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**NEWS RELEASE**  
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## **EDUCATION KEY TO PREVENT SPREAD OF RABIES**

**Charleston, WV** -- The rabies virus is 100 percent preventable through education and vaccination. The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA), along with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services (WVDHHR), have teamed up to get the message out. Thursday, September 28, is World Rabies Day.

"Not only is it important to vaccinate our animals, it's imperative that we educate our children about the dangers infected animals pose," said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. "Whether it's our family pets or farm animals, we all need to be aware of the signs and symptoms of the rabies virus."

Last year, West Virginia recorded 19 confirmed cases of the virus. Animals such as bats, skunks, foxes and raccoons are often the identified carriers. However, the virus can be spread to domesticated animals such as cats, dogs, cattle and horses if not properly vaccinated. Physicians and veterinarians are urging adults to educate themselves and their children about rabies. A short video, developed by the American Veterinary Medical Association, highlights what you need to know about the disease at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZkTg4U3CekE>.

For additional information on rabies education, contact the WVDA at (304)-558-2214 or Dr. Vanessa Harper, USDA/APHIS, at (304)-703-8362.

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