

Distemper case confirmed; shelter quarantines 12 dogs

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POSTED: 05/11/18

Red Bluff >> A confirmed case of distemper at the Tehama County Animal Care Center has led the shelter to quarantine 12 dogs, said Manager Christine McClintock.

The case stems from the impound of five puppies and five adult dogs who were brought to the shelter on April 16 with one of the puppies “exhibiting classic signs of distemper” two weeks after they arrived, McClintock said. The case was confirmed through lab testing.

“Distemper is relatively rare due to the effectiveness of the vaccine,” McClintock said. “This is the first time we’ve actually confirmed distemper in many years. Many of the people even at the vet clinic haven’t seen it in their careers. Distemper virus is very contagious from dog to dog and to certain wildlife species, such as raccoons, wolves and coyotes. It causes severe upper respiratory infections, visual and neurological symptoms and often death. Luckily the vaccine is highly effective and for this reason it is almost completely eradicated.”

The care center is urging the public to make sure their dogs are up to date on vaccinations, especially residents of eastern Corning along the river. Specifically, those in the area of East Avenue, Hoag Road, Mary Avenue and Neva Avenue should take precautions to make sure their dogs are vaccinated, McClintock said.

“For the dogs in our shelter, we have chosen kind of a novel and innovative approach,” McClintock said. “Rather than moving forward with a depopulation effort, we have, in cooperation with Dr. (Debbie) Fox from Valley Veterinary Clinic, done a full risk assessment on every dog in our facility and have determined who is at risk and who is not. For the dogs that we consider to be high risk or exposed, we reached out to Providing Essential For Tehama Shelter (PETS) for funding for advanced testing for those dogs. We’ve initiated a medical quarantine for 12 dogs including the three puppies that are still battling distemper.”

It can take up to six weeks for the symptoms of distemper to develop and to be able to definitively determine whether a dog has contracted distemper or not. McClintock said. The dogs had been in quarantine for about three weeks as of Tuesday.