

Guidance for Veterinary Services Regarding COVID-19

The statewide “stay home” order issued by Governor Laura Kelly on March 28 established that only those individuals or entities which are performing essential activities are exempt from the order. Veterinary services are critical to animal and public health, and thereby veterinary practices and providers of necessary medical supplies should be designated as “essential businesses.”

The Kansas Department of Agriculture recognizes the critical role that veterinary services play in our communities. At this time, the decision whether to stay open or to close — and how to limit the services you are providing — is up to each individual practice. For practices that do remain open, we urge you to take the following protective measures:

- Carefully consider the veterinary services being provided, and postpone elective surgeries and treatments that are not medical in nature. Elective procedures are generally those that can be delayed for a minimum of three months without undue risk to the current or future health of the patient.
- Limited resources should be directed to procedures that ensure the health and welfare of animals in your care. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Veterinary critical care and emergency care
 - Administration of vaccinations to animals
 - Euthanasia of critically ill pets
 - Diagnosis and reporting of notifiable veterinary conditions
 - Physical examinations and completion of Certificates of Veterinary inspection for interstate movement of animals
 - Community animal control and sheltering services
- As much as possible, limit human-to-human contact. This may include curbside service, online histories, phone/online check-in procedures, telemedicine, and other practices.
- Practice cleaning and disinfection protocols, and provide handwashing stations, hand sanitizer, and cleaning wipes throughout the facility.
- Be strategic in the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), including masks, gowns, and gloves.
- If any veterinary healthcare team members become sick, or has been exposed to COVID-19, send them home immediately.

More information is available at the following resources:

- Kansas Department of Health and Environment, COVID-19 Resource Center:
www.kdheks.com/coronavirus
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Guidance for Businesses and Employees:
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus
- American Veterinary Medical Association, information on COVID-19 for Veterinarians:
www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19