

**REPORT OF THE VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

**Companion Animal Licensing  
Procedures Study Group  
Report [HJR 160, 2016]**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



**HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 5**

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
RICHMOND  
2017**



*Click on the bookmark icon to the left (second icon listed) to view and utilize quick links to each item listed in the Table of Contents.*

**Companion Animal Licensing Procedures Study Group Report**

**Virginia Department of Health**

**Division of Environmental Epidemiology**

**November 2016**



**Table of Contents**

**Executive Summary** ..... 4

**Introduction**..... 7

**Statutory Framework**..... 7

**Study Activities** ..... 8

**Data Collection and Research Methods**..... 12

**Review of Dog Licensing Procedures - Results and Findings**..... 13

    Treasurers’ Association of Virginia Survey Summary ..... 13

    Animal Control Officers Survey Summary ..... 15

    Veterinarians Survey Summary..... 16

    Consumers Survey Summary ..... 18

    Survey Limitations ..... 21

**Statewide Database Assessment - Findings**..... 21

    VDH Presentation Summary, Debbie Condrey, VDH Chief Information Officer ..... 22

    Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) Presentation Summary,  
    Darin Moore, DGIF Planning and Finance Division Director ..... 23

    VDACS Presentation Summary, Carolynn Bissett, VDACS  
    Program Manager for the Office of Animal Care and Emergency Response ..... 24

    Maine Department of Agriculture presentation summary, Liam Hughes,  
    Director of the Maine Department of Agriculture (MDA) Animal Welfare Program ..... 24

    Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture summary, Kristen Donmoyer, Director,  
    Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement ..... 25

    Fairfield County Ohio presentation summary, Joshua Van Dyke, Fairfield,  
    Ohio Settlements and Administration Manager (Fairfield, Ohio), John Slater,  
    Fairfield County Auditor; Todd McCullough, County Dog Warden; Wendy Ailors,  
    Fairfield Computer Services (vendor of dog licensing system) ..... 26

    Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles information summary..... 28

    Office of the Attorney General presentation summary, Robin Kurz,  
    Assistant Attorney General ..... 29

**Feasibility of Statewide System**..... 30

**Microchip Technology Related to Animal Licensing** ..... 34

    Found Animals Registry (Miriam Laibson) ..... 34

    Petlink/Datamars (CherylAnn Fernandes) ..... 34

Smart Tag (Tom Troiano) .....	35
AKC Reunite, (Tom Sharp).....	35
HomeAgain, (John Corgan) .....	36
911PetChip, (Jon Dyer).....	36
AVID Identification System, Mary Metzner and Sugar.....	36
<b>Policy Options and Recommendations .....</b>	<b>37</b>
Option 1. Local treasurers should consider multiyear licensing and/or lifetime licensing .....	38
Option 2. Local treasurers should consider using an automated system for rabies certificate and dog licensing information.....	41
Option 3. Local treasurers should consider outreach in regard to the purpose of licensing and expanding licensing purchase options.....	42
Option 4. Local treasurers should consider transferring the responsibility of dog licensing data management to local animal control. ....	45
Option 5. Local treasurers should consider a licensing option whereby a dog is deemed automatically licensed when the rabies vaccination certificate reaches the local treasurer’s office or other local government agency coupled with a dog identification requirement.....	47
Option 6. Local treasurers should consider pursuing raising the maximum fee a locality can charge for a dog license. ....	49
Option 7. Localities should consider greater penalties for licensing noncompliance. ....	50
<b>ATTACHMENTS.....</b>	<b>52</b>
1. HJ160 Study Bill	
2. Relevant Code Sections on Licensing of Companion Animals	
3. Relevant Code Sections on Rabies and Companion Animals	
4. Dog License Compliance Rate	
5. Dog License Fees	
6. Virginia Dog License	
7. Results of 2013 Animal Control Survey	
8. Treasurers’ Association of Virginia’s Procedures Resolution	
9. 2008 Treasurer’s Association of Virginia Survey Dog Licenses	
10. Companion Animal Licensing Study - Animal Control Officer Survey	
11. Companion Animal Licensing Study - Veterinarians Survey	
12. Companion Animal Licensing Study - General Public Survey	
13. Companion Animal Licensing Study - Treasurers Survey	
14. Microchip Technology Panel	
15. Pennsylvania Lifetime Dog License	
16. Richmond Times Dispatch Article	
17. Treasurers Association of Virginia Licensing Statement	

18. HJ160 study group assignment to prompt thoughts in regard to licensing process options
19. Input from Veterinary Practitioners on Licensing Study
20. Virginia Alliance for Animal Shelters Proposal
21. VFHS Dog Licensing Proposal
22. VVMA Options Statement
23. Treasurers Association of Virginia Options Statement
24. Statewide Database Proposal
25. Virginia Animal Control Association Position Statement
26. Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance Position Statement
27. 2016 Rabies Compendium
28. Virginia Department of Health Regional Map
29. Treasurers' Association of Virginia Survey Summary Responses
30. Animal Control Officer Survey Summary Responses
31. VVMA Dog Licensing Procedures Survey Summary Responses
32. General Public Survey with Survey Summary Responses
33. General Public Survey with Comments Categorized
34. Response Rates to Expect from Web-based Survey
35. Factors effecting response rates in web-surveys
36. The adequacy of response rates to online and paper surveys

## Executive Summary

In accordance with House Joint Resolution 160 (HJR 160) enacted by the 2016 General Assembly, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), in cooperation with a panel of stakeholders (herein referred to as the “study group”) and with technical assistance from the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), reviewed Virginia's companion animal licensing procedures and assessed the feasibility of establishing a statewide system for recording rabies vaccinations and licensing. A key proponent of HJR 160 was the Treasurers’ Association of Virginia (TAV). The TAV representative on the study group cited poor animal license compliance rates and return on investment in regard to dog licensing as concerns for providing an impetus for this study. The goals of this study included efficient traceability of animals, finding a more efficient system of licensing whereby the rabies vaccination certificate might serve as a license, exploring the possibility of veterinarians issuing licenses at the point of vaccination and encouraging localities to consider an automated data entry system for rabies vaccination.

Surveys were distributed by study group members to key partners in licensing, namely, local treasurers, animal control officers, veterinarians and members of the general public, in an attempt to gain a better understanding of the dog licensing process, impact and options. At the TAV’s request, the surveys focused on dog licensing since all localities are required to license dogs and comparatively few localities license cats. In addition to querying key partners about the licensing process, these partners were also asked for their perspectives on establishing a statewide database for recording licensing and rabies vaccination information. The concept of microchip implants and how a better understanding of this technology may complement the



study group's efforts in regard to the licensing process and associated data management was explored via a panel of microchip technology representatives.

Based on the information gathered as part of the study process, the study group developed a series of options in regard to the licensing process at the local government level for the TAV's consideration and further deliberation with local partners. All options put forward pertain to individual dog licenses as opposed to kennel licenses or tags associated with dangerous dogs. The options presented take the perspectives of all key partners in licensing into consideration with a particular focus on process efficiency and key partner administrative burden. Study group members expressed various opinions about the options. Two options received unanimous support by the study group and are recommended, namely (i) local treasurers should consider multiyear licensing and/or lifetime licensing and (ii) local treasurers should consider using an automated system for rabies certificate and dog licensing information. A change to *Code of Virginia* section §3.2-6528 would be necessary in order to allow localities the option of offering lifetime licensing of dogs. It is currently within a local government's purview to allow multiyear licensing and to choose the system used to maintain rabies certificate and dog licensing information. None of the seven options is anticipated to have a state general fund fiscal impact.

The study group also considered the feasibility of establishing a statewide system for recording rabies vaccinations and licensing that may include a statewide database of licensed companion animals that can be remotely accessed by animal control officers in the field. The technological feasibility of this type of system was explored via presentations from Virginia state agency representatives as well as representatives from state and local governments in Ohio,

Pennsylvania and Maine. In addition to these presentations, information was gathered from surveys of key partners in licensing.

All key partners who responded to the surveys indicated support for the concept of a statewide database designed to capture rabies certificate and dog licensing data and that this system is technologically feasible. However, fiscal and information access considerations associated with a system like this require further discussion. In light of this, the study group encourages the TAV to discuss this system further with its members, local partners and state agencies.

## **Introduction**

HJ160 directed the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to “review Virginia's companion animal licensing procedures and assess the feasibility of establishing a statewide system for recording rabies vaccinations and licensing that may include a statewide database of licensed companion animals that can be remotely accessed by animal control officers in the field.” The Treasurers’ Association of Virginia (TAV) was main proponent of the legislation. HJR 160 further directed that VDH be “assisted in its work by a panel of stakeholders chosen by the Commissioner of Health” and that “the panel of stakeholders shall include representatives of local government, the Virginia Animal Control Association, the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association and citizens experienced in animal welfare issues.” As part of this effort, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) were also directed to provide technical assistance to the VDH (Attachment 1). This study group met and reviewed the history of the issue, developed surveys to assess the perspectives of key partners in animal licensing and compiled a list of options for consideration by the TAV, and for the General Assembly’s awareness, in connection with the licensing process.

## **Statutory Framework**

The *Code of Virginia* establishes various responsibilities and roles in regard to the licensing of animals. Section §3.2-6527 charges dog owners with the responsibility of obtaining a license and grants a locality’s treasurer with the authority to license dogs and cats of resident owners or custodians who reside within the boundary limits of his county or city. This section also allows for other officers to be charged with issuing animal licenses. Section §3.2-6528 of the *Code of Virginia* establishes the authority and obligation of a locality to impose, by ordinance, a license

tax on ownership of dogs in its jurisdiction and the rates of taxation allowed. What a dog or cat license shall consist of is articulated in *Code of Virginia* §3.2-6526. More specifically, this section states that a dog or cat license shall consist of a license receipt and a metal tag and that, in addition, a license shall not be presented unless there is evidence that a dog or cat has been vaccinated against rabies. Section §3.2-6530 establishes when a dog or cat license tax is payable and instructs owners or custodians that payment is due not later than 30 days after a dog or cat has reached the age of four months, or not later than 30 days after an owner acquires a dog or cat four months of age or older. Section §3.2-6532 states, in part, that local treasurers may issue duplicate tags if a dog or cat license is lost or destroyed provided the owner or custodian presents the original license receipt. Owners or custodians are instructed by §3.2-6531 to securely fasten dog license tags to a substantial collar, and the section states that it is unlawful to allow any dog four months of age or older to run or roam at large at any time without a license tag.

The purposes for which funds obtained by a locality through dog or cat license taxes can be used is outlined in §3.2-6534 and includes payment of salary and expenses of animal control officers, the care and maintenance of a public shelter and the maintenance of a rabies control program. Section 3.2-6587 establishes penalties related to licensing such as making false statements in order to secure a dog or cat license, failure to pay a license tax or removing a legally acquire license tag without the permission of the owner.

### **Study Activities**

A variety of stakeholder groups were engaged in this process. The study group included representatives of the following organizations and agencies:

Danville Area Humane Society (DAHS)

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)

Richmond SPCA

Treasurers' Association of Virginia (TAV)

Virginia Alliance for Animal Shelters (VAAS)

Virginia Animal Control Association (VACA)

Virginia Association of Counties (VaCO)

Virginia Board of Veterinary Medicine (VBVM)

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS)

Virginia Department of Health (VDH)

Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (VDMV)

Virginia Farm Bureau (VFB)

Virginia Federation of Dog Clubs and Breeders (VFDCB)

Virginia Federation of Humane Societies (VFHS)

Virginia Office of the Attorney General (VOAG)

Virginia Veterinary Medical Association (VVMA)

The first meeting of this study group was held on April 25, 2016. As part of the initial planning associated with this study, all future meeting dates were scheduled and compilations of dog licensing and rabies related sections of the *Code of Virginia* were distributed to the study group (Attachments 2-3). During this meeting the TAV representative reviewed the history of the TAV's involvement with the issue of studying companion animal licensing procedures and the thoughts of the TAV in regard to how to proceed with this study within the context of the resolution language. The TAV expressed the need for the study stemmed from concerns about the licensing process being inefficient, having a low compliance rate, and having an unrewarding

return on investment in that the total costs of a licensing program often exceed animal licensing revenue. The TAV described that an individual must first obtain a rabies vaccination for his dog through his veterinarian and then purchase a license through his local treasurer's office.

Furthermore, a TAV pilot study performed in 2015 which included nine Virginia localities reflected a 57% compliance rate associated with licensing with a range of 28-85% compliance.

In addition, the TAV representative on the study group offered that local governments do not generate much funding from companion animal licensing and the administrative effort to contact owners who do not present to purchase a license within 60 days of receiving a rabies certificate was often unrewarding in its return.

From the TAV's perspective, the main goals of this study included the following: (i) for animals to be vaccinated for rabies and be traceable with the goal of reducing local animal control time and expense associated with reuniting lost animals with their owners and (ii) to create a more efficient system of licensing that would involve either the rabies vaccination certificate serving as a license or veterinarians issuing licenses at the point of vaccination and perhaps having localities consider an automated data entry system for rabies vaccination. The TAV also requested this particular study focus on understanding the licensing procedures associated with dogs only given that all localities are required to license dogs and few localities license cats. The TAV also did not recommend any changes to Freedom of Information Act in regard to dog licensing or rabies certificate information (Attachments 4-8).

In addition to the concepts discussed at the first meeting in April, these and additional concepts were discussed during the second study group meeting on May 24, 2016. During these first two

meetings of the study group, topics including (i) statewide database development as it relates to the Freedom of Information Act, (ii) current database systems that are already in place that perhaps could be used as a model for a statewide database of licensed companion animals, (iii) assessing the treasurers' desire to participate in a statewide database, (iv) database ownership and maintenance, (v) methods of uniquely identifying a dog, specifically the kinds of tags currently distributed by local governments as part of licensing and microchip technology as a form of unique identification that might be used instead of a license tag, (vi) licensing fees, (vii) the history of licensing, including the history of licensing compliance (viii) considering incentives for licensing, (ix) minimizing costs to local shelters, (x) the potential role of clinical veterinarians in licensing, (xi) the total program costs to local governments of licensing, (xii) efforts to pursue noncompliance with licensing, (xiii) the consumers' thoughts about licensing, (xiv) concerns about capturing rabies certificate and licensing data associated with Virginia residents who seek veterinary care in other states, (xv) the broad definition of companion animals and the importance of using unique identification for animals such as nonhuman primates, (xvi) the groups that should be targeted to gather further information about these issues, (xvii) the purpose of licensing, as some study group members felt that the study's focus should be more on rabies compliance than a licensing process while others felt that licensing was an important part of responsible animal ownership and would not interfere with rabies compliance, (xviii) licensing as a mechanism for returning a lost animal to its owner, (xx) increasing licensing compliance to help support local animal control services, (xxi) cautions against decreasing rabies compliance in attempts to increase licensing compliance and (xxii) rabies vaccination compliance both as it relates to licensing and how it is separate and not necessarily directly correlated to licensing and

(xxiii) the purpose of licensing evolving over time and possibly being different for each locality were discussed (Attachment 9).

### **Data Collection and Research Methods**

In light of the deliberations associated with the first two meetings, study group members agreed to address the HJR 160 directive to “review Virginia's companion animal licensing procedures” by developing surveys focused on dog licensing practices that would be distributed to local treasurers, animal control officers, veterinarians in clinical practice and members of the general public. These surveys were designed to assist with the process of reviewing current practices and costs associated with licensing as well as gather reactions to certain concepts such as the creation of a statewide database, licensing via an entity other than local treasurer and microchip use.

Based on the recommendation of the study group members representing these organizations, surveys soliciting feedback from local treasurers, animal control officers and veterinarians in clinical practice were distributed in electronic form by the study group members representing the TAV, VACA and VVMA, respectively. In an attempt to solicit comments from a broad range of Virginia's dog owners, surveys soliciting information from consumers were distributed in both paper and electronic form via VVMA, VAAS, VFHS and VFDCB (Attachments 10-13).

In addition, representatives from VDH, VDACS, VDMV and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries all offered advice in regard to data systems currently used in Virginia state government agencies whose structure may be applicable to a statewide dog licensing system. As part of this effort, officials from (i) the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, (ii) the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and (iii) the Fairfield County, Ohio



Auditor's Office described the dog licensing procedures currently in use in their states and jurisdictions, respectively. A representative of the Virginia Office of the Attorney General offered a review of both the Freedom of Information Act and sections within the *Code of Virginia* that may need to be considered as part of any changes to current licensing procedures the study group may propose. Finally, a panel made up of representatives from 911PetChip, AKC Reunite, Avid Identification Systems, Found Animals Registry, HomeAgain, SmartTag and PetLink were invited to attend a study group meeting in order to present information about microchips and microchip technology and how this form of identification might relate to the study group's deliberations about dog licensing (Attachments 14-15).

Throughout the course of the study and the group's deliberations, study group members submitted various statements, licensing option proposals and references for consideration. A member of the general public also submitted a proposal associated with the statewide database. Study group members were also prompted specifically to start thinking about options that may assist the TAV with the licensing process (Attachments 16-27).

### **Review of dog licensing procedures – Results and Findings**

Surveys were sent to local treasurers, veterinarians, animal control officers and consumers. The findings and results of those surveys are summarized in the following sections.

#### *Treasurers' Association of Virginia Survey Summary*

A survey consisting of 33 questions designed to capture local treasurers' perspectives on dog licensing and establishing a statewide system for recording rabies vaccinations and licensing was distributed electronically via the Treasurers' Association of Virginia distribution list to all 136 local government offices within Virginia that sell dog licenses. Fifty one (38%) treasurer's

offices replied and the distribution of respondents stratified by the VDH regions (Attachment 28)

was as follows:

- central=7 (14%)
- eastern=10 (20%)
- northern=1 (2%)
- northwest=16 (31%)
- southwest=17 (33%) .

While more detailed information in regard to local treasurer response can be found in

Attachment 29, some pertinent findings from this survey include:

- the average annual revenue from dog licensing is \$23,953 while the average annual total program cost of this service is \$14,873
- the average charge for a one-year license for a dog that is spayed or neutered is \$5 and the average cost for a one-year license for intact dogs is approximately \$8
- the majority of localities indicated that they do not offer multi-year county/city dog licenses
- if the number of dog owners purchasing a license both within and after 60 days from rabies vaccination is considered, the compliance rate with dog licensing is approximately 65%
- the majority of treasurers use a computer based system to manage rabies certificate and licensing information and reported manual entry only as the method by which this data is entered into these systems
- data entry was reported as the administrative task that consumed the most time and local government funding
- the majority of treasurers are interested in transferring all of the responsibility of licensing to another entity such as a state government agency
- as the majority of treasurers are interested in having rabies certificate and licensing information included in a statewide database that could be accessed remotely by animal control officers, but 41% indicating that they would not participate if they had to contribute any funds to such a system.

*Animal Control Officers Survey Summary*

A survey consisting of 22 questions designed to capture animal control officers' (ACOs) perspectives on dog licensing and establishing a statewide system for recording rabies vaccinations and licensing was distributed electronically via VACA. When, after initial distribution, the number of localities reached was unclear, VDACS redistributed the survey to 133 (98%) of Virginia's 136 localities. The independent cities of Fredericksburg, Poquoson and Williamsburg were not sent surveys, as their animal control enforcement is performed under contract by other localities. Those contacted by VDACS were asked to review the survey and send only one response that reflected the information from that locality's animal control division. While 51 surveys were received, the combined responses reflected information and perspectives from 54 (40%) of the localities contacted. More specifically, one survey reflected the combined information from Wythe County, Bland County and the city of Wytheville and another survey reflected the combined information from Richmond County and Westmoreland county. Each of the remaining 49 surveys received reflected information from only one locality. Therefore, the largest possible number of responses to any one survey question, except for the question associated with county/city identification, was 51. Of the 54 localities represented in the survey, the distribution of respondents stratified by the VDH regions (Attachment 28) was as follows:

- central=10 (19%)
- eastern=11 (20%)
- northern=5 (9%)
- northwest=10 (19%)
- southwest=18 (33%)

While more detailed information in regard to local treasurer response can be found in

Attachment 30, some pertinent findings from this survey include:

- the majority of dogs picked up/sheltered annually by localities do not have evidence of a county/city tag
- the majority of dogs picked up/sheltered annually by localities with evidence of a county/city tag are returned to their owners after an average length of 3 days
- the average length of stay for a dog picked up/sheltered by localities without evidence of a county/city tag is 19 days
- the average cost for one dog to stay in a shelter for one night is \$15.64
- 45% of animal control offices have direct access to their locality's county/city dog licensing information
- non-compliance with licensing is most commonly detected/addressed via response to complaints of non-compliance or assessing charges on a dog that is brought in without a county/city license, when claimed by an owner
- on average, 44 animal control officer man hours per month are devoted to the tasks associated with county/city dog licensing in their respective localities
- the information technology available to animal control officers in the field varies widely
- the majority of animal control offices possess at least one microchip scanner
- the majority of animal control offices surveyed indicated interest in having rabies certificate and county/city dog licensing information from localities included in a statewide database
- If, as a result of participating in a statewide database a locality would receive less money from licensing, about a third of respondents would still want to participate in such a system. Another third would be opposed to participation, with another third undecided.

