

# **NEWS ALERT**

## **CANINE H3N8 INFLUENZA**

### **IS HERE !**



Canine influenza is a highly contagious respiratory infection of dogs caused by a virus that was first discovered in 2004 and believed to have jumped from horses to dogs. The H3N8 is a subtype of this virus and can cause extreme respiratory symptoms. *Note: This Virus has been documented in 30 states, Florida being one of the highest states involved.*

Symptoms can include flu-like symptoms consisting of cough, sneezing, nasal discharge and in some cases fever. Virtually all dogs exposed to this influenza virus become infected: about 80% develop flu-like illness while the other 20% do not become ill. However of the 80%, 5-10% will develop life threatening pneumonia. *Note: the current mortality rate is estimated between 1-5% of infected dogs*

Transmission occurs by direct contact with infected dogs and by air-borne properties from sneezing and coughing. The virus can also contaminate kennel surfaces, food and water bowls, collars, and leashes, and the hands and clothing of people who handle infected dogs. Note: Infected dogs shed virus in their respiratory secretions 7-10 days, during which time the dog is contagious to other dogs but may not be showing signs. Contagious dogs should be isolated from other dogs for 2 weeks to err on the side of caution.

In May of 2009 the United States Department of Agriculture approved a vaccine which is intended to aid in lessening the severity of the disease but not a preventative.

The vaccine is being strongly recommended for dogs of any breed, age or vaccination status. High risk are dogs in shelters, boarding and training facilities, day care centers, grooming parlors and dogs visiting all dog parks.

Canine influenza virus does not infect people and there is no documentation that cats or birds have become infected

**For further information visit the Center for Disease and Control at**

**<http://www.cdc.gov/eid/content/14/6/902.htm>**