

New Dog Flu Study Underway

The two-year dog flu study aims to learn to manage canine influenza.

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A new study being conducted at the University of Florida aims to find ways to manage the canine influenza virus.

The two-year project, costing upwards of \$78,000, is being funded by the Morris Animal Foundation and is co-sponsored by the American Humane Assn. and The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

"This study will determine the prevalence of influenza virus infections in shelters and identify the factors associated with its introduction and spread. We hope to develop effective guidelines for managing respiratory infections," said the study's leader, Cynda Crawford, DVM.

Since emerging in pet dogs in Florida in 2004, the canine flu has been identified in 26 states and the District of Columbia. Current hotspots include Denver, Pittsburgh, Miami, Cheyenne, Wyo., and Northern California's Bay Area.

"Helping sheltering organizations keep their animals — in this case dogs — both healthy and adoptable is one of our major goals," said Marie Belew Wheatley, American Humane Assn. president and chief executive officer.

"We feel this study will go a long way toward addressing this problem, which can have an impact, possibly on euthanasia and even on non-infected dogs in shelters," Wheatley said.