#### *Veterinarians Survey Summary*

A survey consisting of 10 questions designed to capture veterinarians' perspectives on rabies vaccinations, dog licensing, microchip implantation and establishing statewide system for recording rabies vaccinations and licensing was distributed electronically to 887 veterinarian members of the VVMA through that organization's member directory. These 887 VVMA

members represent 88% of the total veterinarian membership of VVMA at the time the survey (n=1008) was distributed and 100% of VVMA veterinarian membership for which email addresses were available. Of the 887 veterinarian VVMA members contacted, there is evidence that 886 received the survey. Of the 886 who received the survey, 76 responded and of those, one survey was discarded as it only contained one response. This resulted in a response rate of 9% (75) of those VVMA members contacted. Of the 1008 veterinarians who were members of VVMA when this survey was distributed, 31 (~3.0%) were listed within the VVMA directory as veterinarians associated with industrial/government/research work, 23 (2%) were listed as veterinarians who work in academia, 30 (3%) were listed as retired and 20 (2%) are listed as 2016 graduates. Using the remaining membership categories, all of which are associated with private hospitals or private practitioners, for the purposes of this study, it was assumed that the majority (90%) of veterinarians who were VVMA members at the time the survey was distributed were clinicians currently engaged in private practice work and, therefore, represent a population of veterinarians who work in settings where performing the clinical service of rabies vaccination is common. Of those VVMA veterinarian members whose primary address at the time of this survey's distribution was listed in the VVMA directory as located in Virginia (n=856), distribution of VVMA members by VDH regions (Attachment 28) is as follows:

- central=127 (15%)
- eastern=124 (15%)
- northern=200 (23%)
- northwest=188 (22%)
- southwest=217 (25%).

The total VVMA membership represents about 25% of the veterinarians licensed in Virginia. Of the 75 surveys analyzed, 73 (97%) responded in a manner that allowed their practice county or city to be categorized by VDH region and results were as follows:

- northern region, 16/73 (22%),
- northwest region, 17/73 (23%),
- southwest region, 16/73 (22%),
- central region, 13/73 (18%) and
- eastern region, 11/73 (15%).

While more detailed information in regard to the response from veterinarians can be found in Attachment 31, some pertinent findings from this survey include:

- the majority of veterinarians responding to the survey indicated a willingness to license dogs at the point of vaccination either without condition or provided very little additional administrative time was associated with this task for themselves or their personnel
- (on average veterinarians or veterinary hospital staff spend 2.4 hours per week communicating with/sending rabies certificate information to their local treasurer's office
- the majority of veterinarians responding were in favor of a statewide database containing rabies certificate and licensing information that animal control officers could access although most veterinarians responding placed conditions on their support of this concept
- the majority of veterinarians offer microchip implantation as a clinical service and reported the 25% of their clients use microchips as a form of pet identification
- veterinarians responding were evenly divided in regard to the concepts of mandatory microchip implantation of dogs and microchip information serving as a dog license.

#### *Consumers Survey Summary*

A survey consisting of 10 questions designed to capture the dog owning consumer's perspectives on rabies vaccinations, dog licensing, microchip implantation and establishing statewide system for recording rabies vaccinations and licensing was distributed electronically and in paper form to members and partner organizations of VAAS, VFDCB, VFHS and VVMA. A total of 2,602 responses were captured. While, based on the estimates found in the 2012 US Pet Ownership

and Demographics Source book (available at

[https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Statistics/Pages/Market-research-statistics-US-pet-](https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Statistics/Pages/Market-research-statistics-US-pet-ownership.aspx)

[ownership.aspx](https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Statistics/Pages/Market-research-statistics-US-pet-ownership.aspx)) when compared to 2015 census data available for Virginia (available at

<http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/51>) it is likely that over 1,000,000

households in Virginia contain at least one dog, an overall response rate was not calculated for

this group as the number of dog owners in Virginia is not known with any certainty. Of the

2,602 respondents to this survey, 2,477 (95%) recorded localities that could be categorized into

VDH regions (Attachment 28) and 2,529 (97%) recorded geographic information that indicated

residency in Virginia. Of the 2,477 responses where VDH region could be assigned:

- 729 (29%) responded from the eastern region
- 442 (18%) from the central region
- 624 (25%) from the northern region
- 471 (19%) from northwest region
- 211 (9%) from southwest region.

While more detailed information in regard to the response from consumers can be found in

Attachments 32 and 33, some pertinent findings from this survey include:

- the great majority of consumer respondents are aware of both rabies vaccination and licensing requirements for dogs,
- 58% of respondents reported that their dog was microchipped and 63% reported being in favor of a microchip serving as their dogs' county/city license instead of the county/city tag,
- 62% of respondents reported that first having their dogs vaccinated for rabies at a veterinary hospital and then purchasing a dog license from their local treasurer's office did not make it less likely that they would purchase a license,
- 52% of respondents indicated that they would prefer to purchase their dogs' county/city license through their veterinarian as opposed to their county/city treasurer and
- most respondents indicated that they would be willing to have their dog's county/city license and rabies certificate information entered into a statewide database that could be accessed by animal control officers provided certain conditions were met.

*Survey Limitations*

In regard to the approach taken to query key partners in the licensing process, the extent to which a survey's findings might be applicable to a population at large relies on a survey's response rate. Response rates can be affected by various factors including survey design, survey length, the method(s) used to distribute the survey and the population targeted for the survey. In this study, four groups: local treasurers, animal control officers, veterinarians in clinical practice and dog owning members of the general public, were surveyed to gain a better understanding of the dog licensing process, impact and options. Response rates were calculated for those groups where the total population of localities or individuals was known or could be reasonably estimated. Response rates for local treasurers and animal control officers were calculated by number of localities responding as a percentage of total localities contacted. More specifically, the 33 question survey designed to capture responses from local treasurers was distributed electronically to all 136 Virginia localities where dog licenses are sold and 51 (38%) of the local treasurer's offices responded. A 22 question survey designed to capture each local animal control division's input was also distributed electronically and 40% (54/133) of local animal control divisions responded. While estimates of response rates to expect when utilizing web-based surveys vary, these response rates could be considered typical. (Attachments 34-36).

Outreach to 886 veterinarians in clinical practice was facilitated by the VVMA. These 886 VVMA members represented approximately 88% of the VVMA's membership at the time the survey was distributed electronically and the veterinarian membership of the VVMA represents approximately 25% of all veterinarians licensed in the Commonwealth. Of this population, 9% (75/886) completed the 10 question survey designed to assess their opinions about dog licensing.



This response rate is lower than would be expected from a web-based survey. It is thought unlikely that an individual veterinarian, local treasurer or animal control representative completed the survey more than once due to the inability to access the survey again via the same computer once the participant had completed the survey.

Input on the topic of dog licensing was also sought from members of the dog-owning general public using a 10 question survey. This survey was distributed both electronically and via paper through both the VVMA and groups through which those involved in animal rescue and dog breeding and showing could be reached. Particularly because a paper survey was used as part of the outreach to this group and no unique identifiers were used in that process, it is possible that an individual member of the general public completed more than one survey resulting in duplicate responses. In addition, because the total number of dogs and dog owners in Virginia is not known, the response rate to this survey is difficult to calculate. While this survey is best characterized as a general opinion poll and subject to sampling error, the study group thought it could provide at least some insight into the dog owning public's views about licensing and, by extension, help to inform the group's deliberations.

### **Statewide Database Assessment – Findings**

Information concerning the associated considerations, development and implementation of a statewide system for recording rabies vaccinations and licensing that may include a statewide database of licensed companion animals that can be remotely accessed by animal control officers in the field was sought from state agencies within Virginia as well as other states. That information is summarized in the following sections.

*VDH Presentation Summary, Debbie Condrey, VDH Chief Information Officer*

Ms. Condrey offered a basic overview of the differences between a database and a registry and how to determine business needs in order to fulfill them using existing technology. She presented items to consider when deciding to build a database or registry, such as its availability on different devices, what level of security it will need, and available funds, as this will determine what type of registry or database might be needed. She gave some examples of current VDH systems, including the Advanced Directive Registry, Immunization Registry and Death Registry. She cautioned that VDH systems are different from the licensing system the group is considering, because the confidentiality and security used in most VDH systems are much stricter than would be necessary for a dog licensing system.

Ms. Condrey also discussed the option of finding a vendor to create a dog licensing system at no cost. Some vendors may be interested in offering a system at no cost as an aid in marketing and selling the system's technologies to other agencies or companies in the future. Discussion from the study group members in response to this information centered around cost feasibility and the government entity that would assume the primary responsibility for dog licensing. As an example of cost, Ms. Condrey offered that the Advanced Directive Registry is free to the public but cost VDH \$250,000 when it was first developed and \$60,000 annually to maintain. This system then transitioned to a private vendor at no cost as the vendor was interested in marketing the software to other potential clients. This vendor, however, was not able to market the technology used for the Advanced Directive Registry and, since then, another private company has been engaged to manage this system.

*Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF), Darin Moore, DGIF Planning and Finance  
Division Director*

Mr. Moore's presentation focused on the business, marketing, and customer service aspects of DGIF computer systems with an emphasis on sale of the licenses that DGIF offers such as those for hunting and fishing. He emphasized the importance of understanding the business needs related to dog licensing particularly if a contract would be pursued with a private company in order to secure a vendor that is a good match for the business need. He reported that DGIF currently contracts with Brandt Information Systems, which created a system for DGIF that allowed the agency to integrate previously separate licensing systems for their customers' convenience and also an e-store function that allows those who visit the DGIF website to shop for the agency's other products. The agency's goals are to increase license sales by offering incentives and increasing the convenience of obtaining a license, as license sales are an important DGIF funding source which also supports the vendor's services. This system is used by DGIF customer service, retail shops, license agents, customers, and sister agencies.

Mr. Moore mentioned that while DGIF does not house the level of confidential data that VDH maintains, there are still considerations regarding who has access to the information in the system. Different tiers of access are available depending on the system user. Mr. Moore reported that the DGIF system also includes many technologically advanced functions. Mr. Moore also mentioned that DGIF receives federal grant money and this would be something for the group to consider in regard to how a dog licensing system might be funded. In response to this information, discussion among the study group members centered on how the Commonwealth regulates licensing fees, the ability for DGIF to raise these fees periodically and system funding which is through a \$1 online transaction fee that is transferred to the vendor.

*VDACS,Carolynn Bissett, VDACS Program Manager for the Office of Animal Care and Emergency Response*

Dr. Bissett discussed two systems currently in use by the agency: the Dangerous Dog Registry (DDR) and GlobalVetLink. She described the DDR's different levels of access for the general public, an ACO or the system administrator. She also described the volume and type of information collected and uploaded in this system by ACOs for each dog. This system was estimated to have a significant fiscal impact statement when originally conceived, and recent updates to it have also proved more costly than expected. The DDR is partially funded by fees collected from owners, and partially by general funds. She then described GlobalVetLink, a website which provides veterinarians a place to complete required forms and certificates online as an alternative to handwritten completion. Through this website, veterinarians in private practice can complete certificates of veterinary inspection, animal passports, upload photos and can print out certificates. Veterinarians can also input the owner's information and diagnostic testing information, as well as vaccine information. This improves efficiency for veterinarians and allows them easier access to a customer's records. This system was developed by a private company, has a subscription fee and is voluntary for veterinarians to use.

*Maine Department of Agriculture, Liam Hughes, Director of the Maine Department of Agriculture (MDA) Animal Welfare Program*

Mr. Hughes reported that, in Maine, license tags and materials are provided by the state to the localities. Localities sell the licenses and localities can choose to participate in the online licensing system managed by MDA if they wish. Challenges the MDA faces with this system include verifying rabies immunization and determining how to ensure fees collected by the

locality are distributed properly, since some fees are collected manually and some are collected online. Mr. Hughes reported that this system still incurs administrative costs because they sort the certificates received from veterinarians and mail them to the localities. They charge a \$1 convenience fee for using the online system in order to cover their costs. The annual maintenance fee for the system is \$16,000; however, this is funded by the \$1 convenience fee when the customer uses the online system. Overall, most of the work is being done and information is being collected and held by the localities, with the state only providing administrative support. He stated that drawbacks included the state not having access to the dog or owner information, people using the system incorrectly and causing errors, and the cost of mailing license tags and materials. He told the group about the Calgary model for dog licensing, wherein that city vastly increased their compliance numbers by incentivizing licensing with rewards such as discounts and gift cards to local businesses. There was a discussion from the group regarding the usefulness at the state level of this particular system in terms of tracking and collecting information, as well as a discussion of the general prevalence of dog licensing requirements in the United States.

*Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Kristen Donmoyer, Director, Pennsylvania*

*Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement*

In Pennsylvania, county treasurers are the issuing authority of licenses per state law. The Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement (BDLE) within the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) enforces the licensing and rabies provisions. Of the money generated as the result of dog license sales, each county treasurer's office retains one dollar per license plus postage; the remainder goes in to the PDA Dog Law Restricted Fund. The BDLE is not funded by tax dollars but rather

75 percent of its funding is received through the sale of dog licenses, approximately \$6.3 million in FY 14-15.

The limitations of Pennsylvania's system for dog licensing include that the system that is not centralized, an inflexible licensing fee set in state law and an inflexible calendar year licensing schedule. Ms. Donmoyer expressed that she feels the system could be improved by requiring one online system to be used for licensing, having BDLE oversee the issuance and enforcement of licensing, amending state law to allow for greater flexibility in the license fee structure and modifying the calendar year licensing schedule so that a license is current for 12 consecutive months.

*Fairfield County Ohio, Joshua Van Dyke, Settlements and Administration Manager (Fairfield, Ohio), John Slater, Auditor; Todd McCullough, Dog Warden; Wendy Ailors, Computer Services (vendor of dog licensing system)*

In addition to submitting written information prior to the study group's June meeting, Mr. Van Dyke and his colleagues offered comments via telephone about the system of dog licensing that many localities in Ohio use. They discussed their county's dog licensing system, which is managed by Fairfield Computer Services, and provided a general overview of Ohio's dog laws.

Dog licensing is state-mandated for all of Ohio's 88 counties, but managed by the counties.

Fifty-four counties currently use the online, web-based system of licensing managed by Fairfield Computer Systems. The ability for counties participating in this system to access another county's data depends on a county being granted administrative access and rights individually, so while many counties use the system, the ability for counties to access another locality's data can

be limited. Most counties do offer the information about dogs that are licensed in that locality on their public websites in a way that allows the data to be searched. Only certain people are given full access to the system, with partial access granted to the public. Wendy Ailors of Fairfield Computer Services discussed the more technical aspects of the system, including all of its capabilities (search functions, online sales, creating reports, generating applications, etc.).

Next the Fairfield County Dog Warden, Todd McCullough, discussed how he uses the system as part of his work. He mentioned some of the drawbacks to the system, which include differing data collection methods depending on locality and an inability to search for information from other counties. The consensus was that this system was not truly state-wide, but more at the locality-level, although localities could give other localities administrative access in order to view their data. The Ohio representatives also discussed the administrative support needed for manual entry of information into the system in Fairfield county and talked about the overall costs of the system. Mr. Van Dyke reported that 3 people assist with data entry and that Fairfield County utilizes a barcode system which assists with the process of license renewal. Manual entry can be done as well, if someone has purchased tags and has a receipt without a barcode. Owners can also use the online system to register and purchase a license in which case the county mails the registrations and licenses to the dog owners. The average start-up costs for the Fairfield Computer Services system run about \$2,000, and the average monthly maintenance fees are \$50-\$350. Ms. Ailors mentioned a few other states making use of the system they created.

*Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, April Rogers, Program Specialist*

DMV utilizes an IBM mainframe z/OS 1.13. Programs are written in Natural and customer records are stored using ADABAS, the combination of programs and files is called CSS.

Customer images used for license issuance are stored in a server based Oracle file, called CISS.

To issue a license, DMV Customer Service Center uses a front end system, called mySelect, which is written in the .Net programming language. mySelect communicates with the mainframe programs via EntireX Broker. DMV also has a web based customer interface to issue renewals and replacement licenses.

DMV manages and maintains CSS. Its Driver License contractor, Canadian Bank Note (CBN) maintains the CISS image data base. CBN also manages and operates a Card Production Center, located in Danville, where all licenses and ID cards are printed and mailed. The system has dozens of files related to different DMV functions. The central file is the customer file, which houses customer personal data and other data pertinent to the type of customer it is. The customer file has well over 200 fields. The Driver License file has 38 fields and the ID card file has 29 fields. The system can be inquired on by DMV customer number, name and SSN.

The typical DMV monthly cost for computer services is \$760,000. Driver licensing and ID card issuance is just one part of that figure. The cost of the DMV contract with CBN over the 10 year life of the contract is \$60,500,000. In addition, the DMV pays a per card cost of \$2.309 per license and ID card. DMV's Driver Licensing IT group has 12 FTE's.



DMV is a non-general funded agency and retains a percentage of the revenue it collects. Its' licensing operations are funded with a portion of that revenue. DMV personnel who have access to the system are those with security clearance and authority to issue credentials and do necessary inquiries.

*Office of the Attorney General, Robin Kurz, Assistant Attorney General*

Robin Kurz with the Office of the Attorney General offered a presentation that reviewed the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and sections of the *Code of Virginia* relevant to animal licensing for the study group's consideration in light of its charge to "assess the feasibility of establishing a statewide system for recording rabies vaccinations and licensing that may include a statewide database of licensed companion animals that can be remotely accessed by animal control officers in the field." Major concepts reviewed involved the definition of a public record, definition of a public body and best practices in regard to the collection of personal information as well as a review of *Code of Virginia* sections §3.2-6527, §3.2-6532, §3.2-6526, §3.2-6528 and 3.2-6531.

FOIA applies to public information and requires that all public records be open to all citizens of the Commonwealth. A public record is a record in the possession of a public body. FOIA states that records maintained in a public database are a public record. The definition of a public body is broad and includes state agencies and localities and also applies if a public body delegates the management of a system to a contractor or the database management is largely supported by public funds. There are records that are exempt from FOIA like bank information, credit card expiration, social security numbers and driver's license numbers. There is not an exemption for

a person's contact information unless that information is part of a medical record or a personnel record.

Currently, in regard to dog licensing, information such as the name and address of the owner, date of payment, and the year the license was issued and whether the animal was spayed or neutered is open to public inspection. Ms. Kurz also mentioned that additional information beyond what is currently collected in the process of licensing and on rabies certificate could be collected, but cautioned the study group members to be mindful of the Government Data Collection and Disseminated Practice Act which instructs government agencies to collect only the information that authorized by law and is appropriate, needed and relevant. She then mentioned that the study group could consider proposing legislation to create an additional exemption to FOIA. She then offered that a registry currently being used by a state agency that may be most relevant to explore for the study group's purposes is Virginia's Dangerous Dog Registry which is available in full to animal control officers, but only certain elements are available to the public. Discussion from the study group members in response to this information centered on the definition of a public record and how it relates to an organization that contracts with a government entity, as well as questions about how often FOIA requests are challenged.

### **Feasibility of a Statewide System**

The study group considered the feasibility of establishing a statewide system for recording rabies vaccinations and licensing that may include a statewide database of licensed companion animals that can be remotely accessed by animal control officers in the field. The technological

feasibility of this type of system was explored via presentations from Virginia state agency representatives as well as representatives from state and local governments in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Maine. While the study group concluded that, in general, a system such as this was technologically feasible, fiscal and information access considerations require further discussion prior to articulating a policy option.

