



## Pet Owners' Vaccine Hesitance Threatens Public Health

BY: SAMANTHA BARTLETT, DVM

Vaccine hesitancy is beginning to affect pet owners' attitude towards vaccination of their pets. An associate professor of public health at Texas A&M University, Simon F. Haeder, conducted surveys to determine the prevalence of non-vaccination among pet owners. He found that most pets among his survey respondents had received their core vaccines, including Rabies vaccination. He also found that three-quarters of pet owners trust their veterinarian to recommend vaccines and understand that many diseases prevented by vaccines are often severe and can lead to death. Additionally, more than 80% of dog and cat owners surveyed support vaccination requirements.

However, a significant minority hesitate to vaccinate their pets – 22% of dog owners and 26% of cat owners. About 12% of cats and 4% of dogs are not vaccinated against rabies. Vaccination rates for other core vaccines among this population are even lower. Many of these owners voice concerns about the safety and side effects associated with vaccines, believing it is safer to allow a pet to get natural immunity by contracting a disease than to be vaccinated. Overall, about 60% of the pet owners surveyed feel that their pets are vaccinated too much and prefer their pets to receive fewer vaccines at a time as opposed to all vaccines given in one visit.

These numbers are significant because these unvaccinated pets are at a higher risk of contracting a preventable disease and suffering severe illness and death. This will also subject their owners to severe financial and emotional investments. In addition, veterinarians may not initially think to diagnose a pet with a preventable disease as most are not commonly seen recently. Pets that are not vaccinated for rabies and potentially have contact with a rabid animal will be counted as an exposure risk for their owners forcing potentially unnecessary prophylactic post-exposure treatment as well as the stress and cost of quarantine imposed on their pet.

As veterinarians, our job is to help educate and address the concerns of pet owners so that we can come up with a satisfactory plan for all parties involved. Ultimately, we want our pet owners to feel they are making the best decisions for their pet's health and preventing needless illness, financial and emotional stress, and needless fatality of their beloved pet.

## Tickborne Parasite Reaches Kansas Cattle – *Theileria Orientalis* Ikeda

BY: SAMANTHA BARTLETT, DVM

A parasites of red blood cells in cattle has been diagnosed in Kansas. *Theileria orientalis* Ikeda, detected in Virginia in 2017, has now been identified in 16 states within the U. S. One case in Kansas involved calves that were purchased on the East coast and imported into Kansas. The primary vector is the Asian long-horned tick, a newer invasive species, that has been found in neighboring states including Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. The disease can be spread through multi-use needles and, of course, the Asian long-horned tick.

*Theileria orientalis* is a protozoal parasite that affects red and white blood cells. The parasite causes a condition known as theileriosis with symptoms similar to those of anaplasmosis. These include anemia, jaundice, and weakness. *T. orientalis* is not classified as reportable and there are no known human health risks from the parasite.

However, the disease caused by *T. orientalis* can cause significant economic impact for cattle producers secondary to mortality, reduced productivity and increased veterinary costs. It is important to monitor herds for symptoms and call veterinarians as soon as they are noticed to achieve prompt diagnosis and begin management protocols.

*T. orientalis* Ikeda has moved steadily across the country and is confirmed in 16 states. The disease mostly affects calves and pregnant heifers and can achieve up to 5 percent mortality rate in an infected herd. Cattle that recover from infection are likely to become chronic carriers and potential disease reservoirs. Infected ticks can remain in pastures for up to two years once introduced.

## FDA Seeks Reports on Adverse Events in Dogs Reported with Monoclonal Antibody Drug, Librela

BY: SAMANTHA BARTLETT, DVM

Librela, a monoclonal antibody used for treatment of osteoarthritis pain in dogs, was approved by the FDA in May 2023. The drug, developed by Zoetis, is administered as a monthly injection by veterinarians only. Since its arrival on the market, approximately 3600 reports of adverse events were received in the first year. These events included neurological signs such as ataxia, seizures, paralysis, anorexia, lethargy and recumbency, urinary incontinence, polyuria and polydipsia, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle tremors, lameness, and death or euthanasia. These reports can be accessed online through the FOIA Electronic Reading Room.

These reports prompted the FDA to initiate an investigation resulting in a “Dear Veterinarian” letter issued earlier this year. In its investigation, the FDA discovered that approximately 2/3 of the adverse events occurred within a week of receiving the injection with 30% occurring on the first day of the injection. 70% of

these events occurred with the initial dose of Librela and about 30% of the events involved no other medications or supplements.

