



**JANUARY 2025**

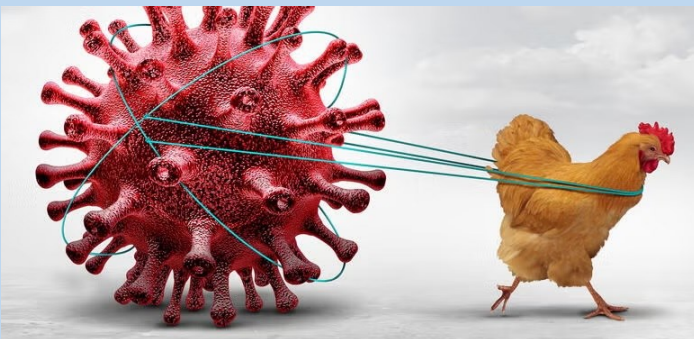
### **AVIAN INFLUENZA A H5N1 IN CATS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

By Alice Jeromin, B.S. Pharmacy, DVM, DACVD

Dozens of barn and feral cats have contracted the H5N1 virus since first described in the dairy cattle outbreak in March, 2024. Indoor cats, cats in zoos and in the wild (mountain lions, bobcats, lions, tigers, leopards) have been affected. Cases in cats have been linked to poultry, or wild bird exposure before the outbreak even began. We now are aware of other sources of the viral infection in cats.

How can cats get the virus? Food has been recognized as the source of infection including unpasteurized milk or raw undercooked meat. Other sources include raw colostrum, unpasteurized cream, exposure to wild birds or poultry (backyard chickens), or exposure to farm workers or their clothing.

What would be the symptoms of H5N1 in a cat?



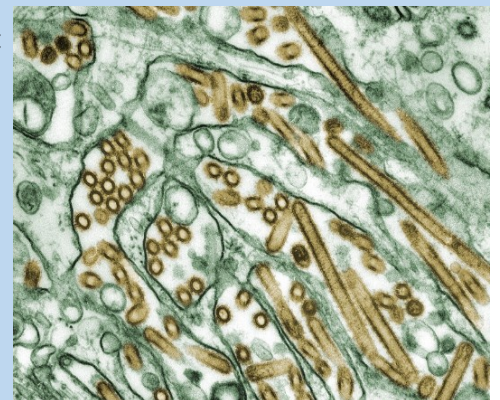
Depression, lack of appetite, fever, nasal or ocular discharge, coughing, trouble breathing or fast breathing, or neurological signs such as walking "funny", circling,

### **(H5N1...continued)**

tremors, seizures, or blindness.

What should I do if I suspect the virus in my cat? Use personal protection devices such as masks, hand washing, and isolate the cat until you can get it to the veterinarian. Limit the cat's contact with people or pets that may have immunosuppressive diseases or on immunosuppressive medications.

How do I prevent my cat from getting the virus? Do not feed unpasteurized milk products, avoid feeding raw food diets or undercooked meat, keep cats



indoors away from wild birds and livestock. Wash your hands after interacting with a cat that has had exposure to dead birds or encounters with livestock or poultry (backyard chickens included).

Recently a cat in Oregon contracted the virus from eating a raw frozen pet food which has since been recalled after it tested positive for the virus (Northwest Naturals 2lb Feline Turkey Recipe raw frozen pet food).

Other sources of information on the H5N1 virus and your pet: AVMA.org, CDC, FDA, and your state public health veterinarian.

## CAN CATS HIDE ILLNESS AND DISCOMFORT?

By Megan Davis DVM

Suburban Animal Hospital

Cats are notorious for hiding illness and they are not taken to the vet as often as their canine housemates. The signs of chronic pain (ex. Arthritis discomfort) can be especially difficult to identify at home. The symptoms are subtle and gradual, so owners may assume it is part of normal aging.

All cats should get annual exams and as they reach their senior years they benefit from a checkup every six months.

The following are some symptoms that can indicate your cat is in pain and/or unwell:

Decreased grooming. The fur looks greasy and clumped together. There may be dandruff, especially on the lower back.

Increased grooming. Excessive licking over an uncomfortable area may lead to hair loss and skin infections.

Not using the litter box. They may urinate or defecate at the side of the litter box if the sides are too high for them to get in. Or they may soil in other areas if the box is upstairs or behind a baby gate.

