

Virus Spreads Among Dogs at Louisiana Shelter

Close to 200 animals were euthanized and an internal investigation is underway.

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Nearly 200 cats and dogs at an animal shelter in Hammond, La., were euthanized after a viral outbreak, officials said.

On Monday, the cats and dogs at the Tangipahoa Parish Animal Shelter were showing symptoms that included vomiting and bloody diarrhea, according to parish officials. An area veterinarian examined the animals and determined that half of them appeared to be infected.

The veterinarian recommended that all cats and dogs be put down and that the shelter be completely cleaned, sanitized, and closed for several days to follow, parish officials said. Parish President Gordon Burgess consulted with a second veterinarian, as well as the State Department of Health and Hospitals and the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, and it was determined that the original veterinarian's plan would be followed.

"While the parish is certainly disappointed that this course of action had to be carried out resulting in the euthanasia of over 170 animals, it must also be clearly pointed out that Tangipahoa Parish Animal Control is primarily a population control and abuse investigation agency, not a rescue organization," according to a statement released Thursday by the parish.

The parish is conducting an internal investigation to determine if there were any shelter policy violations that may have led to the outbreak. Two kennel staff members have publicly announced their resignations.

The facility remains under quarantine. Shelter staff could not be reached for comment