More specifically, a goal of the TAV shared with the study group included the desire to hold the cost of any changes needed to the current dog licensing system to a minimum, especially any costs passed on to the public. In addition, the TAV shared concerns that any recommendations from the study group containing cost increases to the state, local governments or the public would only serve to make changes harder to achieve. The study group discussed a goal that involved funding a statewide system by sharing licensing fees between the localities and a state agency that would assume the primary role of licensing. However, based on an estimate of the scope of work to initiate the development of such a system and figures shared by VDACS in regard to the initial costs of developing that agency's Dangerous Dog database, there was concern that significant general funds would be required to develop this system.

In addition, transitioning the funding of a statewide system presumes robust and consistent locality participation and willingness to share licensing fees. The majority (63%) of treasurers indicated that they would be interested in having such a system and approximately the same percentage (61%) indicated support for participating in a statewide system particularly if it resulted in a reduction in administrative time associated with processing licensing and rabies certificate information for the localities. However, 29% treasurers responding indicated they

would want the option of not participating in such a system with another 49% responding that they were not sure if they would want that option

The potential loss of local licensing revenue that might result from participation in a statewide system was explored. Among local treasurers who responded to the survey, 33% reported that they would be willing to participate in a statewide system even if, as a result, the localities received little or no revenue from dog licensing, Another 31% indicated that they would not be willing to participate in a statewide system if this was the result and the remaining 35% indicated they were not sure. Further, when treasurers were asked about their willingness to contribute funds for the maintenance of such a system, 39% responded that they would not be willing to contribute funds and 27% were unsure. Similarly, when ACOs were also asked about their perspective on a statewide database if, as a result of the development of such a system, their locality received less or no money from licensing and of 51 responses, 18 indicated support, 18 indicated opposition and the remaining 15 were unsure about their willingness to participate. The majority of ACOs who responded to the survey did, however, indicate that they were in favor of a statewide database that contained rabies certificate information whether it could be accessed remotely or not. The majority of consumers who responded to the survey were also in favor of a statewide system with 28% indicating a willingness to participate without any further qualifications and 53% supportive with the qualifications offered in the possible responses, namely (i) as long as animal control officers found it useful and/or (ii) as long as it increased the likelihood of that a lost dog could be returned to its owner more quickly, and/or (iii) provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public. Finally, the majority of the 75 veterinarians responding to the survey were also not opposed to a statewide database of this kind.

The study group also discussed implications of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) pertaining to potential development of a statewide system. Currently, rabies certificate information is available through a FOIA request to the local government. The scope of a statewide database containing this information would be larger and more quickly accessible via a FOIA request to a state agency charged with managing this data. Members of the study group discussed data management of a system like this in regard to data entry and access with, for instance, developing incremental levels of access with direct access to input information and to view information to veterinarians, local treasurers, animal control officers and any other agents designated by localities. Key partners surveyed were asked about information in a statewide database and their support for such a system if all or part of the information contained provided this information was exempt from a FOIA request. TAV expressed a desire to make no changes to the FOIA statute concerning dog licensing or rabies certificate information. In each case, the number of key partners who indicated a willingness to participate in such a system provided all or part of the information was exempted from a FOIA request suggests that further discussion by the members of the TAV concerning the FOIA implications of a statewide system may be warranted.

The study group acknowledges that all key partners in licensing who responded to the surveys indicated support for the concept of a statewide database designed to capture rabies certificate and dog licensing data. However, given the uncertainty about the willingness of localities to consistently participate in such a system, the fiscal impact such a system may have and the

potential concerns about the scope of the data available via a FOIA request, TAV is encouraged to discuss such a system further with its members, local partners and state agencies.

### **Microchip Technology Related to Animal Licensing**

Study group members expressed interest in learning more about microchip implant technology as it may relate to the group's deliberations about dog licensing. Toward that end, representatives from a number of companies that manufacture and/or utilize microchip technology in regard to animal identification were invited to participate in the study group's July meeting. These representatives offered information about their companies and other thoughts and information for the study group's consideration concerning microchip technology. (Attachments 14-15)

#### *Found Animals Registry (Miriam Laibson)*

Found Animals Registry is a non-profit company headquartered in Los Angeles that maintains a 100% free national registry. The registry can support a microchip number, all of the pet owner information, veterinary contacts, and a permanent contact for pet owners. The permanent contact, or guardian feature, can be a breeder, rescue or any other person. The registry offers free daily uploads, which would be beneficial if the microchip is used as a license. Found Animals Registry uses only ISO standard microchips (134.2 kHz) and only provides universal scanners, which allow for the greatest capture of information from multiple microchip brands.

#### *Petlink/Datamars (CherylAnn Fernandes)*

Petlink/Datamars manufactures microchips and maintains a universal database. Petlink also has a guardian feature, which allows any shelter or rescue group that adopts out an animal to remain

a permanent contact for that animal, and the permanent contact is always attached to that account, no matter how many times that animal is re-homed.

*Smart Tag (Tom Troiano)*

Smart Tag offers microchips, identification tags and pet licensing. This company has 4 different types of microchips, each of which comes with a metal ID tag and amber alert service if the pet is lost. They also now offer a data microchip. With new scanners, information can be updated at any time, and can link the chip to a pet license tag, a rabies tag or any other tag. Smart Tag is the only microchip company that offers a microchip with re-programmable data, which can be updated after implantation. All Smart Tag microchips include a lifetime registration so there are no annual fees.

*AKC Reunite, (Tom Sharp)*

AKC Reunite is a nonprofit founded in 1995. This company registers any microchip and currently has 4 million pets in the registry. AKC Reunite sells only ISO standard microchips. The company sells two types of universal scanners that read all four types of microchips sold in the US. This company also participates in Pet Microchip Look Up, which is sponsored and hosted by the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA). This service is free and can be accessed by anyone using the website [petmicrochiplookup.org](http://petmicrochiplookup.org). As the study group considers using microchips as animal licenses in Virginia, the AKC Reunite representative advised that the study group consider the large number of people who bring their pets into the state for travel. This can become problematic if each state begins setting up its own registries without communicating with a national registry.

*HomeAgain, (John Corgan)*

HomeAgain distributes microchips and scanners that are manufactured by Destron Fearing. A full enrollment with their company provides one year of free member benefits to Home Again, as well as a lifetime registration in their database. Maintaining up to date owner contact information can be difficult. Membership is renewable annually, after the first free year. Membership includes access to 24-hour recovery specialists, veterinarians and pet rescuers if a registered pet is lost. HomeAgain operates a 24/7 medical hotline. Non-members are charged \$65 for advice over the hotline, but members access the hotline for free. All HomeAgain microchips are ISO compliant and the company also supports the AAHA universal pet microchip look-up ([petmicrochiplookup.org](http://petmicrochiplookup.org)).

*911PetChip, (Jon Dyer)*

911PetChip manages free online registry services and lost pet recovery services under the name Free Pet Chip Registry, the only for-profit company in the world that offers free registration with their system for any brand of microchip. This benefits owners that have multiple pets with multiple brands of microchips. 911PetChip has a strict non-solicitation policy and only speaks to registrants to either assist in returning their lost pet or updating registration information at no cost. If an animal control officer locates a dog with a microchip that is registered with Free Pet Chip Registry, he can input the microchip number on the website's homepage, which will initiate a series of automated pet alerts.

*AVID Identification System, Mary Metzner and Sugar*

AVID is the oldest and the only USA based microchip company. AVID provides all frequencies of ISO chips, a secure AVID chip, and a Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary



Associations (FECAVA) chip. Their scanner can read every microchip. The AVID representative provided several handouts detailing legislation in other states and localities that require microchipping of animals, including Pennsylvania and San Antonio, Texas. She also provided a handout with instructions on how to log in on to AVID's professional login page, which can provide owner information to ACOs immediately. ACOs can access this professional log in page from a cell phone, and any animal control or humane society can get free access to the professional portal by calling AVID sales. All AVID chips have a lifetime registration and AVID provides 24/7 customer service. The AVID representative then used her dog Sugar to demonstrate the ease of scanning.

Study group members engaged the panelists in a number of topics associated with microchips and animal identification, including: (i) microchip data, data access and security, (ii) modifying microchip data, (iii) the amount of information that can be stored on a microchip, (iv) cost to the consumer (v) access to rabies vaccination status information, (vi) mandatory microchip implantation, (vii) regulations regarding microchip implantation, (viii) tattoos as a form of animal identification, (ix) cost savings to a locality by returning a dog to its owner quickly, (x) microchip scanner technology, (xi) state-wide database considerations, and (xii) general thoughts about animal identification.

### **Policy Options and Recommendations**

Based on the survey data collected, consideration of the presentations made by the various subject matter experts as well as extensive discussion, the study group identified several policy options to address the issues identified in HJR160. All options put forward pertain to individual

dog licenses as opposed to kennel licenses or licenses associated with dangerous dogs. The options presented take the perspectives of all key partners into consideration, and place particular focus on enhancing process efficiency and minimizing administrative burden.

Study group members representing private organizations and associations were asked to offer their organization's position in regard to the options. These organizations were asked to choose a position of support, oppose, no position or other (with a narrative explaining the details of that position) for each option. If a study group member representing a stakeholder organization chose to include a narrative associated with the positions of support, oppose or no position, those narratives were also included.

For every option the responses are organized alphabetically by organization name and grouped by position. Where positions of these organizations for any one option consisted of support only or a combination of support and no position, the support for that option is characterized as unanimous. Policy options 1 and 2 received unanimous support, and are recommended by the study group. However, there was not unanimity concerning any of the remaining options. The positions and narratives provided by the representative of each stakeholder group concerning each of the other options are summarized following the description of each option.

**Policy Option 1. Local treasurers should consider multiyear licensing and/or lifetime licensing.**

The administrative time and burden associated with licensing may be partly alleviated for both members of the general public and local treasurers by considering lifetime licensing and/or

multi-year licensing. While these options would not transfer licensing to another entity, as was the desire expressed by 64% of the local treasurers responding to the survey, these options may reduce the annual time and effort associated with processing licenses. Responses to the surveys completed by local treasurers would indicate that, currently, only about 50% of localities offer multi-year licensing. Multi-year licensing would likely result in a decrease to the number of dogs processed through a treasurer's office each year.

Multi-year licensing by localities would need to be approved by a local government prior to a treasurer's office implementing this option. Lifetime licensing may also decrease the number of dogs processed through a treasurer's office annually. This option, as discussed by the study group, would involve a one-time fee, set higher than a yearly dog license fee, paid by the dog owner to the local treasurer's office, however, the dog owner would also need to produce proof of identification that readily identifies the owner, such as a microchip, the information of which would need to be included on the rabies certificate, and registration of that dog. Provided the dog owner maintains proof of current rabies vaccination on file with the locality, the dog would be considered licensed for life.

The option of lifetime licensing is not unprecedented and is available in localities in other states, however, in Virginia, if this option was pursued, the *Code of Virginia* §3.2-6528 would need to be amended to reflect this as an option for localities. It is not anticipated that pursuing either multi-year licensing or lifetime licensing would have a state general fund fiscal impact.

Study group members representing private organizations and associations were unanimous in their support of this option (see individual responses below). In light of this unanimity, the study group would recommend that the General Assembly consider amending *Code of Virginia* §3.2-6528 to reflect a lifetime licensing option for dog licensing:

- DAHS-Support.
- HSUS-Support.
- Richmond SPCA-Support. We believe that localities should have the option to choose whether and how to implement dog licensing. Should a particular jurisdiction choose to issue licenses (regardless of how they choose to do it), we support multiyear and lifetime licensing.
- TAV-Support.
- VAAS-Support.
- VACA- Support. VACA supports the concepts of multi-year and lifetime licensing as options for localities, and believes that such practices will reduce the administrative burden on treasurers.
- VFB- Support. VFB supports multiyear licensing in particular as this simplifies the treasurers' administrative process.
- VFDCB-Support.
- VFHS-Support. As an overarching issue, VFHS believes that localities should have the option to choose whether and how to implement dog licensing. Assuming a particular jurisdiction chooses to issue licenses (whether through the local treasurer's office or through a different agency), VFHS supports multiyear and lifetime licensing.
- VVMA-Support.
- VaCO-No position. Further comment: Though VaCO has no position, I believe many counties would support increased flexibility of having an option of allowing for multi-year licensing.

**Policy Option 2. Local treasurers should consider using an automated system for rabies certificate and dog licensing information.**

The use of data management technology may assist the treasurers in decreasing the administrative burden of rabies certificate data entry. The survey responses from the local treasurers indicate that only three localities (5.8%) of the 51 responding use any type of automated system for data entry of either rabies certificate or dog licensing information. The TAV may want to consider encouraging its members to use an automated system for data entry. This can be implemented by those localities that use an automated system contracting with or sharing this system with neighboring localities. While this option would not transfer licensing to another entity, as was the desire expressed by 64% of the local treasurers responding to the survey, it may reduce the annual time and effort associated with the data entry and maintenance of licensing, which was identified by the treasurers responding to the survey as comprising approximately 60% of the staff time and local government funding associated with licensing. A locality's purchasing or use of an automated system for this purpose is not anticipated to have a state general fund fiscal impact. No amendments to the *Code of Virginia* would be necessary in association with a locality's decision to using an automated system for this purpose.

Study group members representing private organizations and associations were unanimous in their support of this option (see individual responses below). In light of this unanimity, the study group would recommend that the TAV consider encouraging its members to use and/or facilitate the use of an automated system for the data management associated with licensing:

- DAHS-Support.
- HSUS-Support.

- Richmond SPCA-Support. We believe that localities should have the option to choose whether and how to implement dog licensing. Should a particular jurisdiction choose to issue licenses, we support use of an automated system for rabies certificates and dog licensing information.
- VAAS-Support.
- VACA-Support. VACA supports and agrees that an automated system would reduce the administrative burden of data entry for rabies certificate and license information by treasurers.
- VFB-Support. VFB supports this option as it could simplify the treasurers' administrative process.
- VFDCB-Support.
- VFHS-Support. As an overarching issue, VFHS believes that localities should have the option to choose whether and how to implement dog licensing. Assuming a particular jurisdiction chooses to issue licenses (whether through the local treasurer's office or through a different agency), VFHS supports use of an automated system for rabies certificates and dog licensing information.
- VVMA-Support.
- TAV-No position. We are kind of doing this now.
- VaCO- No position. Further comment: If I understand the language correctly, it appears hortatory to me, and not mandated for localities to utilize an automated system for rabies certification and dog licensing. The level of technology used by a locality would be a matter for the local government to decide, based upon financial capacity and other considerations.

**Policy Option 3. Local treasurers should consider outreach in regard to the purpose of licensing and expanding licensing purchase options.**

Greater efforts associated with education about the purpose of licensing and/or the options available to consumers to purchase a license may increase the licensing compliance rate and, by extension, result in a greater number of dogs licensed and also additional local revenue that can be used to support animal control services in a locality. For example, local treasurers may want to consider providing educational materials to veterinary hospitals that can be distributed to dog

owners at the point of vaccination. These materials could describe the importance of licensing including how specifically the revenue from licensing is used and the options for license payment in that locality. In addition, localities could consider supplying veterinarians with a probationary license that is valid for the remainder of the calendar year or the date by which licenses are due for renewal in each locality and/or an envelope addressed to the local treasurer's office to facilitate payment by mail. While veterinarians were not asked about their willingness to distribute these materials, only 27% of those responding to the survey indicated that they would not be willing to license dogs at the point of vaccination and so, perhaps, the majority of veterinarians would be willing to distribute licensing materials provided by the local government at the point of rabies vaccination.

In addition, the TAV may want to consider encouraging its members to (i) mail a license renewal form with another routine mailing such as local personal property tax bill, (ii) contract with local businesses, other than veterinary hospitals, commonly frequented by many members of the general public and that maintain evening and weekend hours, such as pharmacies and grocery stores, to sell county/city dog licenses, (iii) permit animal control officers to sell dog licenses, (iv) offer online options for license fee payment and/or (v) offer discounted licensing fees for those owners who microchip their dogs. Although this option will not achieve a decrease in a local treasurer's office administrative burden associated with licensing, 62% of consumers who responded to the survey indicated that the two-step process of obtaining a rabies vaccination from a veterinarian and then obtaining a license from the treasurer's office did not make it less likely that they would purchase a license. Further, 9.7% of consumers indicated that they thought their dog was already licensed when their dog was vaccinated for rabies. Given the willingness

of most dog owners to purchase a license from the treasurer's office and confusion on the part of some members of the dog owning public, greater educational efforts associated with the purpose of licensing and/or greater options associated with license purchase may assist with licensing compliance and, by extension, have positive effects on local government revenue to support animal services and a more rapid return to owner which may result in a savings for the locality. This measure would also need to include outreach to veterinarians to assess their willingness to distribute licensing materials. Initiating outreach in this regard or instituting additional options for dog license purchase is not anticipated to have a state general fund fiscal impact. No amendments to the *Code of Virginia* would be necessary in association with a locality's decision to implement these options:

- DAHS-Support
- HSUS-Support.
- Richmond SPCA- Support. We believe that localities should have the option to choose whether and how to implement dog licensing. Should a particular jurisdiction choose to issue licenses, we support the use of outreach, incentives, and expanding licensing purchase options to help with compliance.
- VAAS – Support. Enthusiastically support.
- VACA- Support. VACA supports the concepts of increased outreach and use of educational materials to inform the public about the importance of licensing. VACA also supports encouraging treasurers to mail license renewal forms with another routine mailing such as local personal property tax bills. VACA further supports the concept of permitting willing local businesses, other than veterinary hospitals, commonly frequented by many members of the general public and that maintain evening and weekend hours, such as pharmacies and grocery stores, to sell county/city dog licenses. VACA supports permitting animal control officers to sell dog licenses. Finally VACA supports online options for payment of license fees and the concept of discounted licensing fees for those owners who microchip their dogs.
- VFDCB-Support.
- VFHS-Support. As an overarching issue, VFHS believes that localities should have the option to choose whether and how to implement dog licensing. Assuming a particular



jurisdiction chooses to issue licenses (whether through the local treasurer's office or through a different agency), VFHS supports the use of outreach, incentives, and expanding licensing purchase options to help with compliance.

- VVMA-Support.
- TAV-Oppose. Sounds good, but more work with no real resources.
- VFB-Oppose. This option results in more time and money spent by Treasurers with potentially poor results.
- VaCO-No position. Further comment: improved communications and outreach within many localities would increase compliance rates. Cooperative programs between Treasurers and Veterinarians could be effective. I believe many residents who fail to have their dogs licensed, probably because they're extremely busy, have several occasions when they believe it is necessary to take their dogs to the vets for examinations or certain treatments needed by the pet. A cooperative program between Vets and Treasurers could make purchase of dog licenses much more convenient for the dog owner. Many dog owners may not know what the county's licensing requirements are. At minimum, a veterinarian's office could serve as a very helpful source of information; and (at best) could serve as a source of convenience if the veterinarian is willing to act as sales agent on behalf of the locality.