Changes in jumping up or down. Does your cat no longer nap on their favorite chair? Were they always on the counter when you cooked? Kitty may still jump but may hesitate and calculate before they take the leap.

"Grumpy" behavior. They hiss or swat when you try to pet them. Or they may even growl as you start to approach them.

Anti-social behavior. They no longer spend time around the family. Preferring to stay in a different room or hiding under the bed.



There are various pain management options for cats including daily oral meds, monthly injections and acupuncture/rehab treatments. Discuss with your vet and they will help you formulate a treatment plan to improve your cat's quality of life.



**WE NEED  
YOUR SUPPORT!**

**PLEASE "FOLLOW"  
US ON THE  
LEE COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
ANIMAL CRUELTY  
FACEBOOK PAGE!**

FACEBOOK.COM/LCSO.ACTF



## I'M NO TURKEY!

Meet "Butterball!"

This loving young fella has some special medical needs, but happens to be one sweet, cuddly dude! Come visit



him at the Cape Coral Animal Shelter located at 325 SW 2nd Avenue in Cape Coral.

For additional information regarding Butterball, or any of his friends, please contact the shelter at 239-573-2002.



# SPEAK UP

# FOR THE VOICE- LESS



◀ Khaleesi was rescued in Cape Coral after suffering horrific neglect at her former owners hands. She was severely malnourished and couldn't even stand. Today, she is healed and in a loving home. Her former owners were jailed on felony charges. One call made all the difference.

## SWFL CRIME STOPPERS



## STOP DOG FIGHTING AND ANIMAL CRUELTY NOW!

# CALL CRIME STOPPERS AT 1-800-780-TIPS (8477)

## TO PROTECT ANIMALS WHO CANNOT PROTECT THEMSELVES.

Paid by CSTF



### FLORIDA STATUTE 828.12

Cruelty to animals:

(2) A person who intentionally commits an act to any animal, or a person who owns or has the custody or control of any animal and fails to act, which results in the cruel death, or excessive or repeated infliction of unnecessary pain or suffering, or causes the same to be done, commits aggravated animal cruelty, a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or by a fine of not more than \$10,000, or both.



### MEET "PRETTY LADY!"

Pretty Lady was surrendered because her owner had no interest in caring for her...none.

Sadly, Pretty Lady deserved much better as she is a sweet, loving girl who enjoys playing.

If you are in search of unconditional love and companionship, and would benefit from having a new "best bud," please come

out to the Animal Refuge Center located at 18011 Old Bayshore Road in North Fort Myers or call 239-731-3535.



### HOPPY NEW YEAR!

Kyle and Kelly are a beautiful bonded pair of 3-year-old rabbits looking for their forever home. Kyle, a handsome Standard Chinchilla, and Kelly, a lovely Lynx-colored Palomino, share an inseparable connection.

They have good litter box habits and adore attention, especially when treats are involved.

During the day, they enjoy relaxing in their hideaway but come out in the evening for affection and playtime.

Sweet, curious, and friendly, Kyle and Kelly would do well in a loving family environment and would likely enjoy the activity of a bustling home.



After spending most of their lives in foster care, they are ready for a loving forever home!

Interested? Please visit [respectforrabbits.org](http://respectforrabbits.org) or call Southwest Florida House Rabbit Rescue at 410-382-2433.

### TOWELS, TOWELS AND MORE TOWELS...

Of the many supplies that animal shelters quickly exhaust, towels may be atop the list.



Special thanks to the Drury Inn & Suites Fort Myers Airport FGCU (Gulf Coast Town Center) for supplying us with an enormous amount of towels and sheets!

This batch was delivered to the Gulf Coast Humane Society by the LCSO Animal Cruelty Task Force.

## PREY DRIVE: WHY YOUR DOG CHASES ANIMALS

“Prey drive,” the instinctive behavior to search for, pursue and capture live prey can be, to say the very least, disturbing to witness. Like it or not, dogs are predators and hunters...even “Fluffy.” It is a natural, survival behavior.

The drive is further broken down as follows: detection of prey, stalking, chase, grab bite, kill bite, consuming of prey.

Dependent upon your dog’s breed, this drive can be quite strong or virtually non-existent. Nevertheless, it is instinctual rather than behavioral. However, for certain breeds, the drive is so strong that a residential lifestyle, lacking prey to pursue, may lead to behavioral problems, including destructive behaviors, due to boredom.

