

Canine Influenza Confirmed in Connecticut

Two cases of dog flu were confirmed by the state veterinarian.

October 20, 2005 The first two cases of canine influenza in Connecticut were confirmed by the state veterinarian, reported the Associated Press.

The virus, which mutated from a horse influenza strain, causes symptoms that mimic kennel cough, including a cough, runny nose and low fever. In less than 10 percent of cases, a more severe form of the illness develops, which can include clinical signs of pneumonia. Between 5 percent and 8 percent of cases are fatal.

Both Connecticut cases were boarded at Planet Bark, a West Hartford kennel, the AP reported. The kennel's owner noticed a number of dogs in her facility coughing, closed the facility, and sent swabs from the sick dogs to the Cornell Animal Health Diagnostic Center, the centralized testing facility for the virus. Two of the samples were shown to be infected. The dogs have since recovered, according to the AP.

The virus has also been confirmed in pets in Florida, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Washington D.C., North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon and California. It spreads by sneezes, coughs, contaminated inanimate objects and people moving back and forth between infected and uninfected dogs.

Owners should take a common sense approach to protecting their pets from the disease, said Cynda Crawford, DVM, Ph.D., an immunologist at the University of Florida who helped identify the virus. They should continue to use reputable kennels and groomers, she said, and keep any pet that recently had a respiratory illness at home for a few weeks so it may fully recover and not spread the disease.