**Policy Option 4. Local treasurers should consider transferring the responsibility of dog licensing data management to local animal control.**

Another option discussed by the study group was the concept of transferring the responsibility of dog licensing data management and sales to a locality's animal control authorities. This is not unprecedented in Virginia and would achieve the goal expressed by 64% of the local treasurers responding to the survey in transferring the responsibility of licensing to another entity. This concept was not, however, included in the ACO survey for specific feedback and so key local government partners would need to discuss this idea further. Because the question included in the ACO survey regarding information technology focused on equipment of this nature that ACOs have access to in the field, the study group would recommend a thorough review of an animal control agency's information technology and data management capabilities prior to

choosing this option as these systems may be more variable among animal control agencies than local treasurer's offices. It is not anticipated that this option would require any amendment to the *Code of Virginia* or have any state general fund fiscal impact:

- HSUS-Support.
- DAHS-Oppose.
- Richmond SPCA-Oppose. We believe that localities should have the option to choose whether and how to implement dog licensing. How the local licensing data is managed should be up to the discretion of the locality. We oppose this option to the extent that it seeks to specify what they should discuss or consider.
- TAV-Oppose. If animal licensing is going to remain at the local government level, we don't want to be perceived as dumping the process on Animal Control.
- VAAS- Oppose. ACO's are already under resourced and their expertise is not in the area of collecting a localities fees. It should be an option for shelters to sell licenses but the administrative collection of fees and accounting rests with those who stand for elective office to be in charge of those activities in each locality.
- VACA-Oppose. VACA cannot support any mandate that compels the transfer of dog licensing sales and management to animal control. In many instances animal control agencies have only 1 or 2 total staff to run the shelter, clean, feed and care for animals, and to respond to calls for service. It would not be feasible to transfer yet another duty to such already overburdened entities. VACA would be willing to be part of a discussion on this concept provided there were 1) a guarantee of creation of at least 1 dedicated FTE position, per 200,000 residents, in each animal control agency to manage animal licensing, and 2) a guarantee that all licensing revenues would remain with the animal control agency to fund services and programs.
- VFB-Oppose. This simply transfers the problem to another department with no real solution.
- VVMA-Oppose. VVMA cannot endorse this option in light of VACA's opposition.
- VaCO- No position. Further comment: Additional discussion is needed. The fiscal impact on local animal control operations need to be better understood.
- VFHS-No position. As an overarching issue, VFHS believes that localities should have the option to choose whether and how to implement dog licensing. VFHS defers to the local treasurers and local animal control agencies on this issue.

- VFDCB-Other. Support with the condition that the government entity that has responsibility for animal control also be included in the discussions.

**Policy Option 5. Local treasurers should consider a licensing option whereby a dog is deemed automatically licensed when the rabies vaccination certificate reaches the local treasurer's office or other local government agency coupled with a dog identification requirement.**

The administrative time and burden associated with licensing may be partly alleviated by allowing dogs to be considered automatically licensed once a rabies certificate is on file with the locality. This option would also give discretion to the locality in regard to which local government entity maintained dog licensing and rabies certificate records. This would eliminate the need for local treasurers or other locality agents to sell county/city tags or follow up with dog owners who do not present to purchase a tag which was reported by the treasurers responding to the survey as consuming approximately 40% of the staff time and local government funding associated with licensing. A dog owner then would be required to maintain identification, such as a microchip or tag containing the owner's name, address, and phone number, securely fastened to a substantial collar worn by the dog. Such identification, therefore, would allow the owner to be readily identified. This option may allow the owner to be in compliance at the point of vaccination if an owner chose to have a veterinarian implant a microchip when the rabies vaccine was administered. This option is not anticipated to have any state general fund fiscal impact. If this option was pursued, *Code of Virginia* sections that would need to be amended include §3.2-6526 and §3.2-6531. If this concept was pursued from a perspective of a no cost

licensing option for localities, an amendment to *Code of Virginia* sections §3.2-6528, §3.2-6530 and §3.2-6587 would be necessary:

- HSUS-Support.
- Richmond SPCA's-Support. We support this option.
- TAV-Support.
- VFB-Support. Considered in compliance.
- VFHS-Support. VFHS supports this option.
- VVMA-Support.
- DAHS-Oppose. We strongly believe that a government-issued tag, not an identification tag, would help protect ownership rights.
- VACA- Oppose. VACA cannot support such a measure. Current statute already requires dogs to wear licenses. Animal licensing revenue is currently used, either directly or indirectly, to fund animal control services and programs. Revenue raised by animal licenses can range from negligible to very significant. This proposal would effectively eliminate the revenue raised by licensing. The proponents of this concept have not suggested any alternative revenue stream to make up what will be lost. Such a loss would be expected to adversely impact medical care for animals, adoption and spay/neuter services, and cruelty and abuse investigations. VACA notes the responses from the public and ACOs overwhelmingly support animal licensing. In addition, the National Animal Control Association, the American Veterinary Medical Association, and the Association of Shelter Veterinarians all strongly support animal licensing. In the Compendium on Rabies Prevention and Control by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, the position is clearly stated. "Registration of all dogs, cats and ferrets is an integral component of all rabies protection programs." Virginia continues to rank very high (2nd and 3rd) for rabies cases, including rabies cases involving domestic species. VACA believes that moving in any direction to eliminate licensing would be contrary to our duty to protect public health and safety. We know that animals that enter a shelter without a license tag or ID spend on average 4-10 days in the shelter. Animals with a license tag or ID spend 1-2 days on average. The chance of an animal without a license or ID being reunited with its family is greatly reduced compared to animals with such identification. This costs Virginia taxpayers millions of dollars.
- VaCO-Oppose. Further comment. If I understand this option correctly, localities would lose revenues from dog license sales. This would impose a procedure on some localities that have achieved higher levels of compliance. I believe the testimony the work group

heard from Loudoun County, which claims to have a successful program, needs to be considered.

- VAAS- No position. We have a concern about Item 5 insofar as we do not want to lose the animal owner's sense that licensing is a responsibility in the community beyond the specific need for vaccination. Our proposal suggested this option as an initial introduction to the owner upon the first rabies vaccination. Then the owner would have to affirmatively purchase the license. We are not opposed; we simply believe this proposal requires considerable discussion.
- VFDCB-Other. The option trades one requirement for another—"free" licensing but a requirement for microchipping. There are too many other variables that have to be worked out for us to give an unequivocal vote of "support" at this time.

**Policy Option 6. Local treasurers should consider pursuing raising the maximum fee a locality can charge for a dog license.**

Raising the maximum fee a locality can charge for a dog license may provide additional income for animal control services and funding of other services detailed in *Code of Virginia* section §3.2-6534. Increasing the maximum fee may provide additional incentive to local government partners in licensing to devote greater time and effort to collect fees. Before pursuing this option, treasurers should consider assessing the potential for decreased compliance if licensing fees are raised and consider how much of an increase beyond the current maximum might be reasonable to pursue. It is not anticipated that pursuing this option would have any state general fund impact. This option would require an amendment to *Code of Virginia* section §3.2-6528:

- DAHS-Support. We believe that localities should be able to consider a wide-range of licensing options, including lower fees for spayed/neutered animals.
- HSUS-Support.
- VAAS- Support. Less enthusiasm.
- VaCO-Support. VACo would support the flexibility to increase licensing fees above the state mandated cap.

- VVMA-Support.
- Richmond SPCA's-Oppose. We oppose this option.
- TAV-Oppose. This will generate a reaction from the public that is not worth the hassle.
- VFB-Oppose. This drives noncompliance.
- VFDCB-Oppose. An increase in fees almost always leads to a decrease in compliance.
- VFHS-Oppose. VFHS opposes this option.
- VACA-Other. VACA does not support this concept for all animals, but may be willing to take part in a discussion about raising license fees for unaltered animals only.

**Policy Option 7. Localities should consider greater penalties for licensing noncompliance.**

Increasing penalties for noncompliance may encourage dog owners to make timely payments in regard to dog licensing fees. Localities, for instance, could consider enacting ordinances to include additional fees for late payments. Cities and counties could also enact and enforce escalating civil penalties for noncompliance. Although this option will not will not achieve a decrease in a local treasurer's office administrative burden associated with licensing, civil penalties for noncompliance may make ACO procedures associated with serving summonses less burdensome and could increase the funding a treasurer's office receives associated with licensing. It is not anticipated that pursuing this option would have a state general fund impact. If this option was pursued, *Code of Virginia* section §3.2-6587 would need to be reviewed and possibly amended:

- VAAS-Support. 1. The fact that Virginia remains 2nd or 3rd in the USA for incidence of rabies is suggestive of the absolute compunction that we not indulge any actions that would result in a reduction in the number of companion animal that are vaccinated. That would be a public health travesty. 2. We know from our survey and our own shelter experience that dogs without licenses spend almost 9 times longer in a shelter than those with licenses at a cost of millions of dollars to our localities. We also know the likelihood of an animal with a licensed being returned to its owner is very high while one without a license quite low. That has a real financial impact on local governments and on

shelters. 3. We believe that animal owners have an extra responsibility to pay for the costs associated with animal ownership in a community and that represents a fairer approach to providing community services. 4. All national organizations, the National Animal Control Association, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the Association of Shelter Veterinarians. "Registration of all dogs, cats and ferrets is an integral component of all rabies protection programs" is the position in the Compendium or Rabies Prevention and Control by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians. We should respect the scientific based position of these professionals.

- HSUS-Oppose.
- Richmond SPCA-Oppose. We oppose this option.
- TAV-Oppose.
- VFB-Oppose. A higher penalty does nothing to drive compliance if you don't have the money to begin with.
- VFDCB-Oppose.
- VFHS-Oppose. VFHS opposes this option.
- DAHS-No position.
- VaCO-No position.
- VACA-Other. VACA does not support across the board greater penalties for licensing noncompliance. Currently violation is a class 4 misdemeanor, punishable by a fine not to exceed \$250. VACA does support the concept of late fee penalties similar to those charged for late payment of personal property tax, etc. VACA supports the concept of changing licensing violations from a criminal to a civil penalty. Under a civil penalty system there could be escalating civil penalties for repeated noncompliance. A civil penalty system may make ACO and court procedures less burdensome. Adoption of a late fee penalty system could increase the funding a treasurer's office receives associated with licensing.
- VVMA-Other: VVMA supports Option 7 (Localities should consider greater penalties for licensing noncompliance) after Option 3 (Local treasurers should consider outreach in regard to the purpose of licensing and expanding licensing purchase options) is instituted in all localities statewide. While some counties/cities do distribute information on licensing and the importance of licensing, this education is not occurring in every locality. Before dog owners can be more seriously penalized for not licensing, we need to ensure that reasonable efforts are made throughout all Virginia localities to educate and encourage compliance before penalties for non-compliance are routinely issued.

**ATTACHMENTS**



16105282D

**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 160**  
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE  
(Proposed by the House Committee on Rules  
on February 9, 2016)  
(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Orrock)

*Requesting the Virginia Department of Health to study Virginia's procedures for licensing dogs and cats. Report.*

WHEREAS, the adoption of legal requirements in every state for vaccination of dogs and domesticated cats against rabies has resulted in dramatic declines in the incidence of rabies and human exposure to rabies since 1960; and

WHEREAS, Virginia law has required rabies inoculation of dogs since 1984 and domesticated cats since 1988; and

WHEREAS, under § 3.2-6524 of the Code of Virginia, it is unlawful for a person to own a dog that is four months old or older unless the owner has obtained a license and a locality is authorized to adopt an ordinance that requires the licensing of a cat four months old or older; and

WHEREAS, proof of a rabies vaccination is required to obtain a local license for a dog or cat; and

WHEREAS, in practice, the local licensing requirement provides the principal tool for enforcing the state requirement for vaccination of dogs against rabies; and

WHEREAS, over the past two decades, Virginia has substantially revised its comprehensive animal control laws; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, Virginia adopted a law that required veterinarians to provide a copy of rabies vaccination certificates for dogs to the city or county treasurer, as a means of increasing compliance with licensing requirements; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding these actions, the present system for licensing at the local level does not ensure a high level of vaccination compliance, is plagued by licensing noncompliance, and leaves animal control officers and other public safety officials without access to a statewide data resource regarding animals, thereby rendering animal control efforts more difficult and less effective; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Virginia Department of Health be requested to study Virginia's procedures for licensing dogs and cats.

In conducting its study, the Virginia Department of Health shall review Virginia's companion animal licensing procedures and assess the feasibility of establishing a statewide system for recording rabies vaccinations and licensing that may include a statewide database of licensed companion animals that can be remotely accessed by animal control officers in the field. The Department shall be assisted in its work by a panel of stakeholders chosen by the Commissioner of Health. The panel of stakeholders shall include representatives of local government, the Virginia Animal Control Association, and the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association and citizens experienced in animal welfare issues.

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services shall provide technical assistance to the Virginia Department of Health for this study. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Virginia Department of Health for this study, upon request.

The Virginia Department of Health shall complete its meetings by November 15, 2016, and report its findings and recommendations to the Chairman of the House Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions and the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education and Health by December 1, 2016, and shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports no later than the first day of the 2017 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

HOUSE  
SUBSTITUTE

HJ160H1

## Attachment 2

April 18, 2016

### Relevant Code Sections on Licensing of Companion Animals in Virginia

Chapter 65: Comprehensive Animal Care: <http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title3.2/chapter65/>

#### *§ 3.2-6524. Unlicensed dogs prohibited; ordinances for licensing cats.*

A. It shall be unlawful for any person other than a releasing agency that has registered as such annually with local animal control to own a dog four months old or older in the Commonwealth unless such dog is licensed, as required by the provisions of this article.

B. The governing body of any locality may, by ordinance, prohibit any person other than a releasing agency that has registered as such annually with local animal control from owning a cat four months old or older within such locality unless such cat is licensed as provided by this article.

#### *§ 3.2-6526. What dog or cat license shall consist of.*

A. A dog or cat license shall consist of a license receipt and a metal tag. The tag shall be stamped or otherwise permanently marked to show the jurisdiction issuing the license and bear a serial number or other identifying information prescribed by the locality.

B. No license tag shall be issued for any dog or cat unless there is presented, to the treasurer or other officer of the locality, or other agent charged by law with the duty of issuing license tags for dogs and cats, satisfactory evidence that such dog or cat has been inoculated or vaccinated against rabies by a currently licensed veterinarian or currently licensed veterinary technician who was under the immediate and direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian on the premises.

#### *§ 3.2-6527. How to obtain license.*

Any person may obtain a dog license or cat license if required by an ordinance adopted pursuant to subsection B of § 3.2-6524, by making oral or written application to the treasurer of the locality where such person resides, accompanied by the amount of license tax and current certificate of vaccination as required by this article or satisfactory evidence that such certificate has been obtained. The treasurer or other officer charged with the duty of issuing dog and cat licenses shall only have authority to license dogs and cats of resident owners or custodians who reside within the boundary limits of his county or city and may require information to this effect from any applicant. Upon receipt of proper application and current certificate of vaccination as required by this article or satisfactory evidence that such certificate has been obtained, the treasurer or other officer charged with the duty of issuing dog and cat licenses shall issue a license receipt for the amount on which he shall record the name and address of the owner or custodian, the date of payment, the year for which issued, the serial number of the tag, whether dog or cat, whether male or female, whether spayed or neutered, or whether a kennel, and deliver the metal license tags or plates provided for herein. The information thus received shall be retained by the treasurer, open to public inspection, during the period for which such license is valid. The treasurer may establish substations in convenient locations in the county or city and appoint agents for the collection of the license tax and issuance of such licenses.

#### *§ 3.2-6528. Amount of license tax.*

The governing body of each county or city shall impose by ordinance a license tax on the ownership of dogs within its jurisdiction. The governing body of any locality that has adopted an ordinance pursuant to

subsection B of § 3.2-6524 shall impose by ordinance a license tax on the ownership of cats within its jurisdiction. The governing body may establish different rates of taxation for ownership of female dogs, male dogs, spayed or neutered dogs, female cats, male cats, and spayed or neutered cats. The tax for each dog or cat shall not be less than \$1 and not more than \$10 for each year. If the dog or cat has been spayed, the tax shall not exceed the tax provided for a male dog or cat. Any ordinance may provide for a license tax for kennels of 10, 20, 30, 40, or 50 dogs or cats not to exceed \$50 for any one such block of kennels. No license tax shall be levied on any dog that is trained and serves as a guide dog for a blind person, that is trained and serves as a hearing dog for a deaf or hearing-impaired person, or that is trained and serves as a service dog for a mobility-impaired or otherwise disabled person.

*§ 3.2-6529. Veterinarians to provide treasurer with rabies certificate information; civil penalty.*

A. Each veterinarian who vaccinates a dog against rabies or directs a veterinary technician in his employ to vaccinate a dog against rabies shall provide the owner a copy of the rabies vaccination certificate. The veterinarian shall forward within 45 days a copy of the rabies vaccination certificate or the relevant information contained in such certificate to the treasurer of the locality where the vaccination occurs...

B. It shall be the responsibility of the owner of each vaccinated animal that is not already licensed to apply for a license for the vaccinated dog. Beginning January 1, 2008, if the treasurer determines, from review of the rabies vaccination information provided by veterinarians, that the owner of an unlicensed dog has failed to apply for a license within 90 days of the date of vaccination, the treasurer shall transmit an application to the owner and request the owner to submit a completed application and pay the appropriate fee. Upon receipt of the completed application and payment of the license fee, the treasurer or other agent charged with the duty of issuing the dog licenses shall issue a license receipt and a permanent tag. The treasurer shall retain only the information that is required to be collected and open to public inspection pursuant to the provisions of this Chapter and shall forthwith destroy any rabies vaccination certificate or other similar record transmitted by a veterinarian to a treasurer pursuant to this section.. Any veterinarian that willfully fails to provide the treasurer of any locality with a copy of the rabies vaccination certificate or the information contained in such certificate may be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$10 per certificate. Monies raised pursuant to this subsection shall be placed in the locality's general fund for the purpose of animal control activities including spay or neuter programs.

*§ 3.2-6530. When license tax payable.*

A. The license tax as prescribed in § 3.2-6528 is due not later than 30 days after a dog or cat has reached the age of four months, or not later than 30 days after an owner acquires a dog or cat four months of age or older and each year thereafter.

B. Licensing periods for individual dogs and cats may be equal to and may run concurrently with the rabies vaccination effective period. Any kennel license tax prescribed pursuant to § 3.2-6528 shall be due on January 1 and not later than January 31 of each year.

*§ 3.2-6531. Displaying receipts; dogs to wear tags.*

Dog and cat license receipts shall be carefully preserved by the licensees and exhibited promptly on request for inspection by any animal control officer or other officer. Dog license tags shall be securely fastened to a substantial collar by the owner or custodian and worn by such dog. It shall be unlawful for the owner to permit any licensed dog four months old or older to run or roam at large at any time without a license tag. The owner of the dog may remove the collar and license tag required by this section when: (i) the dog is engaged in lawful hunting; (ii) the dog is competing in a dog show; (iii) the dog has a skin

condition that would be exacerbated by the wearing of a collar; (iv) the dog is confined; or (v) the dog is under the immediate control of its owner.

*§ 3.2-6532. Duplicate license tags.*

If a dog or cat license tag is lost, destroyed or stolen, the owner or custodian shall at once apply to the treasurer or his agent who issued the original license for a duplicate license tag, presenting the original license receipt. Upon affidavit of the owner or custodian before the treasurer or his agent that the original license tag has been lost, destroyed or stolen, he shall issue a duplicate license tag that the owner or custodian shall immediately affix to the collar of the dog. The treasurer or his agent shall endorse the number of the duplicate and the date issued on the face of the original license receipt. The fee for a duplicate tag for any dog or cat shall be \$1.

*§ 3.2-6533. Effect of dog or cat not wearing a license tag as evidence.*

Any dog or cat not wearing a collar bearing a valid license tag shall prima facie be deemed to be unlicensed, and in any proceedings under this chapter the burden of proof of the fact that such dog or cat has been licensed, or is otherwise not required to bear a tag at the time, shall be on the owner of the dog or cat.

*§ 3.2-6534. Disposition of funds.*

Unless otherwise provided by ordinance of the local governing body, the treasurer of each locality shall keep all moneys collected by him for dog and cat license taxes in a separate account from all other funds collected by him. The locality shall use the funds for the following purposes:

1. The salary and expenses of the animal control officer and necessary staff;
2. The care and maintenance of a public animal shelter;
3. The maintenance of a rabies control program;
4. Payments as a bounty to any person neutering or spaying a dog up to the amount of one year of the license tax as provided by ordinance;
5. Payments for compensation as provided in § 3.2-6553; and
6. Efforts to promote sterilization of dogs and cats.

Any part or all of any surplus remaining in such account on December 31 of any year may be transferred by the governing body of such locality into the general fund of such locality.

*§ 3.2-6535. Supplemental funds.*

Localities may supplement the dog and cat license tax fund with other funds as they consider appropriate. Localities shall supplement the dog and cat license tax fund to the extent necessary to provide for the salary and expenses of the animal control officer and staff and the care and maintenance of a public animal shelter as provided in subdivisions 1 and 2 of § 3.2-6534.

*§ 3.2-6536. Payment of license tax subsequent to summons.*

Payment of the license tax subsequent to a summons to appear before a court for failure to pay the license tax within the time required shall not operate to relieve such owner from the penalties or court costs provided under § 16.1-69.48:1 or 17.1-275.7.