The FDA is encouraging veterinarians to continue to report any adverse events that may be associated with administration of Librela. Veterinarians can report directly to Zoetis at 1-888-963-8471 or to the FDA via its online reporting system.

FDA Online Reporting System: <https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/report-problem/how-report-animal-drug-and-device-side-effects-and-product-problems>

Dear Veterinarian Letter: <https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/product-safety-information/dear-veterinarian-letter-notifying-veterinarians-about-adverse-events-reported-dogs-treated-librela>

FOIA Electronic Reading Room: <https://www.fda.gov/about-fda/center-veterinary-medicine/cvm-foia-electronic-reading-room>

# New Study Says Domestic Cats Need To Be Evaluated More For HPAI H5N1 Implications

BY: SAMANTHA BARTLETT, DVM

A study published in *Emerging Microbes and Infection* in early January expressed concern for the potential of the evolution of HPAI H5N1 in cats into a more dangerous virus. The University of Maryland School of Public Health made a 20-year review of bird flu in felines and noted a sharp increase of the incidence of bird flu in domestic cats, versus zoo-kept or wild species of felines, in 2023. HPAI H5N1 has a 67% mortality rate in cats.

In April 2024, ten cats died of HPAI H5N1 in South Dakota. The strain found in these cats was very similar to that found in the local dairy cow population. Scientists are unsure whether the cats were infected through the ingestion of infected birds or if the transmission occurred through exposure to the cattle. Since 2022, 200 species of mammals have shown to be susceptible to HPAI H5N1 including foxes, bobcats, mountain lions, bottlenose dolphins, coyotes, skunks, opossums, squirrels, raccoons, minks, black bears, polar bears, and harbor seals.

Cats currently do not appear to transmit the virus to people and the virus does not tend to spread from person to person. However, scientists note that only a few changes need to occur for the virus to be suited to transmission among humans. The virus sheds in bodily fluids such as saliva, nasal secretions, and feces. Cats are more likely to get the virus from a sick human than a human is to get it from a cat.

Cats can become infected through the consumption of raw milk or meat. They can also contract the virus from exposure to infected wild birds and dairy workers. Symptoms include neurologic signs such as ataxia, circling, tremors, seizures, and blindness. Other symptoms include lethargy, discharge from eyes and nose, sneezing, coughing and respiratory difficulties.

The College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell has issued guidelines for testing cats for HPAI H5N1 along with guidance for monitoring shelter and community colonies at <https://www.vet.cornell.edu/animal-health-diagnostic-center/about/news/testing-cats-highly-pathogenic-avian-influenza-hpai-h5n1-ahdc>.

The AVMA also has guidance on monitoring and managing cats with suspected HPAI H5N1 at <https://www.vet.cornell.edu/animal-health-diagnostic-center/about/news/testing-cats-highly-pathogenic-avian-influenza-hpai-h5n1-ahdc>.





## City of Leawood to Eliminate Animal Licensing Requirement

LEAWOOD, Kan.- Starting Tuesday, Jan. 28, the City of Leawood is ending its standard pet licensing program. Instead, Leawood will require all dogs and cats to have a microchip or vanity tag and be up to date on the rabies vaccination. This change simplifies pet ownership and reduces administrative costs while focusing on responsible pet care and community safety.

### Why the Change?

Animal Control officers, who operate on a complaint basis, already verify pet vaccinations directly with veterinarians when necessary and check for a microchip or identification, making licensing redundant. Under the new rules, these Animal Control practices will remain the same, ensuring that pets and their families are reunited quickly and efficiently.

Dropping the licensing program allows staff to redirect their time toward managing business licenses and permits, which demand more attention and generate significant revenue.

### What Does This Mean for Pet Owners?

#### Identification Tags or Microchips

Dogs and cats over six months old must either:

- Wear an identification tag or plate attached to their collar that is visible and contains at least a current telephone number of the current owner or caretaker, OR
- Have a microchip containing at least a current telephone number for the owner or caretaker
- Identification tags must always be worn when the pet is outdoors or not in a vehicle.

#### Rabies Vaccinations

- Dogs and cats over six months old must be vaccinated against rabies.



- If a veterinarian determines a pet cannot receive the vaccine for health reasons, the owner must provide a statement from the vet on official letterhead.
- Owners must keep the current rabies vaccination certificate or the veterinarian's exemption statement and provide it upon request by animal control or law enforcement.