The drive is usually triggered by the sudden or covert movement of a small “critter.”

This is a critical component and we **must** look closely at this.

That which your dog deems to be a “critter” may be very different from that which YOU deem to be prey. The sudden movement of a smaller pet...even a child...may automatically trigger the drive. While some may consider this a form of “aggression,” it is not. To the canine, this is standard practice.

There is a significant difference between prey drive and aggression: prey drive is an instinctual need to hunt and kill, while aggression is driven by fear.

Additionally, dogs instinctively reduce the distance between themselves and their prey...while PREFERRING to increase the distance between themselves and a threat. However, this does not mean that a dog will necessarily flee from conflict or an uncomfortable situation.



Remember...while we consider our dogs to be furry family members...this drive makes them unpredictable. Exercise caution when around small children or animals.

While canines with extremely strong prey drives will likely continue chasing everything that moves in your backyard, many dogs can be pacified by engaging them in play that involves chasing an object, such as a ball, retrieving it and returning it to you.



**“TO MY MIND, THE LIFE OF A LAMB IS NO LESS PRECIOUS THAN THAT OF A HUMAN BEING. THE MORE HELPLESS THE CREATURE, THE MORE THAT IT IS ENTITLED TO PROTECTION BY MAN FROM THE CRUELTY OF MAN.”**



**- MOHANDAS GANDHI**

**PLEASE REPORT ALL  
SUSPECTED ANIMAL  
MISTREATMENT**



**239-444-1000**



# PROTECT YOUR PETS

## FROM HEARTWORM



MOSQUITOES ARE  
ONE OF THE  
GREATEST THREATS  
TO YOUR PETS



SCAN THE QR CODE  
TO LEARN MORE



#FIGHTTHEBITE

### PREPARING FOR AN EMERGENCY

Seemingly, each evening's news depicts catastrophic events occurring around the world. These events often require immediate evacuation and the creation of a pet emergency kit may save your pet's life.

## PET EMERGENCY/DISASTER KIT

<p><b>FOOD SUPPLY FOR SEVEN (7) DAYS (MINIMUM)</b></p>	<p><b>WATER SUPPLY FOR SEVEN (7) DAYS (MINIMUM)</b></p>	<p><b>AN APPROPRIATE SIZE CRATE WITH ROOM TO MOVE ABOUT</b></p>
<p><b>PET-SPECIFIC FIRST AID KIT</b></p>	<p><b>PET INFORMATION: VACCINES MEDICAL RECORDS REGISTRATION VET CONTACT INFO</b></p>	<p><b>EXTRA HARNESS/COLLAR AND LEASH</b></p>
<p><b>COLLAPSABLE FOOD AND WATER BOWLS</b></p>	<p><b>A HANDFUL OF THEIR FAVORITE TOYS/BLANKET</b></p>	<p><b>CAT LITTER BOX AND A SEVEN (7) DAY SUPPLY OF LITTER</b></p>
<p><b>UP-TO-DATE MICROCHIP</b></p>	<p><b>GROOMING ITEMS</b></p>	




### DON'T LET YOUR DOG RIDE IN AN OPEN TRUCK BED

An estimated 100,000 dogs die annually as a result of being transported in the bed of a truck!

Please note...that number only reflects fatalities. An even larger number are severely injured due to this practice.



Open truck beds do not provide any protection from the weather. Hot sun can heat the metal floor of a truck bed enough to burn a pet's paw pads or skin. Additionally, a dog left sitting in the broiling sun without water or shade may suffer from heat stroke in a very short period of time.

While many dogs appear to enjoy the wind in their faces, airborne debris, dust particles and other irritants can cause significant damage to a pet's eyes, ears and respiratory passages.

Do not leash or tie your pet to any portion of the truck bed. Many dogs have been strangled when tossed or bumped over the side of the truck and been left helplessly dangling. Be it the result of a collision or simply an unexpected attempt to jump from the vehicle, tying your dog to the truck is a dangerous practice.

If your dog must ride in the back of the truck, put the pet inside a crate that will give it some protection from the wind and weather. Tie the crate **SECURELY** to the walls of the truck bed so it cannot slide about or be tossed out of the truck. Ensure that the crate provides shade.