*§ 3.2-6562. Capturing, confining, and euthanizing companion animals by animal control officers; approval of drugs used.*

It shall be the duty of the animal control officer or any other officer to capture and confine any companion

animal of unknown ownership found running at large on which the license fee has not been paid. Following the expiration of the holding period prescribed in § 3.2-6546, the animal control officer or other officer may deliver such companion animal to any person in his jurisdiction who will pay the required license fee on such companion animal...

*§ 3.2-6587. Unlawful acts; penalties.*

A. The following shall be unlawful acts and are Class 4 misdemeanors:

1. For any person to make a false statement in order to secure a dog or cat license to which he is not entitled.
2. For any dog or cat owner to fail to pay any license tax required by this chapter before February 1 for the year in which it is due. In addition, the court may order confiscation and the proper disposition of the dog or cat...
7. For any person to conceal or harbor any dog or cat on which any required license tax has not been paid.
8. For any person, except the owner or custodian, to remove a legally acquired license tag from a dog or cat without the permission of the owner or custodian.

## Attachment 3

### Relevant Code Sections on Rabies and companion animals

#### ***§ 3.2-6521. Rabies inoculation of companion animals; availability of certificate; rabies clinics.***

A. The owner or custodian of all dogs and cats four months of age and older shall have such animal currently vaccinated for rabies by a licensed veterinarian or licensed veterinary technician who is under the immediate and direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian on the premises unless otherwise provided by regulations. The supervising veterinarian on the premises shall provide the owner or custodian of the dog or the cat with a rabies vaccination certificate or herd rabies vaccination certificate and shall keep a copy in his own files. The owner or custodian of the dog or the cat shall furnish within a reasonable period of time, upon the request of an animal control officer, humane investigator, law-enforcement officer, State Veterinarian's representative, or official of the Department of Health, the certificate of vaccination for such dog or cat. The vaccine used shall be licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for use in that species. At the discretion of the local health director, a medical record from a licensed veterinary establishment reflecting a currently vaccinated status may serve as proof of vaccination.

B. All rabies clinics require the approval by the appropriate local health department and governing body. The licensed veterinarian who administers rabies vaccinations at the clinic shall (i) provide the owner or custodian a rabies vaccination certificate for each vaccinated animal and (ii) ensure that a licensed veterinary facility retains a copy of the rabies vaccination certificate. The sponsoring organization of a rabies clinic shall, upon the request of the owner or custodian, an animal control officer, a humane investigator, a law-enforcement officer, a State Veterinarian's representative, a licensed veterinarian, or an official of the Department of Health, provide the name and contact information of the licensed veterinary facility where a copy of the rabies vaccination certificate is retained. However, the county or city shall ensure that a clinic is conducted to serve its jurisdiction at least once every two years.

C. Vaccination subsequent to a summons to appear before a court for failure to do so shall not operate to relieve such owner from the penalties or court costs provided under § 16.1-69.48:1 or 17.1-275.7.

D. The Board of Health shall, by regulation, provide an exemption to the requirements of subsection A if an animal suffers from an underlying medical condition that is likely to result in a life-threatening condition in response to vaccination and such exemption would not risk public health and safety. For the purposes of § 3.2-6522, such exemption shall mean that the animal is considered not currently vaccinated for rabies. For the purposes of §§ 3.2-5902, 3.2-6526, and 3.2-6527, such exemption shall be considered in place of a current certificate of vaccination.

#### ***§ 3.2-6522. Rabid animals.***

A. When there is sufficient reason to believe that the risk of exposure to rabies is elevated, the governing body of any locality may enact, and the local health director may recommend, an emergency ordinance that shall become effective immediately upon passage, requiring owners of all dogs and cats therein to keep the same confined on their premises unless leashed under restraint of the owner in such a manner that persons or animals will not be subject to the danger of being bitten by a rabid animal. Any such emergency ordinance enacted pursuant to the provisions of this section shall be operative for a period not to exceed 30 days unless renewed by the governing body of such locality in consultation with the local health director. The governing body of any locality shall also have the power and authority to pass ordinances restricting the running at large in their respective jurisdiction of dogs and cats that have not been inoculated or vaccinated against rabies and to provide penalties for the violation thereof.

B. Any dog or cat showing active signs of rabies or suspected of having rabies that is not known to have exposed a person, companion animal, or livestock to rabies shall be confined under competent observation for such a time as may be necessary to determine a diagnosis. If, in the discretion of the local health director, confinement is impossible or impracticable, such dog or cat shall be euthanized by one of the methods approved by the State Veterinarian as provided in § 3.2-6546. The disposition of other animals showing active signs of rabies shall be determined by the local health director and may include euthanasia and testing.

C. Every person having knowledge of the existence of an animal that is suspected to be rabid and that may have exposed a person, companion animal, or livestock to rabies shall report immediately to the local health department the existence of such animal, the place where seen, the owner's name, if known, and the signs suggesting rabies.

D. Any dog or cat for which no proof of current rabies vaccination is available and that may have been exposed to rabies through a bite, or through saliva or central nervous system tissue, in a fresh open wound or mucous membrane, by an animal suspected to be rabid shall be isolated in a public animal shelter, kennel, or enclosure approved by the local health department for a period not to exceed six months at the expense of the owner or custodian in a manner and by a date certain as determined by the local health director. A rabies vaccination shall be administered by a licensed veterinarian prior to release. Inactivated rabies vaccine may be administered at the beginning of isolation. Any dog or cat so bitten, or exposed to rabies through saliva or central nervous system tissue, in a fresh open wound or mucous membrane with proof of current vaccination, shall be revaccinated by a licensed veterinarian immediately following the exposure and shall be confined to the premises of the owner or custodian, or other site as may be approved by the local health department at the expense of the owner or custodian, for a period of 45 days. If the local health director determines that isolation is not feasible or maintained, such dog or cat shall be euthanized by one of the methods approved by the State Veterinarian as provided in § 3.2-6546. The disposition of such dogs or cats not so confined shall be at the discretion of the local health director.

E. At the discretion of the local health director, any animal that may have exposed a person shall be confined under competent observation for 10 days at the expense of the owner or custodian, unless the animal develops active signs of rabies, expires, or is euthanized before that time. A seriously injured or sick animal may be euthanized as provided in § 3.2-6546.

F. When any suspected rabid animal, other than a dog or cat, exposes or may have exposed a person to rabies through a bite, or through saliva or central nervous system tissue, in a fresh open wound or mucous membrane, decisions regarding the disposition of that animal shall be at the discretion of a local health director and may include euthanasia as provided in § 3.2-6546, or as directed by the state agency with jurisdiction over that species. When any animal, other than a dog or cat, is exposed or may have been exposed to rabies through a bite, or through saliva or central nervous system tissue, in a fresh open wound or mucous membrane, by an animal suspected to be rabid, decisions regarding the disposition of that newly exposed animal shall be at the discretion of a local health director.

G. When any animal may have exposed a person to rabies and subsequently expires due to illness or euthanasia, either within an observation period, where applicable, or as part of a public health investigation, its head or brain shall be sent to the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services of the Department of General Services or be tested as directed by the local health department.

**§ 3.2-6523. *Inoculation for rabies at public or private animal shelters.***

Dogs and cats being adopted from a public or private animal shelter during the period an emergency ordinance is in force, as provided for in § 3.2-6522, may be inoculated for rabies by a certified animal

technician at such shelter if the certified animal technician is under the immediate and direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian.

*§ 3.2-6525. Regulations to prevent spread of rabies.*

A. The governing body of any locality may adopt such ordinances, regulations or other measures as may be deemed reasonably necessary to prevent the spread within its boundaries of the disease of rabies. Penalties may be provided for the violation of any such ordinances. If the ordinance declares the existence of an emergency, then the ordinance shall be in force upon passage.

B. The governing body of any locality may adopt an ordinance creating a program for the distribution of oral rabies vaccine within its boundaries to prevent the spread of rabies. An ordinance enacted pursuant to this subsection on or after July 1, 2010, shall be developed in consultation with the Department of Health and with written authorization from the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries in accordance with § 29.1-508.1 and shall contain the following provisions:

1. Notice shall be given to the owner or occupant of property prior to the entry upon the property for the purpose of the distribution of oral rabies vaccine or the use of any other methods to place oral rabies vaccine on the property. Notice shall be given by: (i) sending two letters by first-class mail, at successive intervals of not less than two weeks set forth in the ordinance; and (ii) printing a copy thereof, at least once, in a newspaper of general circulation in the locality concerned. Written notice shall be in a form approved by the governing body and shall include a description of the purpose for which entry upon the property is to be made, the time and method of rabies vaccine distribution at the property, and the submission deadline for requests by any owner or occupant of property who wishes to be excluded from the oral rabies vaccine distribution program.

2. The owner or occupant of property may refuse to allow the distribution of oral rabies vaccine upon such property. The ordinance shall establish procedures to be followed by any owner or occupant who wishes to be excluded from the oral rabies vaccine distribution program, including the time and method by which requests for nonparticipation must be received. If the governing body receives a request for nonparticipation by the owner or occupant of property for the distribution of oral rabies vaccine, no further action shall be taken to distribute oral vaccine, on such property for a period of one year.

Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to limit any authority for the distribution of oral rabies vaccine otherwise provided by law.



## Attachment 4

### DOG LICENSES Percent of Dogs Licensed vs. Dogs Vaccinated Sampling/Survey

Concept: All Vets are required to send rabies certificates to the local government/treasurer. Treasurer matches certificates to licenses already purchased, waits 60 days for more purchases, mails reminder notices to the remaining dog owners and sells licenses to those voluntarily coming forward.

Sample pool: If a vet or vets send in 120 rabies certificates in a given month:

120 Received

-20 Owner lives outside locality

100 Dogs vaccinated in locality

-55 Dogs already licensed after 60 days (so 45 notices mailed)

-10 Dogs owners buying licenses after receiving mailing notice

35 # of dogs vaccinated but not licensed. Calculates to 65% compliant &  
**35% noncompliant**

#### LOCALITY RESULTS

Culpeper County	57% compliant
Scott County	55% compliant
Botetourt County	85% compliant
Frederick County	58% compliant
Spotsylvania County	73% compliant
York County	69% compliant
Arlington County	25% compliant
City of Fredericksburg	28% compliant
Hanover County	62% compliant

Flat Average                      57% COMPLIANT

Based on a 3 year rabies cycle, annualizing some of the full-months data and % of compliance rates, there are probably over 2 million dogs in Virginia, and 850,000 unlicensed dogs.

## Attachment 5

### DOG LICENSES

\* The fees listed do not include discounts for spayed/nuetered dogs, which only further lowers a locality's licensine revenue.

LOCALITY	1 YEAR FEE
Lee	2
Russell	3
Bristol	4
Charlotte	4
Cumberland	4
Madison	4
Rockingham	4
Danville	5
Essex	5
Frederick	5
Grayson	5
Henry	5
King William	5
Mecklenburg	5
Pittsylvania	5
Poquoson	5
Scott	5
Smyth	5
Wise	5
Wythe	5
York	5
Appomattox	6
Bland	6
Hanover	6
Page	6
Washington	6.5
Amherst	7
Chesterfield	7
Nelson	7
Giles	7.5
Rockbridge	7.5
Waynesboro	7.5
Allegheny	8
Carroll	8
Highland	8
James City County	8
Northumberland	8
Shenandoah	8
Winchester	8
Accomack	10
Amelia	10
Arlington	10

Augusta	10
Bedford	10
Caroline	10
Charlottesville	10
Chesapeake	10
Culpeper	10
Emporia	10
Falls Church	10
Franklin City	10
Franklin County	10
Fredericksburg	10
Gloucester	10
Goochland	10
Greene	10
Greenville	10
Halifax	10
Harrisonburg	10
Henrico	10
Isle of Wight	10
Loudon	10
Lunenburg	10
Lynchburg	10
Manassas Park	10
Middlesex	10
Newport News	10
Northhampton	10
Norton	10
Orange	10
Patrick	10
Portsmouth	10
Powhatan	10
Prince Edward	10
Prince George	10
Pulaski	10
Radford	10
Roanoke City	10
Spotsylvania	10
Stafford	10
Staunton	10
Suffolk	10
Warren	10

## Attachment 6

### VIRGINIA DOG LICENSE

The Treasurers' Association of Virginia is requesting a study of the dog licensing process in Virginia.

Delegate Robert Orrock, House Agriculture Committee, has been very receptive to this idea and most likely would be the legislator to propose the study.

Currently in Virginia:

- Citizens get their dogs vaccinated by/at a veterinarian's office.
- They then conduct a 2<sup>nd</sup> transaction with local government to obtain a license.
- Local governments deal with hundreds of thousands, perhaps a million or more transactions each year for little or no net profit.
- Additionally, our research show less than 2/3rds of dog owners buy a license, which means hundreds of thousands of dogs cannot be traced to their owner.

Proposed Study:

- Find an updated way to trace all vaccinated dogs, reduce the burden on the dog owners and relieve local government of a time consuming process that does not generate any real revenue.

Initial Concept:

- Have dogs automatically licensed when they are vaccinated.
- Background - Veterinarians already send localities copies of every rabies certificate. Instead, let them issue the license. A license fee can be added onto the vaccination bill. Currently this can be up to \$10 for a year. However, a \$5 fee might be appropriate. The Vet keeps \$2 for his/her time and submits the other \$3 to the State or locality to manage a data base of all vaccinated dogs. Hanover actually has 4 large Veterinarian offices selling dog licenses for us at 50 cents commission.
- Actually, there are several options for the data base. The State, or a contracted vendor could host the data base. The data entry could be done by either the Vet for another \$1, by the localities or by the State.
- Hanover has even tested a scanner where the rabies vaccination forms are read instead of keypunched. We could process an entire year's worth of forms in only a few weeks.

Results:

- A more citizen friendly program in that they only have to visit the Vet, and license would be good for same duration as rabies shot, hence less cost to the owner.
- More efficient government.
- Ability to find owners of 33% more dogs. (This could be 700,000 dogs).
- NO IMPACT ON RABIES COMPLIANCE, ANIMAL HEALTH OR PUBLIC SAFETY.

#### Details & Issues:

- Kennels would still be subject to local government approval, and with proof of kennel permit the owner would pay reduced license fee.
- Dog owners moving into Virginia could get a license from the government or a Vet, good until next rabies vaccination.
- Dangerous dog permits would still be subject to local government approval

## Attachment 7

# Results of 2013 Animal Control Survey

---

Pursuant to Va. code § 3.2-6555, every county and independent city in Virginia must employ an animal control officer, or contract with another locality for animal control services. Annually, each locality is required to complete a survey, known as the Animal Control Survey, distributed by VDACS to supply training and continuing education information to the State Veterinarian. Periodically, additional questions are included in the Animal Control Survey. In 2013, the following question about local mandatory licensing of cats was included. The results of the answers are below.

### ***Does your locality require cats to be licensed?***

130 counties and cities completed the survey, and 129 counties and cities answered this question. Of the 129, 16 cities and 5 counties answered yes to the above question, indicating that their jurisdiction does require cats to be licensed (a total of 21). The locality that did not answer the question was confirmed to NOT require cat licensure in 2016. On 5/12/2016, VDACS personnel verified that 20, not 21, of the localities that answered “yes” to the question do require cats to be licensed. Thus, as of 2013, approximately 15.38% (20/130) of localities in Virginia require licensing for cats. Please be aware that VDACS did not verify that all of the localities that answered “no” in 2013 still do not require licensing for cats.

Virginia cities that require cats to be licensed		Virginia counties that require cats to be licensed
Alexandria	Hopewell	Bath
Bristol	Norfolk	Isle of Wight
Chesapeake	Newport News	Northampton
Colonial Heights	Norton	Roanoke
Covington	Richmond	Smyth
Franklin	Salem	
Galax	Virginia Beach	
Hampton		

**Attachment 8  
Treasurers' Association of Virginia's Draft Companion Animal Licensing Procedures  
Resolution**

**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_**

Offered \_\_\_\_\_

Prefiled \_\_\_\_\_

*Establishing a joint subcommittee to study reforming Virginia's procedures for licensing companion animals. Report.*

-----  
Patrons-- \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
Referred to Committee on \_\_\_\_\_  
-----

WHEREAS, the adoption of legal requirements in every state for vaccination of domestic animals against rabies has resulted in dramatic declines in the incidence of rabies in domestic animals and human exposure to rabies since 1960; and;

WHEREAS, Virginia has statutorily required rabies vaccinations for dogs and cats for more than \_\_\_\_\_ years; and

WHEREAS, Virginia localities are authorized, pursuant to Code of Virginia § 3.2-6524 B, to require residents who own dogs and cats to obtain a local license for such animals; and

WHEREAS, proof of rabies vaccination is required to obtain a local license for a companion animal; and

WHEREAS, in practice, the local licensing requirement provides the principal tool for enforcing the state requirement for vaccination of dogs against rabies; and

WHEREAS, over the past two decades, Virginia has substantially revised its comprehensive animal control laws, and in 2006, adopted a statutory requirement that veterinarians supply a copy of rabies vaccination certificates for domestic animals to the city or county treasurer, as a means of increasing compliance with licensing requirements; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding these actions, the present system for licensing at the local level is cumbersome, does not ensure a high level of vaccination compliance, is plagued by licensing noncompliance, and leaves animal control officers and other public safety officials without access to a statewide data resource regarding animals, rendering animal control efforts more difficult and less effective; be it therefore

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study reforming Virginia's procedures for licensing of companion animals, including examining the feasibility of a statewide licensing database. The joint subcommittee shall have a total membership of 14 members that shall consist of seven legislative members, the

State Veterinarian, and six nonlegislative citizen members. Members shall be appointed as follows: four members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; three members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; the State Veterinarian; three nonlegislative citizen members, including a member or representative of the Virginia Municipal League (VML), a member or representative of the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo), and a member or representative of the Virginia Animal Control Association, each to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; and three nonlegislative citizen members, including a local city or county treasurer, a citizen experienced in animal welfare issues, and a member or representative of the Virginia Veterinary Medicine Association, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. Nonlegislative citizen members of the joint subcommittee shall be citizens of the Commonwealth. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk, nonlegislative citizen members shall only be reimbursed for travel originating and ending within the Commonwealth of Virginia for the purpose of attending meetings. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required. The joint subcommittee shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership, who shall be members of the General Assembly.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall review Virginia's companion animal licensing procedures, and examine the feasibility of establishing a statewide system for recording rabies vaccinations and licensing, and the establishment of a statewide database of licensed animals that is capable of being remotely accessed by animal control officers in the field.

Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the House of Delegates. Legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the joint subcommittee shall be provided by the Division of Legislative Services. Technical assistance shall be provided by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee for this study, upon request.

The joint subcommittee shall be limited to six meetings for the 2016 interim, and the direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$15,000 without approval as set out in this resolution. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required.

No recommendation of the joint subcommittee shall be adopted if a majority of the House members or a majority of the Senate members appointed to the joint subcommittee (i) vote against the recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the joint subcommittee.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2016, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2016 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the joint subcommittee intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations



for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and the report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2016 interim.