#### Parks and Greenways Rules

- All dogs visiting Leawood Dog Park at 106th and Lee Boulevard, or any other city park or greenway, must be vaccinated against rabies.
- Dogs may be off leash while in Leawood Dog Park, but owners must follow all posted rules and regulations in city parks.

Please note that this change does not affect the City's special permit program for households with more than two dogs or cats, leash laws, or the dangerous animal ordinance. The City will continue to provide animal control services and enforce regulations related to pet ownership.

# Professor Creates Product to Sterilize Dogs and Cats Without Surgery

BY: SAMANTHA BARTLETT, DVM

A professor in the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. CheMyong Jay Ko is developing a method for sterilizing animals without surgery. Dr. Ko started working on the project to help veterinarians spend more time on healing animals and less time on elective surgeries.

He discovered that multiple doses of a synthetic estrogen given to neonate rodents halted their sexual development. The administration of estrogen during the window of reproductive organ development prevents the maturity of sex organs and halts the development of sex-related behaviors.

Dr. Ko's technology is an injectable pellet that releases hormones in cats and dogs. The product is made by Dr. Ko's company, Epivara, and is called iSpay and iNeuter. He has also developed iNeuter-S as an alternative for castration in male pigs. Dr. Ko states that although the technology stops the development of the reproductive organs, the overall growth of the individual is not affected.

The products developed by Epivara are still waiting for approval through the FDA and USDA. The full regulatory approval will likely take about \$25 million per species. Dr. Ko has received several grants as well as money from private investors to help with development and testing.

Meanwhile in Chile, a vaccine has been created that sterilized dogs for a year. A faculty member from the University of Chile's veterinary sciences department, Fernando Saenz, has been working with his team since 2009 to develop the vaccine. The product is currently being distributed throughout Chile. The vaccine stops the production of sex hormones for one year in male and female dogs by stimulating antibodies. The vaccine, known as Egalitte, has been patented in 40 different countries.

---

## MARCH CE EVENT

**Speaker:** Joanna Kuecker, DVM, CCRP, cVMA

**Topic:** The G.I. Microbiome: What's Bugging Your Patients?

**Date:** Thursday Mar. 20th, 2025

**Time:** Dinner/Registration: 6:30 | Presentation: 7:00

**CE:** 1 Hour

**Location:** Bristol (Leawood)

**Fee:** No fee to attend this event. Current membership dues cover all CE..

**Sponsor:** Nutramax

---

## Classifieds

Send your classified ads to: Wanda Geis, PO Box 12468, Shawnee Mission, KS 66282-2468, or email them to [classifieds@kcvcma.com](mailto:classifieds@kcvcma.com). Classified ads will be run at the sole discretion of the editor and may be edited for content.

### January 28, 2025

Kansas City Practice Closed: Equipment for Sale: Summit Select Xray Innovet Table w/Digital 17x17 Upgrade, Midmark Progeny Dental Xray, Midmark 1000-008 Hi-Speed Mobile Dental System, Tonovet & ophthalmic equipment, 47 Shor-Line Cages, 2 Shor-Line exam tables with scales, Shor-Line long V-Top tilting/rotating hydraulic surgical table; Vetland Isoflurane Anesthetic Machine, Midmark Quick-Clean 3Gal Ultrasonic Cleaner, Centrifuges, Sterilizers, many Acupuncture & Medical books. Etc. Xrays must be sold before vacating building Feb 14th. 913-238-3201 or 913-238-3128.

---

**January 8, 2025**

At Phoenix Veterinary Surgical Specialists, we take pride in delivering exceptional care to patients and providing peace of mind to their families. As a family-owned specialty surgery center, we provide a unique, personalized touch that larger corporate practices simply cannot match.

**Why Entrust us with the specialty surgical needs of your patients?**

- Experienced Team of Specialists
- Three board-certified surgeons with a combined wealth of expertise:
- Heather Millard, DVM, MS, DACVS-SA
- Ralph Millard, DVM, MS, DACVS-SA
- Kara Forsee, DVM, DACVS-SA

**Comprehensive Services**

- Advanced orthopedic procedures, including fracture repair and joint surgeries
- Extensive soft tissue capabilities, ranging from tumor removal to reconstructive surgery

**Outstanding Support**

- A skilled and compassionate technical team ensuring top-notch patient care
- Overnight care to provide continuous monitoring and support

**Family-Owned & Operated**

- A compassionate, personalized approach tailored to meet the unique needs of each patient

Trust us to be your partner in delivering the best possible surgical care for your clients' beloved pets. Visit us at Phoenix Veterinary Surgical Specialists and discover the difference compassionate, expert care makes!