouraged to avoid comingling areas such as dog parks, grooming facilities and boarding centers, especially if their dogs are not fully vaccinated or are at higher risk of illness.

As the holiday season approaches, dog owners may choose to board pets while they are away from home. If you plan to board your dog this holiday season, it is vital to have up-to-date vaccinations – including canine influenza, Bordetella and parainfluenza – at least two weeks prior to the start of boarding.

Veterinarians in New Mexico have reported dogs with symptoms consistent with this syndrome. These reports are suspected cases, but have not been positively identified. New Mexico joins 14 other states that have reported cases of sick dogs with symptoms that resemble kennel cough. The nearest state relative to New Mexico with confirmed cases is Colorado.

In the most recent cases of the canine respiratory syndrome, dogs are experiencing prolonged coughing that can last weeks or months with minimal response to treatment. While there is no official total on how many dogs have died nationwide from the canine respiratory syndrome, it's

believed that most, if not all, of the dogs had underlying conditions and were at high risk of illness.

Symptoms of the canine respiratory syndrome can include:

- Trouble breathing
- Wheezing
- Coughing and/or sneezing
- Fever
- Discharge from eyes and/or nose
- Lethargy
- Dehydration
- Loss of appetite

If your dog is displaying more than one of the symptoms listed above, officials urge you to **promptly contact your veterinarian** to determine if further evaluation is necessary. Early evaluation can help in getting accurate diagnosis and treatment.

State-level veterinarians in New Mexico will collect samples from dogs across the state that are showing multiple symptoms associated with the syndrome. The samples will be sent to the University of New Hampshire, which is leading the effort to identify the pathogen that is causing the illness.

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