## Attachment 9

### 2008 TAV Survey Dog Licenses

LOCALITY:	Regular Licenses			Year	Kennel Licenses			Individual % Chg 06-08	Kennel % Chg 06-08
	2006	2007	2008		2006	2007	2008		
Alleghany County	673	749	1087		21	29	31	61.52%	47.62%
Altavista Town*	0	0	0		0	0	0		
Amelia County	1092	1558	1748		217	190	219	60.07%	0.92%
Amherst County	2025	1930	3784		103	97	95	86.86%	-7.77%
Appomatox County	782	621	1060		64	68	118	35.55%	84.38%
Augusta County	3080	3678	7534		107	118	129	144.61%	20.56%
Bath County	485	501	670		29	30	30	38.14%	3.45%
Bedford, City	267	324	581		1	1	2	117.60%	100.00%
Bedford County	4109	4695	8037		128	156	185	95.60%	44.53%
Bland County	901	844	1137		60	64	55	26.19%	-8.33%
Botetourt County	2229	2856	3138		18	22	20	40.78%	11.11%
Bristol, City	223	290	433		3	4	3	94.17%	0.00%
Buchanan	913	942	1307		34	30	38	43.15%	11.76%
Brunswick County	1796	1673	1900		230	227	254	5.79%	10.43%
Charles City County	276	311	337		135	133	138	22.10%	2.22%
Charlotte County	1368	1382	1625		125	110	110	18.79%	-12.00%
Charlottesville, City	1026	1482	2734		0	0	0	166.47%	
Chesapeake, City	12351	12376	16529		91	77	84	33.83%	-7.69%
Chesterfield County **	6077	7594	14468		209	255	275	138.08%	31.58%
Colonial Heights, City	1437	1354	2244		1	1	1	56.16%	0.00%
Craig County	652	838	1184		20	33	47	81.60%	135.00%
Culpeper County	1321	2385	4534		58	68	72	243.22%	24.14%
Dickenson County	677	680	712		42	42	41	5.17%	-2.38%
Emporia, City	136	130	274		0	0	0	101.47%	
Essex County	974	1218	1219		182	75	74	25.15%	-59.34%
Fairfax, City #	1518	1008	1238		0	0	0	-18.45%	
Fairfax County	43352	45681	76966		0	0	0	77.54%	
Falls church, City	251	347	404		0	0	0	60.96%	
Fauquier County	862	853	2526		69	64	75	193.04%	8.70%
Frederick County	2689	2951	5536		31	30	20	105.88%	-35.48%
Gloucester County	3479	2735	5698		155	155	278	63.78%	
Goochland County	990	1267	1820		112	171	118	83.84%	5.36%
Greensville County	380	500	737		67	62	86	93.95%	28.36%
Halifax County	7203	6346	6380		251	268	264	-11.43%	5.18%
Hampton, City	2037	3247	5789		38	34	52	184.19%	36.84%
Hanover County	10782	14038	16120		328	339	359	49.51%	9.45%
Henry County	1850	1777	3575		63	59	51	93.24%	-19.05%
Highland County	536	446	587		19	22	23	9.51%	21.05%
Hopewell, City	692	516	1718		0	0	0	148.27%	
James City County	1956	1840	3597		25	23	24	83.90%	-4.00%
Isle of wight County	1543	1982	4400		113	139	170	185.16%	50.44%
King William County	925	912	1457		117	126	163	57.51%	39.32%
Lancaster County	1162	1100	1412		25	19	27	21.51%	8.00%
Lee County	373	391	1519		30	28	17	307.24%	-43.33%

Loudoun County	9953	11258	16012	9	36	27	60.88%	200.00%
Louisa County	1457	1498	3190	269	138	187	118.94%	-30.48%
Lunenburg County	358	369	632	58	60	83	76.54%	43.10%
Lynchburg, City	1695	1668	3332	3	3	3	96.58%	0.00%
Martinsville, City	553	501	752	0	0	0	35.99%	
Mecklenburg County	3137	3312	3430	223	231	295	9.34%	32.29%
Middlesex County	1509	1366	1909	79	73	86	26.51%	8.86%
Montgomery County	3794	3975	5921	43	59	63	56.06%	46.51%
Nelson County	727	593	1811	48	32	50	149.11%	4.17%
Norfolk, City			6314	0	0	0	#DIV/0!	
Northumberland County	1551	1576	2173	64	60	85	40.10%	32.81%
Norton, City	62	160	155	0	0	0	150.00%	
Nottaway County	1155	1191	1535	103	95	104	32.90%	0.97%
Orange County	1758	1860	3170	48	52	64	80.32%	33.33%
Patrick County	1107	1023	2231	33	28	53	101.54%	60.61%
Portsmouth, City	2784	2811	4174	0	0	0	49.93%	
Powhatan County	2252	2184	3730	58	63	68	65.63%	17.24%
Prince Edward County	1553	1512	1860	95	93	99	19.77%	4.21%
Prince George County	983	1329	2664	31	120	200	171.01%	545.16%
Prince William County	8563	8675	12079	31	32	27	41.06%	-12.90%
Pulaski County	2006	1939	2668	14	17	18	33.00%	28.57%
Richmond County	472	413	1043	95	116	135	120.97%	42.11%
Roanoke, City	3660	3780	6839	1	2	2	86.86%	100.00%
Roanoke, County	2940	2878	6638	90	90	93	125.78%	3.33%
Rockbridge County	1546	1675	1718	36	49	50	11.13%	38.89%
Rockinghamn County	2609	3053	4318	110	112	135	65.50%	22.73%
Rocky Mount, Town*	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Russell County	310	303	1292	34	40	54	316.77%	58.82%
Scott County	1150	1317	2321	0	0	8	101.83%	
Shenandoah County	2501	2496	4494	28	22	27	79.69%	-3.57%
Smyth County	2879	2970	4818	73	74	76	67.35%	4.11%
Spotsylvania County	3654	4525	7900	25	23	116	116.20%	364.00%
Stafford County	2907	2990	7967	74	69	78	174.06%	5.41%
Suffolk, City	2804	3198	4923	116	123	137	75.57%	18.10%
Surry County	169	187	492	21	26	54	191.12%	157.14%
Sussex County	279	313	580	90	99	117	107.89%	30.00%
Tazewell County	1872	1324	2406	0	0	0	28.53%	
Virginia Beach, City	23762	24937	40429	20	16	27	70.14%	35.00%
Warren County	4741	4536	5915	0	0	0	24.76%	
Washington County	3494	3674	5622	0	0	0	60.90%	
Westmoreland County	603	563	1303	51	52	79	116.09%	54.90%
Winchester, City	543	809	816	0	0	0	50.28%	
Wise County	881	761	1380	5	4	6	56.64%	20.00%
Wythe County	1811	2036	3225	78	110	42	78.08%	-46.15%
Wytheville, Town *	0	0	0	0	0	0		
York County	3746	3861	6137	38	32	34	63.83%	-10.53%
Total	243740	259747	422073	5515	5620	6530	73.17%	18.40%

# Note: licenses sold counted by year for expiration date not date sold.

\* Does not sell dog licenses

\*\* Totals through October for 2008

Date: 1/21/09



## Attachment 10

Per House Joint Resolution 160, ratified by the 2016 General Assembly, the Virginia Department of Health, in cooperation with the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association, animal control officers, local treasurers, humane groups and other partners, is conducting a study of dog licensing procedures in Virginia and would like to ask animal control officers for their feedback in regard to this process. A full list of questions has been included for your review in the event that any answers require further research prior to initiating the survey which should be completed using the link included below. Your feedback by or before **July 1, 2016** would be very much appreciated.

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ACO\\_Licensing\\_Survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ACO_Licensing_Survey)

**1. What county/city jurisdiction do you serve?** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. For dogs with county/city license tags:**

- On average, how many dogs with county/city tags does your locality pick up/shelter per year? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many dogs that you pick up with county/city tags are successfully returned to their owner? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the average length of stay for a dog with a county/city tag in your shelter? \_\_\_\_\_

**3. For dogs without county/city license tags:**

- On average, how many dogs without a county/city tag does your locality pick up/shelter per year? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many dogs that you pick up without county/city tags are successfully returned to their owner? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the average length of stay for a dog without a county/city tag in your shelter? \_\_\_\_\_

**4. What is the cost to your locality for 1 dog to stay in the shelter for 1 night?** \_\_\_\_\_

**5. What does your locality charge for a 1 year county/city dog license for:**

- a neutered/spayed dog? \_\_\_\_\_
- an intact (NOT spayed/neutered) dog? \_\_\_\_\_

**6. How many county/city kennel licenses does your locality sell each year?** \_\_\_\_\_

**7. What does your locality charge for a county/city kennel license?** (Please list all options available)

**8. Do you have microchip scanner?** YES or NO

**9. If you do have a microchip scanner:**

- How many do you have for use in the shelter? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many do you have for use in the field? \_\_\_\_\_

**10. What does your locality do regarding non-compliance with county/city dog licensing?** (Check all that apply)

- Go door to door in search of non-complaint owners
- Go only to homes where there are complaints of noncompliance
- Go to dog parks or other areas where dogs and owners may congregate in search of non-compliant owners
- No action taken to track down non-compliant dog owners
- Assess charges on a dog that is brought in without a county/city license, when claimed by an owner
- Other. Describe \_\_\_\_\_

**11. How is the revenue from county/city dog licensing in your locality typically used?** (Check all that apply)

- Salary and expenses of the animal control officer and necessary staff
- Care and maintenance of the public animal shelter
- Maintenance of a rabies control program
- Payments as a bounty to any person neutering/spaying a dog, up to the amount of one year of the license tax as provided by ordinance
- Payments for compensation as provided in §3.2-6553 (payments for death or injury of livestock and poultry)
- Efforts to promote sterilization of dogs and cats
- Funds are placed in General Fund
- Other. Describe \_\_\_\_\_

**12. On average per month, how many man hours are devoted to the tasks associated with county/city dog licensing in your locality?** \_\_\_\_\_

**13. Do you have direct access to your locality's county/city dog licensing information vs. asking someone at the Treasurer's Office?** YES or NO

**14. How does your locality maintain dog county/city license information?**

- a. Computer program
- b. Paper files
- c. Other. Describe \_\_\_\_\_

**15. How does your locality verify rabies certificate information?**

- a. Computer program
- b. Proof of license
- c. Paper files
- d. Other. Describe \_\_\_\_\_

**16. Do you have access in the field to any of the following? (Check all that apply)**

- a. Computer with access to county databases
- b. Computer with wifi access
- c. Smart phone with wifi access
- d. Smart phone with limited data access
- e. Cell phone or radio only
- f. None of the above. Describe/explain what you do have access to \_\_\_\_\_

**17. Would you be interested in having rabies certificate and county/city dog licensing information from your locality included in a statewide database that could accessed remotely?** a. Yes b. No c. Not sure d. No opinion

**18. Would you be interested in having rabies certificate and county/city dog licensing information from your locality included in a statewide database, even if you could not access it remotely from the field?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure
- d. No opinion

**19. Would you be willing to participate in a statewide database that captured rabies certificate and county/city dog licensing information which animal control officers could access if, as a result, your locality received less money from licensing?** a. Yes b. No c. Not sure

**20. Would you be willing to participate in a statewide database that captured rabies certificate and county/city dog licensing information which animal control officers could access, if all or part of the information contained in this database was exempted from Freedom of Information Act requests?** a. Yes b. No c. Not sure

**20. How would mandatory microchipping of dogs affect your locality? (Check all that apply)**

- a. Save your locality money due to more animals being identified and returned to home, thereby reducing the total number of animal-hours in the shelter
- b. Save your locality time, due to a faster return to owner
- c. Result in less compliance with licensing
- d. Result in greater compliance with licensing
- e. Make no difference in cost
- f. Make no difference in time
- h. Not sure

**21. Please feel free to share any general comments about county/city licensing of dogs:**

---

---

---

---

## Attachment 11

The Virginia Department of Health, in cooperation with the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association, animal control officers, local treasurers, humane groups and other partners, is conducting a study of dog licensing procedures in Virginia and would like to ask veterinarians for their feedback in regard to this process. This survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. Your feedback by July 1, 2016 would be very much appreciated.

1. In what county do you practice or have your practice headquarters? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Approximately how many dogs do you vaccinate for rabies annually? \_\_\_\_\_
3. On average, approximately how many hours per week do you or your staff devote to communicating with/sending to your local treasurer's office information about rabies certificates associated with dogs your practice vaccinates? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Would you be willing to license dogs at the point of vaccination? (Choose any that apply)
  - a. Yes
  - b. Yes, provided there was very little additional administrative time associated with the licensing aspect of the service to my client
  - c. Yes, provided I was compensated for my time
  - d. Yes, provided I did not have to administer any other part of a locality's licensing program
  - e. Yes, provided I did not need to handle or keep track of any local government funds
  - f. No
5. Would you be in favor of the development of a statewide database containing rabies certificate and licensing information that animal control officers could access? (choose any that apply)
  - a. Yes
  - b. Yes, as long as animal control officers found this system useful
  - c. Yes, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly
  - d. Yes, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public
  - e. No
6. Do you offer microchipping as a clinical service through your practice?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
7. Approximately what percentage of your clients use microchips as a form of pet identification?
8. Would you support requiring that all dogs be microchipped?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
9. Would you support a microchip serving as the county or city license, instead of the dog tag?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
10. Please feel free to share any general comments about county/city licensing of dogs:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Attachment 12

The Virginia Department of Health, in cooperation with the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association, animal control officers, local treasurers, humane groups and other partners, is conducting a study of dog licensing procedures in Virginia and would like to ask dog owners for their feedback in regard to this process. This survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. The survey process will continue until July 1, 2016. Your feedback would be very much appreciated. Please circle your answers.

1. What is your county of residence \_\_\_\_\_

2. Are you aware that dogs are required to have a rabies vaccination? YES or NO

3. Are you aware that dogs are required to be licensed by your county or city? YES or NO

4. Is your dog microchipped? YES or NO

5. Would you support requiring all dogs to be microchipped? YES or NO

6. Would you support a microchip serving as your county/city license instead of the county/city tag?  
YES or NO

7. Does the process of first having your dog vaccinated for rabies and then purchasing a county/city license from your local treasurer make it less likely that you will purchase a county/city license?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I thought dogs were automatically licensed when they were vaccinated for rabies
- d. I can buy a county license from my veterinarian after my dog is vaccinated

8. Would you prefer to purchase your county/city license through your veterinarian as opposed to your county/city treasurer?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Yes and I would be willing to pay a nominal fee for this convenience
- d. No, I do not mind purchasing my county/city license elsewhere
- e. I already purchase my county/city license through my veterinarian

9. Would you be willing to have your dog's county/city license and rabies certificate information entered into a statewide database that could be accessed by animal control officers?

- a. Yes
- b. Yes, as long as animal control officers found this system useful
- c. Yes, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly
- d. Yes, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public
- e. No

10. Please feel free to share any general comments about county/city licensing of dogs:

---

---

---

---



## Attachment 13

Per House Joint Resolution 160, ratified by the 2016 General Assembly, the Virginia Department of Health, in cooperation with the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association, animal control officers, local treasurers, humane groups and other partners, is conducting a study of dog licensing procedures in Virginia and would like to ask city and county treasurers for their feedback in regard to this process. A full list of questions has been included for your review in the event that any answers require further research prior to initiating the survey which should be completed using the link included below. Your feedback by or before July 1, 2016 would be very much appreciated.

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Licensing\\_Survey\\_Treasurer](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Licensing_Survey_Treasurer)

1. Please identify your jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_
2. On average, how many county/city licenses for dogs does your locality sell per year? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What does your locality charge for a 1 year county/city dog license for a spayed/neutered dog? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What does your locality charge for a 1 year county/city dog license for a dog that is NOT spayed/neutered?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Does your locality offer multiyear county/city dog licenses?
  - a. Yes, in addition to 1 year licenses we offer 3 year licenses
  - b. Yes, in addition to 1 year licenses we offer 2 and 3 year licenses
  - c. No
  - d. Other. Describe \_\_\_\_\_
6. On average, how many county/city kennel licenses does your locality sell each year? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What does your locality charge for a county/city kennel license? (Please list all options available)  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What is the average total revenue your locality obtains from dog licensing each year? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How is the revenue from dog licensing typically used? (Circle all that apply)
  - a. The salary and expenses of the animal control officer and necessary staff;
  - b. The care and maintenance of a public animal shelter;
  - c. The maintenance of a rabies control program
  - d. Payments as a bounty to any person neutering or spaying a dog up to the amount of one year of the license tax as provided by ordinance
  - e. Payments for compensation as provided in § 3.2-6553 (ie payments for death or injury of livestock and poultry)
  - f. Efforts to promote sterilization of dogs and cats
  - g. Funds just placed in General Fund.
  - h. Other. Describe \_\_\_\_\_
10. What is the average total revenue from dog licensing your locality transfers to the general fund of your locality each year? \_\_\_\_\_
11. On average per month, how many staff hours are devoted to the administrative tasks (eg data entry, data maintenance, license sales, follow up with owners who have not yet purchased a license, other customer service, etc) associated with dog licensing in your locality? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Of the staff activities needed to administer your licensing program, which one consumes the most staff time?
  - a. Data entry and maintenance
  - b. Customer service (e.g, selling licenses and answering questions about/discussing license procedures with members of the general public)
  - c. Follow up with owners who have not purchased a license
  - d. Other intraoffice activities and discussions about licensing
13. Of the staff activities needed to administer your licensing program, which one consumes the most local government funding?
  - a. Data entry and maintenance
  - b. Customer service (e.g, selling licenses and answering questions about/discussing license procedures with members

- of the general public)
- c. Follow up with owners who have not purchased a license
- d. Other intraoffice activities and discussions about licensing

**14. On average per year, what is the total program cost associated with dog licensing in your locality (include management & staff time, postage, envelopes, license tags, software support, etc)?** \_\_\_\_\_

**15. How does your locality maintain dog license information?**

- a. Computer program
- b. Paper files
- c. Other. Describe \_\_\_\_\_

**16. How does your locality maintain rabies certificate information?**

- a. Computer program
- b. Paper files
- c. Other. Describe \_\_\_\_\_

**17. How long do you maintain records associated with dogs licensed in your locality?**

- a. <1 year
- b. 1-5 years
- c. 6-10 years
- d. >10 years

**18. If a computer program is used to maintain rabies and/or dog licensing information, what type of system do you use?**

- a. Not applicable
- b. Enter system information here \_\_\_\_\_

**19. Is the rabies certificate and dog licensing information manually keyed into your computer system or do you have an automated system that assists with data entry?**

- a. Not applicable
- b. Manually keyed
- c. Automated process that assists with data entry (enter specific information about system here) \_\_\_\_\_

**20. What efforts are made if an owner does not present himself in 60 days to buy a license after you have received the rabies certificate information?**

- a. No follow up
- b. One reminder is mailed to the owner
- c. A reminder is mailed to the owner and, if no response within a certain period of time, a second reminder is mailed
- d. Other. Describe \_\_\_\_\_

**21. On average per year, what percentage of dog owners in your locality purchase a license within 60 days of your office receiving a rabies certificate?** \_\_\_\_\_

**22. On average per year, what percentage of owners in your locality purchase a dog license after 60 days have passed from when your office receives a rabies certificate?** \_\_\_\_\_

**23. Would you be willing to have veterinarians in your locality license dogs when they vaccinate them for rabies and supply them with the necessary tags?** a. Yes      b. No      c. Not sure

**24. Would you be willing to pay veterinarians in your locality to license dogs when they vaccinate them for rabies?**  
a. Yes      b. No      c. Not sure

**25. Would your locality be interested in having rabies certificate and licensing information from your locality included in a statewide database that could be accessed remotely by animal control officers?**

- a. Yes                      b. No                      c. Not sure

**26. Would your locality want the option of opting out of a statewide database that could be accessed remotely by animal control officers?**

- a. Yes                      b. No                      c. Not sure

**27. Would you be willing to participate in a statewide database that captured rabies certificate and licensing information that animal control officers could access if the administrative time associated with processing licensing and rabies certificate information was reduced for your office?**

- a. Yes                      b. No                      c. Not sure

**28. Would you be willing to participate in a statewide database that captured rabies certificate and licensing information that animal control officers could access if, as a result, your locality received less or no money from dog licensing?**

- a. Yes                      b. No                      c. Not sure

**29. Would you be willing to participate in a statewide database that captured rabies certificate and licensing information that animal control officers could access if all or part of the information contained in this database was exempted from Freedom of Information Act requests?**

- a. Yes                      b. No                      c. Not sure

**30. Would you be willing to participate in a statewide database that captured rabies certificate and licensing information that animal control officers could access if your office or locality was required to contribute funding for the maintenance of such as system?**

- a. Yes  
b. Yes, provided our contribution was less than our current cost of administering a licensing program  
c. No  
d. Not sure

**31. Would your locality be interested in transferring all of the responsibility of licensing to another entity such as a state government agency?**

- Yes    or    No

**32. Would your locality need to modify any existing local ordinances related to licensing if another entity such as a state government agency assumed the complete responsibility of licensing?**

- a. Yes                      b. No                      c. Not sure

**33. What aspect of a statewide database that captured rabies certificate and licensing information that animal control officers could access would prevent you from participating or be a nonstarter in regard to participation? (circle all that apply)**

- a. Contributing any funds to such a system  
b. No ability to exempt all or part of the information captured in this system from being requested via the Freedom of Information Act  
c. Loss of any licensing revenue  
d. No aspect of a statewide database would be so concerning that my office would not want to participate  
e. Other. Describe \_\_\_\_\_

**Please feel free to share any general comments about county/city licensing of dogs:**

---

---

---

---

## **Attachment 14**

Microchip Technology Panel  
Companion Animal Licensing Study  
Companion Animal Licensing Procedures Work Group Meeting, July 18, 2016

Tom Troiano  
SmartTag  
600 Meadowlands Parkway, Suite 131  
Secaucus, NJ 07094

Miriam Laibson  
Michelson Found Animals Foundation  
P.O. Box 66370  
Los Angeles, CA 90066

Mary Metzner  
Avid Identification Systems, Inc  
3125 Lemay Ferry Rd  
St Louis, MO 63125

Tom Sharp  
AKCReunite  
8051 Arco Corporate Drive, Suite 200  
Raleigh, NC 27617

John Corgan  
HomeAgain  
c/o Merck Animal Health  
2 Giralda Farms  
Madison, NJ 07940

CherylAnn Fernandes  
Shelter Care Representative  
Datamars, Inc.  
250 West Cummings Park  
Woburn MA 01801

Jon J. Dyer  
911PetChip  
9601 Owensmouth Ave, Suite 17  
Chatsworth, CA 91311

## LICENSURE

### Attachment 15

#### § 21.51. Lifetime dog license issuance.

(a) *Eligibility.* The owner of a dog 3 months of age or older may apply to the county treasurer or agent, on a form prescribed by the Department for a lifetime license.

(b) *Lifetime license requirement.* A lifetime license shall consist of the following:

(1) A lifetime license number issued by the county treasurer or agent and a tag bearing that lifetime license number.

(2) A tattoo or microchip permanently identifying the dog.

(c) *Permanent identification requirement.* A person applying for a lifetime license shall choose either a tattoo or the implantation of a microchip as the means of permanent identification for the dog. The person applying for a lifetime license is responsible for having the dog tattooed or a microchip implanted to permanently identify the dog. Application of a tattoo or implantation of a microchip must be done in a manner consistent with the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act and 49 Pa. Code Chapter 31 (relating to State Board of Veterinary Medicine).

(d) *Tattoo as permanent identification.* If the applicant chooses to have the dog tattooed as a means of permanent identification, the following rules and procedures apply:

(1) Prior to having the dog tattooed, the dog owner shall obtain and complete a lifetime license application from the county treasurer or agent of his respective county. The dog owner shall obtain and complete the lifetime license application in person or by mail and shall return the completed lifetime license application to the county treasurer or agent. The dog owner shall include the appropriate fees, set forth on the lifetime license application and in sections 200(b) and 201(b) of the act (3 P. S. § § 459-200(b) and 459-201(b)), with the completed lifetime license application.

(2) Upon receipt of a completed lifetime license application the county treasurer or agent shall follow the procedures in subsection (g). If the lifetime license application is determined to be complete, the county treasurer or agent shall issue a lifetime license number as set forth in subsection (g) and issue a verification of permanent identification form, prescribed by the Department.

(3) Upon receiving the lifetime license number and verification of permanent identification form issued by the county treasurer or agent, the dog owner shall have the dog tattooed in accordance with this chapter.

(4) The tattoo number applied to the dog must be the same number as the lifetime license number issued by the county treasurer or agent.

(5) The tattoo must be applied on the right hind leg on the inner part of the upper thigh of the dog. The dog owner may have the letters "PA" tattooed on the dog immediately preceding the tattoo number.

(6) The dog owner and the person applying the tattoo shall complete, date and sign the verification of permanent identification form for the dog receiving the tattoo and return it to the county treasurer or agent that issued the lifetime license number and tag. The verification of permanent identification form must set forth the exact number tattooed on the dog, identify the dog by breed and delineate the dog's age, sex, color and markings and whether the dog has been spayed or neutered. In addition, it must contain the name, address and phone number of the dog's owner and the name, address and phone number of the person applying the tattoo.

(7) The dog owner shall have 30 days from receipt of a lifetime license number and verification of permanent identification form to have the dog tattooed and return the verification of permanent identification form to the county treasurer or agent that issued the lifetime license number.

(8) Upon receiving the completed verification of permanent identification form, the county treasurer or agent shall issue the lifetime license and tag to the dog owner.

(9) A dog owner who fails to have the dog tattooed and return the completed verification of permanent identification form to the issuing county treasurer or agent within 30 days after receiving a lifetime license number and verification of permanent identification form shall be in violation of the licensure provisions of the act and this chapter and subject to the penalties prescribed therein. In addition, the lifetime license number and tag shall be void. The issuing county treasurer or agent shall return the lifetime license fee to the dog owner and record and report the noncompliance to the Department as set forth in § 21.52 (relating to recordkeeping for lifetime dog licenses). The issuing county treasurer and, if applicable, the agent shall retain the applicable issuance fees, set forth in section 200(b) of the act.

(e) *Microchip as permanent identification.* If the applicant chooses to have a microchip implanted in the dog as a means of permanent identification, the following rules and procedures apply:

(1) The dog owner shall have a microchip implanted in the dog in a manner consistent with the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act and 49 Pa. Code Chapter 31. The microchip implanted shall be of a type consistent with the definition of "microchip" in § 21.1 (relating to definitions) and shall be implanted in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.

(2) The dog owner shall obtain and complete both a lifetime license application and a

verification of permanent identification form prescribed by the Department.

(3) The dog owner shall obtain a lifetime license application from the county treasurer or agent of his respective county. The dog owner may obtain the lifetime license application in person or by mail.

(4) The lifetime license application may be obtained and completed either prior to or after implantation of a microchip in the dog. The application and a verification of permanent identification form must be completed and signed prior to the issuance of a lifetime license and tag. The final packet submitted by the dog owner to the county treasurer or agent must contain the properly completed lifetime license application and verification of permanent identification form and the appropriate fees, set forth on the lifetime license application and in sections 200(b) and 201(b) of the act.

(5) If the dog owner obtains a lifetime license application prior to having a microchip implanted in the dog, the dog owner may request and the county treasurer or agent shall issue a verification of permanent identification form along with the lifetime license application. If the dog owner has not yet applied for a lifetime license prior to implantation of the microchip, the licensed veterinarian implanting the microchip shall supply the verification of permanent identification form. A licensed veterinarian shall obtain the verification form from the Department. When the dog owner, consistent with the provisions of the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act and 49 Pa. Code Chapter 31, personally implants the microchip in his own dog the dog owner may obtain the verification of permanent identification form from the county treasurer or agent and shall fill out the required information.

(6) The dog owner and when the dog owner does not implant the microchip himself but, instead has a licensed veterinarian or person authorized to implant a microchip consistent with the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act and 49 Pa. Code Chapter 31 implant the microchip, the licensed veterinarian shall complete, date and sign the verification of permanent identification form for the dog in which the microchip is implanted. The completed verification of permanent identification form must set forth the identifying number of the microchip implanted, identify the dog by breed and delineate the dog's age, sex, color and markings and whether the dog has been spayed or neutered. In addition, it shall contain the name, address and phone number of the dog's owner and when a licensed veterinarian or person authorized to implant a microchip consistent with the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act and 49 Pa. Code Chapter 31 has implanted the microchip, the name, business address and phone number of the licensed veterinarian. If a licensed veterinarian or person authorized to implant a microchip consistent with the Veterinary Medicine Practice Act and 49 Pa. Code Chapter 31 implants the microchip, the licensed veterinarian shall set forth his veterinary practice license number on the verification of permanent identification form.

(7) The dog owner shall complete the lifetime license application and take or mail the completed lifetime license application and verification of permanent identification form to the county treasurer or agent of his respective county.

(8) Upon receiving a properly completed lifetime license application and verification of

permanent identification form, as well as the appropriate fees, as set forth on the lifetime license application and in sections 200(b) and 201(b) of the act, the county treasurer or agent shall issue a lifetime license number and tag as set forth in subsection (g).

(9) A dog owner who fails to have the dog microchipped and return the completed verification of permanent identification form to the issuing county treasurer or agent within 30 days after receiving a lifetime license number and verification of permanent identification form shall be in violation of the licensure provisions of the act and this chapter and subject to the penalties prescribed therein. In addition, the lifetime license number and tag shall be void. The issuing county treasurer or agent shall return the lifetime license fee to the dog owner and record and report the noncompliance to the Department as set forth in § 21.52. The issuing county treasurer and, if applicable, the agent shall retain the applicable issuance fees, set forth in section 200(b) of the act.

(f) *Dog previously microchipped.* If a person has already had a microchip implanted in his dog and seeks to obtain a lifetime license for the dog, the applicant is not required to have a new microchip implanted in the dog as a means of permanent identification. Instead the applicant shall:

(1) Obtain and complete both a lifetime license application and a verification of permanent identification form prescribed by the Department. The lifetime license application may be obtained and completed either prior or subsequent to having the dog scanned for a microchip as set forth in this subsection. The verification of permanent identification form must be filled out at the same time the dog is scanned.

(2) Have a licensed veterinarian or kennel owner scan the dog to assure the microchip has been properly implanted and to obtain the identifying number of the microchip.

(3) The dog owner and the licensed veterinarian or kennel owner shall complete, date and sign the verification of permanent identification form for the dog in which the microchip was scanned. The verification of permanent identification form must set forth the identifying number of the microchip scanned, identify the dog by breed and delineate the dog's age, sex, color and markings and whether the dog has been spayed or neutered. In addition, it must contain the name, address and phone number of the dog's owner and the name, business address and phone number of the person scanning the microchip number. If a veterinarian is involved, the veterinarian shall set forth his veterinary practice license number on the verification of permanent identification form.

(4) The dog owner or licensed veterinarian may obtain a verification of permanent identification form.

(i) The dog owner may obtain a verification of permanent identification form, along with a lifetime license application, from the county treasurer or agent in his respective county of residence prior to scanning of the dog for an existing microchip. If the dog owner takes his dog to a licensed veterinarian for implantation of the microchip and has not yet applied for a lifetime license, the licensed veterinarian shall supply the verification of permanent identification form.



(ii) A licensed veterinarian shall obtain verification of permanent identification forms from the Department.

(5) The dog owner shall deliver to the county treasurer or agent, in person or by mail, the properly completed lifetime license application and verification of permanent identification form and the appropriate fees, as set forth on the lifetime license application and in sections 200(b) and 201(b) of the act.

(6) Upon receiving a properly completed lifetime license application and verification of permanent identification form, as well as the appropriate fees, as set forth on the lifetime license application and in sections 200(b) and 201(b) of the act, the county treasurer or agent shall issue a lifetime license number and tag as set forth in subsection (g).

(g) *County treasurer or agent procedure for issuance of lifetime license.*

(1) *General.*

(i) *One lifetime license per lifetime license application.* A lifetime license application must be completed for each dog for which a lifetime license is requested. The county treasurer or agent shall issue only one lifetime license and tag for each properly completed lifetime license application. The county treasurer or agent shall collect the applicable fees, as set forth on the lifetime license application and in sections 200(b) and 201(b) of the act, for the lifetime license before issuing the lifetime license and tag.

(ii) *Assignment of lifetime license number.* The lifetime license must list a number. The county treasurer or agent shall assign a lifetime license number for each dog for which a properly completed lifetime license application has been submitted and approved. The county treasurer or agent shall issue the lifetime license number on the lifetime license certificate and tag. The number shall be at least six digits with the first two digits designating the county. For example, Adams County number must begin with 01; York County, with 67. The county number must be followed by at least four digits assigned by the county treasurer or his agent. For example, the lifetime license number assigned by York County for the first dog licensed would be 670001.

(2) *Tattoo procedure.* If the dog owner intends to tattoo the dog as the means of permanent identification the dog owner shall complete a lifetime license application and pay the applicable fees, as set forth on the lifetime license application and in sections 200(b) and 201(b) of the act, prior to the county treasurer or agent issuing a lifetime license and tag. The county treasurer or agent, upon receipt of a properly completed lifetime license application and the applicable fees, shall complete the lifetime license from information on the lifetime license application. The county treasurer or agent shall assign a lifetime license number as set forth in paragraph (1)(ii) and issue a verification of permanent identification form, prescribed by the Department, to the dog owner. The dog owner shall have 30 days from receipt of a lifetime license number and verification of permanent identification form to have the dog tattooed and return a completed verification of permanent identification form to the issuing county treasurer or agent. If the dog owner fails to return the verification of permanent identification form within the 30-day time period, the issuing county treasurer or agent shall void the lifetime license, refund the lifetime license fee, record and designate the

lifetime license number as void and report the noncompliance to the Department as set forth in § 21.52. The issuing county treasurer and, if applicable, the agent shall retain the applicable issuance fees, set forth in section 200(b) of the act. The lifetime license number may not be reissued to future applicants other than the original applicant.

(3) *Microchip procedure.* If the dog owner intends to use a microchip as the means of permanent identification, the dog owner may have a microchip implanted in the dog prior to completing an application for a lifetime license. The dog owner shall complete a lifetime license application and verification of permanent identification form and pay the applicable fees, set forth on the lifetime license application and in sections 200(b) and 201(b) of the act, prior to the county treasurer or agent issuing the lifetime license and tag. The county treasurer or agent shall, upon request of the dog owner, issue a lifetime license application and a verification of permanent identification form. Upon receiving a completed lifetime license application, verification of permanent identification form and the applicable fees, the county treasurer or agent shall complete the lifetime license from information on the lifetime license application and verification of permanent identification form, assign a lifetime license number as set forth in paragraph (1)(ii) and issue the lifetime license and tag. The county treasurer or agent may not issue a lifetime license and tag until the dog owner has properly completed both the lifetime license application and the verification of permanent identification form. The county treasurer or agent shall record both the lifetime license number issued and the microchip number set forth on the verification of permanent identification form. The dog owner shall have 30 days from receipt of a verification of permanent identification form to have a microchip implanted in the dog or have a currently microchipped dog scanned and return a completed verification of permanent identification form to the issuing county treasurer or agent. If the dog owner fails to return the verification of permanent identification form within the 30 day time period, the issuing county treasurer or agent shall void the lifetime license, refund the lifetime license fee, record and designate the lifetime license number as void and report the noncompliance to the Department as set forth in § 21.52. The issuing county treasurer and, if applicable, the agent shall retain the applicable issuance fees, set forth in section 200(b) of the act. The lifetime license number may not be reissued to future applicants other than the original applicant.

#### Authority

The provisions of this § 21.51 amended under sections 101 and 201 of the Dog Law (3 P. S. § § 459-101 and 459-201); and Articles II—IX-A of the Dog Law (3 P. S. § § 459-201—459-219, 459-301—459-305, 459-401, 459-402, 459-501, 459-502, 459-501-A—459-507-A, 459-601—459-603, 459-701—459-706, 459-801, 459-802, 459-901—459-907 and 459-901-A—459-911-A).

#### Source

The provisions of this § 21.51 amended March 14, 2003, effective March 15, 2003, 33 Pa.B. 1329; amended November 5, 2004, effective November 6, 2004, 34 Pa.B. 6019. Immediately preceding text appears at serial pages (296112) to (297117).

No part of the information on this site may be reproduced for profit or sold for profit.

This material has been drawn directly from the official Pennsylvania Code full text database. Due to the limitations of HTML or differences in display capabilities of different browsers, this version may differ slightly from the official printed version.

Pennsylvania Dog Law Chapter 8 § 459-201. Applications for dog licenses; fees; penalties (b)

(b) Lifetime license.--The owner of any dog three months of age or older which has been permanently identified may apply to the county treasurer of his respective county or an agent under section 200(a), on a form prescribed by the department for a lifetime license for such a dog. Except as otherwise provided in this act, a dog which has been issued a lifetime license shall be required to wear a license tag. The application and license certificate shall state the breed, sex, age, color and markings of such dog, the type and number of permanent identification and the name, address and telephone number of the owner. The application shall be accompanied by the appropriate license fee as follows:

- (1) For each neutered male dog and for each spayed female dog for which the certificate of a licensed doctor of veterinary medicine or the affidavit of the owner is produced, the lifetime license fee shall be \$30.
- (2) For all other male and female dogs, the license fee shall be \$50.
- (3) For Pennsylvania residents 65 years of age or older and persons with disabilities:
  - (i) For each neutered male dog and for each spayed female dog for which the certificate of a licensed doctor of veterinary medicine or the affidavit of the owner is produced, the license fee shall be \$20.
  - (ii) For all other male and female dogs, the license fee shall be \$30.
- (4) Compensation, if collected under section 200(b), shall also be paid by all applicants, regardless of age or disability. A dog which has been issued a lifetime license prior to the effective date of this act shall not be subject to fees under this subsection.

Sec. 5-100. - Dog and cat microchipping required.

- (a) The owner or keeper of any dog or cat must have the animal implanted with a registered microchip before the animal attains four (4) months of age. A dog or cat is exempt from this requirement if the dog or cat is determined to be medically unsuitable for microchipping by a licensed veterinarian in writing. If a dog or cat is determined to be medically unsuitable for microchipping, the owner shall have the dog or cat permanently marked with an identifying tattoo by a licensed veterinarian. Proof of medical unsuitability for microchipping along with the identifying tattoo number and owner's or keeper's name, address and telephone number must be provided to the Department within thirty (30) days of tattooing. If there is a change in contact information, the owner or keeper of a tattooed dog or cat shall update contact information with the Department within thirty (30) days of the date of the change in contact information. If there is a change in ownership of a tattooed dog or cat, the initial owner or keeper shall be responsible for notifying the Department of the change within thirty (30) days of the date of change in ownership. The new owner or keeper shall be responsible for providing the Department with the new owner's or keeper's name, address and telephone number within thirty (30) days after the change in ownership.
- (b) It is a defense to prosecution under this section that:
- (1) The dog or cat owner is a nonresident of this city and is keeping the subject pet in the city for fewer than sixty (60) days;
  - (2) The dog or cat owner has been a resident of this city for fewer than thirty (30) days; or
  - (3) The dog or cat had been abandoned or lost and the temporary owner has had the dog or cat for fewer than thirty (30) days.

(Ord. No. 2010-06-17-0555, § 1, 6-17-10; Ord. No. 2015-04-30-0354, § 2, 4-30-15)

Sec. 5-102. - Maintaining current microchip registration.

- (a) The owner or keeper of a dog or cat shall maintain current registration with a microchip registration company.
- (b) If there is a change in contact information of an owner or keeper of a registered microchipped dog or cat, the owner or keeper shall update contact information, including new address or telephone number, with the microchip registration company within thirty (30) days of the date of the change in contact information.
- (c) If there is a change in ownership of a registered dog or cat, the initial owner or keeper shall be responsible for ensuring that the microchip is no longer registered in the initial owner's or keeper's name within thirty (30) days of the date of change in ownership. The new owner or

keeper shall be responsible for re-registering the microchip to include any new address and telephone number and have the registration information transferred to the new owner's or keeper's name within thirty (30) days after the change in ownership.

(Ord. No. 2010-06-17-0555, § 1, 6-17-10; Ord. No. 2015-04-30-0354, § 2, 4-30-15)

**Editor's note—** Ord. No. 2015-04-30-0354, § 2, adopted April 30, 2015, repealed the former Sec. 5-102 and enacted a new Sec. 5-102 as set out herein. The former Sec. 5-102 pertained to issuance of pet licenses and derived from Ord. No. 2010-06-17-0555, § 1, adopted June 17, 2010.

## Mandatory chip programs

Thanks for the email... here is what I have so far.... It is a working list that gets added to all the time...plus the stuff folks posted on the facebook page might not be in this list.

As for your inquiry about jurisdictions/municipalities that use microchipping as part of or to replace the traditional yearly dog license, here are some of my findings:

1. Pinal County AZ is currently investigating this option.
2. Here is an article for City of Mountain View CA:  
<http://mv-voice.com/news/2013/08/26/public-meeting-on-controversial-animal-control-ordinance>
3. Wes Valley City UT gives a price reduction for chipped dogs
4. City of Fayetteville NC  
92.20 Microchipping and Registration Required  
The owner or harbored of any dog or cat four (4) months old or older living in the City must have an RFID microchip implanted in their dog or cat. The RFID number must be registered with the City's Animal Services Division within thirty (30) days of the animal being brought into the City. The identifying RFID microchip number must be registered with the City Animal Services Division within thirty (30) days of the cat or dog being brought into the City or within thirty (30) days of the dog or cat reaching four (4) months of age. At all times, the owner or harbored of a dog or cat living in the City must maintain up-to-date contact information, including address and telephone number, with the City Animal Services Division. The fee for any City performed RFID microchip implant shall be \$20.00.
5. Milton, Ontario, Canada offers discounted cost of chipped dogs
6. Queensland Australia Brisbane—they link the chip number to their annual council rego and still issue a council rego tag. Details against the chip remain the owners responsibility to manage.
7. FL Keys SPCA offers discounted license for microchipped animals.
8. State of IL
9. Artesia NM ask for Harry Bailey
10. Hobbs NM
11. Whitcha Kansas
12. MADACC shelter in Milwaukee WI
13. Toledo Area Humane Society in OH

14. Polk County in FL
15. Clovis, NM
16. Tallahassee Animal services
17. Animal Friends PA
18. Brevard County Sherriff
19. Davis County AC in Utah
20. Washington County AC in Oregon
21. Manatee County in FL
22. Macomb County AC in Michigan
23. HAWS in Waukesha WI

## **United States**

### **Arizona**

Arizona animal statutes provides that an impounded dog or cat shall not be released to its owner from the pound unless the dog or cat receives an implantable microchip for the purpose of identification.  
(<http://www.animallaw.info>)

### **Arkansas**

A dog or cat owner may obtain a lifetime dog or cat license if the animal has a microchip implant.  
(Annual licenses do not require dogs or cats to have a microchip implant.)  
([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusarodeurekasprings\\_northlittlerock.htm#northlittlerock](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusarodeurekasprings_northlittlerock.htm#northlittlerock))

### **Colorado**

The court shall order any owner of a dangerous dog to have the animal implanted with a microchip.  
[http://www.state.co.us/gov\\_dir/leg\\_dir/olls/sl2004a/sl\\_370.htm](http://www.state.co.us/gov_dir/leg_dir/olls/sl2004a/sl_370.htm)

### **Florida**

#### ***Miami-Dade County Ordinances***

All cat and dogs sold in the county must be implanted with a microchip before the sale.  
([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusflodmiamidadecounty\\_sarasota.htm#sarasota](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusflodmiamidadecounty_sarasota.htm#sarasota))

### **Georgia**

#### ***Savannah, Georgia***

Dogs classified as dangerous or potentially dangerous are required to be implanted with a microchip.  
([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusgaodlincolncounty\\_savannah.htm](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusgaodlincolncounty_savannah.htm))

### **Hawaii**

#### ***Honolulu and Maui County Statutes***

Dangerous dogs are required to be microchipped.  
([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stushiodhonolulu\\_maiui.htm](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stushiodhonolulu_maiui.htm))

### **Illinois**

#### ***West's Smith-Hurd***

According to the Illinois Animal Welfare Act a shelter or animal control agency shall not adopt out a cat



or dog if it has not been microchipped.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusilstch225\\_605\\_1\\_22.htm](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusilstch225_605_1_22.htm))

#### **Chicago**

Animals declared to be dangerous must be implanted with a microchip.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusilodchicago\\_hillside.htm#s50](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusilodchicago_hillside.htm#s50))

#### **Indiana**

##### **Indianapolis**

Impounded dogs and cats must be microchipped prior to being returned to the owner. Crime prevention dogs are also required to be microchipped.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusinodindianapolis\\_terrehaute.htm#terre](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusinodindianapolis_terrehaute.htm#terre))

#### **Kansas**

Each person who possesses a dangerous "regulated" animal must have the animal microchipped. The local animal control authority must be notified regarding the animal's microchip number and microchip manufacturer.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusksst32\\_1301\\_1312.htm](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusksst32_1301_1312.htm))

#### **Concordia**

Owners, keepers, harborers or possessors of dangerous dogs must have the animal microchipped and provide proof to the city clerk that a microchip has been implanted in the animal.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusksodconcordia\\_manhattan.htm](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusksodconcordia_manhattan.htm))

#### **Kentucky**

##### **Lexington-Fayette Ordinances**

An adoption agency must microchip an animal before adoption.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stuskyodgeorgetown\\_lexington.htm](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stuskyodgeorgetown_lexington.htm))

#### **Maine**

According to the Maine statutes the court may order restriction on dangerous dogs, one of which includes permanent identification of the dog by tattoo, microchip or any other means directed by the court.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusme7msra3951\\_53.htm](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusme7msra3951_53.htm))

Maine statutes direct the commissioner to establish rules for permanent identification of all wolf hybrids by using a tattoo, microchip or any other method determined by the commissioner.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusmest3401\\_4162.htm](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusmest3401_4162.htm))

#### **Michigan**

The owner of a wolf-dog cross must have the animal identified with an implantable microchip.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusmi287\\_1001.htm](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusmi287_1001.htm))

The owner of a large carnivore (big cats and bears) shall have the animal identified with a microchip implant.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusmi287\\_1101.htm](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusmi287_1101.htm))

#### **Minnesota**

Persons who possess a "regulated" animal must have the animal microchipped. The chip number and the name of the microchip manufacturer must be provided to the local animal control authority.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusmnst346\\_01\\_347\\_56.htm#s347\\_515](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusmnst346_01_347_56.htm#s347_515))

##### **Chanhassen and Minneapolis Animal Control Ordinances**

Dogs declared as being dangerous must be implanted with a microchip. The microchip number and manufacturer of the microchip must be provided to the animal control agency.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusmndochanhassen\\_minneapolis.htm](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusmndochanhassen_minneapolis.htm))

#### **Missouri**

##### **Kansas City**

In order to register a dangerous or potentially dangerous dog, it must be implanted with a microchip.  
([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusmoodkansascity\\_springfield.htm#springfield](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusmoodkansascity_springfield.htm#springfield))

#### **Nebraska**

When a dog is declared as dangerous it must be implanted with a microchip within the next thirty days. Once the procedure is done, proof of the procedure and microchip identification number shall be provided to the animal control authority.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusnest54\\_617\\_624.htm](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusnest54_617_624.htm))

#### **Nevada**

##### ***Las Vegas and Reno***

Dangerous animals must be microchipped. Owners and keepers of wild animals (permit required) must have the animal implanted with a microchip.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusnvodlasvegas\\_reno.htm#reno](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusnvodlasvegas_reno.htm#reno))

#### **New Mexico**

Dangerous and potentially dangerous dogs must be chipped.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusnmst77\\_1\\_1\\_19.htm](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusnmst77_1_1_19.htm))

#### **New York**

If a dog is proven to be dangerous, the judge or justice shall order the microchipping of the dog..

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusnyagri\\_mkts\\_121.htm](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusnyagri_mkts_121.htm))

#### **Oregon**

A dog that is not put to death because of killing, wounding, injuring or chasing livestock shall be implanted with an identifying microchip.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusorst433\\_340\\_609\\_994.htm#s609\\_168](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusorst433_340_609_994.htm#s609_168))

#### **South Dakota**

##### ***City of Sioux Falls Ordinances***

An animal declared vicious must be permanently identified with an implantable microchip.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stussdodaberdeen\\_siouxfalls.htm#aberdeen](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stussdodaberdeen_siouxfalls.htm#aberdeen))

#### **Utah**

##### ***Salt Lake City***

Dangerous or vicious dogs must be microchipped. The chip number must be registered with the division.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusutodmoab\\_saltlakecity.htm#saltlakecity](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusutodmoab_saltlakecity.htm#saltlakecity))

If an animal is impounded two or more times without wearing an identification tag, the owner may be required to have the animal microchipped.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusutodmoab\\_saltlakecity.htm#saltlakecity](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusutodmoab_saltlakecity.htm#saltlakecity))

Guard dogs must be microchipped.

([http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusutodmoab\\_saltlakecity.htm#saltlakecity](http://www.animallaw.info/statutes/stusutodmoab_saltlakecity.htm#saltlakecity))

---

***\*\*Please note: Many animal shelters in the United States will not allow a pet to be adopted unless it has a microchip implant. Also, it appears that some U.S. military bases require pets to be microchipped.***  
(<http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0815/p01s04-usmi.html>)

---

This a work in progress list. I am still gathering data, but this is a good start.

My company, Datamars, is interested in any opportunities where we can be part of a discussion panel to see how microchipping can help enhance dog license programs... so if you want to work on anything as part of a working group, let me know.

# Richmond knows you have a dog now and wants you to license it

BY NED OLIVER  
Richmond Times-Dispatch

For a long time, Richmond has required that cats and dogs be licensed with the city at a cost of \$10 per year. And for a long time, the city has been fairly lax about enforcing it.

As a result, Richmond, a city of 214,000 people, sold 1,898 dog and cat licenses in 2014 — a figure that would make the city the least pet-friendly place in the country if it truly was representative of the number

of animals living here. “Really it was just an honor system in the past,” said Christie C. Peters, director of the city’s Department of Animal Care and Control. “Unless Animal Control was in your home or someone complained about you, we really didn’t enforce it.”



That’s why some residents have been surprised during the past two weeks to receive personalized notices for the first time requesting they register their animals. Peters’ department has sent out about 11,000 of them as it



DANIEL SANGJIB MIN/TIMES-DISPATCH  
**Kelsey Emond of Richmond (center) watches as her dog, Obi (black dog at right), plays with other dogs at Barker Field in Richmond.**

tries to catch up on a backlog of rabies vaccination notices from area veterinarians. Those are documents that state law requires the vets share with

PETS, Page A8

## Pets

From Page A1

localities but which, in the city’s case, until recently had languished in the treasurer’s office.

Richmond’s treasurer’s office, unlike the counties, has no responsibility over the city’s finances.

“I don’t know what was happening before, but it was not a large effort that would in any way account for the number of pets in the city of Richmond,” Peters said.

She estimated that 50,000 dogs and cats live in the city.

Peters said progress toward licensing more animals has been incremental since she was hired in 2013. The department took over the licensing functions in full last year and got the number up to 3,429 after it included a notice about the requirement in city utility bills.

Licenses are sold for each calendar year, and one month into 2016 the city already is past the 1,000 mark with mail bags full of more responses waiting in her office to be



SHELBY LUM/TIMES-DISPATCH  
**Linda Michel walks her dog, Charlotte, down the center of Monument Avenue near Strawberry Street in Richmond.**

processed. The city still has a way to go to catch up to its immediate neighbors. Henrico County, which requires only dogs to be licensed, sold 21,971 tags last year, according to a spokesman. In Chester-

field, a spokeswoman said 10,814 dog tags were sold in 2015.

Peters said money from the fees goes straight to her department and will be used for such things as veterinary care of animals in the city shelter; spaying

and neutering operations; and training for animal control officers.

She acknowledged some residents have been confused since it’s the first time they’ve been asked to register pets but that most residents have

seemed happy to comply.

“It’s a great way to make sure you’re in compliance and also supporting your local shelter,” she said.

noliver@timesdispatch.com  
(804) 649-6580  
Twitter: @nedoliver

## Attachment 17

# TREASURER'S ASSOCIATION OF VIRGINIA

## DOG LICENSING

The Treasurer's Association of Virginia initiated the request for this study. Our daily interaction with dog licensing has created a unique perspective. We felt that in the age of automation and high rabies vaccination compliance, it was time for a fresh look at the entire licensing process. Our suggestions attempt to be sensitive to the many groups touched by the animal vaccination & licensing process. This includes, Animal Control, VDACS, Veterinarians, local governments, the numerous animal groups, and especially our citizens.

House Joint Resolution No. 160 states, "the Virginia Department of Health shall review Virginia's companion animal licensing procedures and assess the feasibility of establishing a statewide system for recording rabies vaccinations & licensing...". Local treasurers feel that a statewide system is one part of this study, but there are other key issues to discuss. Per Resolution No. 160, and the ideas presented to date by this committee, the following topics are highlighted in this document:

- Statewide system/registry
- Micro-chipping of all dogs
- Allowing rabies vaccinations to be the license, and/or allowing localities to issue free licenses

## STATEWIDE DATABASE/REGISTRY

A central registry could be "loaded" by the veterinarians, the State, local governments or even a 3<sup>rd</sup> party. Other than original data entry, this should be highly automated using electronic file transfers and scanning, not keypunching.

The cost of any changes need to be held to a minimum, especially anything passed on to the public. Any recommendations from this committee containing cost increases to the State, local governments or the public only serve to make changes harder to achieve.

Treasurers recognize that the Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Virginia Animal Control Association members would be the key users of a statewide registry. Citizens rarely call a treasurer's office when they find a lost dog. The local Treasurers see an option for a State-wide registry from the rabies certificates, or licenses, issued at the veterinarians. This would be the only time information is keypunched. Forms could be received electronically or scanned at the local or state level, or by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendor.

License fees, if needed at all, could actually be set quite low in that localities would not have as many expenses. We estimate 700,000 dogs are vaccinated annually. If funding is an issue, a license tax would could be split between veterinarians, local and State governments. We recommend no higher than \$5, hopefully less. Most of the public would save money in that many of these fees would be paying for a 3 year license, basically the length of the rabies inoculation. Special rules would have to continue to apply to kennels and dangerous dogs.

### **MICRO-CHIPPING OF ALL DOGS**

On the surface, requiring a micro-chip for all dogs would appear to be a state-of-the-art idea and would help Animal Control Officers. However, due to the possible added costs to the dog owner (even if minimal), loss of a revenue source to veterinarians, and the public reaction to this idea so far (survey results not completed yet), the local Treasurers would like to see micro-chipping tabled. We feel this idea only distracts from and adds to the challenge of passing legislation to at least track all vaccinated dogs and in a more efficient/automated manner.

**ALLOWING RABIES VACCINATIONS TO BE THE LICENSE, AND/OR ALLOWING LOCALITIES TO ISSUE FREE LICENSES**

The net revenues for localities from the current dog licensing process has proven to be minimal. If dog licenses were treated the same as property taxes, State law would allow local treasurers not to send a bill to dog owners due to the minimal fee. The question is how much is the licensing process promoting public safety and animal health? In that a dog owner has to obtain a vaccination for his/her dog prior to buying a license, treasurers feel the safety benefits of the current process are minimal. Additionally, a significant portion of the public does not comply with licensing laws but they comply with vaccination guidelines.

Treasurers feel if the effective licensing of a dog occurred each time it was vaccinated, a complete registry of all vaccinated dogs could be created. Either through State law or locality option, we could use the vaccination certificate as the licensing form, or, have veterinarians issue a free license at the time of vaccination. State Code 3.2-6528 would have to be changed to change the minimum fee from \$1 to \$0. The vaccination tag could serve as the license tag; or the license tag could be supplied by government (locality or State). The rabies certificate could include the license # and then be electronically transferred in a file format by the veterinarians to their government contact. Or, the veterinarians could be given a bar-code label to place on rabies forms and the forms continue to be mailed to their government contact for scanning. This would result in one-stop shopping for citizens, and, automate an outdated process. Veterinarians could even enter rabies data on to a State approved website that allows them to print a copy for their customers, and receive a small stipend for each transaction. When entering this data, they could type in the metal tag #, and if the dog is microchipped enter that too. Hanover County currently pays 50-cents to some vets now to sell licenses. A \$1 stipend to place a bar-code on the vaccination form and issue a matching metal tag should suffice.

*M. Scott Miller*

Hanover County Treasurer  
804-365-6050 FAX804-365-6452  
[msmiller@hanovercounty.gov](mailto:msmiller@hanovercounty.gov)

file: Dog Study

## **Attachment 18: HJ160 study group assignment to prompt thoughts in regard to licensing process options**

### Options for consideration as part of the Companion Animal Licensing Procedures Work Group Final Report

During the final part of the June 14 meeting, I proposed to the group that we all think about some options that we might propose for the General Assembly's consideration as part of the discussion section of our final report. For every option, we should try to highlight what we perceive the advantages and disadvantages are of that option and also articulate as best we can the financial, technological, legislative and political considerations associated with each option. I proposed several options for consideration and further discussion at our July meeting (see below) and would ask that all of the work group members consider these as well as come prepared to offer any other options you think it would be important for the group to discuss.

Option #1: Do not make any changes to the current system

- This option may be appropriate particularly if the results from the surveys are mixed with no particular trends that we can discern.
- This option should not result in particular financial, technological or legislative changes/considerations. Potential political considerations may include some groups, such as the County Treasurer's Association, concern that changes were not proposed
- With this option, the work group should consider offering thoughts about what additional information would be helpful to gather (and from whom) in assessing whether any changes to the current system would be prudent

Option #2: Ask veterinarians to license dogs at the point of vaccination and collect license fees

- This would involve veterinarians in clinical practice collecting the license fee when they vaccinate dogs for rabies and then sending at least a portion of that to either the local treasurer or to a state agency if it is the desire of the treasurers to no longer be a part of the dog licensing process. Veterinarians would also be asked to continue fulfilling the requirement articulated in 3.2-6529 in that they would still need to "forward within 45 days a copy of the rabies vaccination certificate or the relevant information contained in such certificate to the treasurer of the locality where the vaccination occurs" although this requirement, if a state agency assumes the role of selling dog licenses, may need to be amended. If veterinarians continued to send rabies certificate information to their local treasurers and the local treasurers managed that data and it was not entered into a state system, then there would be no particular technological considerations associated with this. The financial considerations would be local and there would be no need to amend any sections of the *Code of Virginia*. If

licensing became a fully state function, the state would supply the metal tags needed for licensing and veterinarians would be asked to send a portion of the license fee to the state. This would likely involve building an infrastructure (both in regard to personnel and a data management system whether a state agency developed that system or contracted with a third party) to distribute license tags, collect fees (and possibly redistribute fees if some license fee money would then be redistributed to the localities) and manage the data contained in the rabies certificates that would be submitted to the state by veterinarians. This option would have technological considerations and financial considerations and a general fund impact unless some other method of funding state personnel and a data management system could be found. Also, if a state agency assumed the responsibility of licensing, the following *Code* sections should be reviewed and amended: §3.2-6526, § 3.2-6527, §3.2-6528, 3.2-6532, §3.2-6534. From a political consideration standpoint, the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association would likely voice concerns about a system whereby veterinarians were compelled to collect license fees at the point of vaccination and may oppose this initiative.

Option #3: Ask veterinarians to license dogs at the point of vaccination but provide the license tag at no cost/no charge for licensing.

- This option would involve either a local or state government entity supplying license tags to veterinarians free of charge and, at the point of rabies vaccination; tags would be supplied to dog owners free of charge. This option may be prudent if the total program costs of a fee for license program are outweighed by the savings, (through assessing such metrics as fewer days a dog is kept in the public shelter/faster return to owner, lower costs in regard to administrative time and public money associated with selling license tags and following up with owners who vaccinate their dogs for rabies yet do not purchase a license tag) a locality will realize if more dogs are licensed. The function of licensing within this option could reside with either state or local government. Veterinarians be asked to continue fulfilling the requirement articulated in 3.2-6529 in that they would still need to “forward within 45 days a copy of the rabies vaccination certificate or the relevant information contained in such certificate to the treasurer of the locality where the vaccination occurs” although this requirement, if a state agency assumes the role of selling dog licenses, may need to be amended. If veterinarians continued to send rabies certificate information to their local treasurers and the local treasurers managed that data and it was not entered into a state system, then there would be no particular technological considerations associated with this. The financial considerations would be local and there would be no need to amend any sections of the *Code of Virginia*. If licensing became a fully state function, the state would supply the metal tags needed for licensing and



veterinarians would be asked to send a portion of the license fee to the state. This would likely involve building an infrastructure (both in regard to personnel and a data management system whether a state agency developed that system or contracted with a third party) to distribute license tags and manage the data contained in the rabies certificates that would be submitted to the state by veterinarians, although there would be no need to collect fees or redistribute funds. This option would have technological considerations and financial considerations and a general fund impact unless some other method of funding state personnel and a data management system could be found. Also, if a state agency assumed the responsibility of licensing, the following *Code* sections should be reviewed and amended: §3.2-6526, § 3.2-6527, §3.2-6528, 3.2-6532, §3.2-6534. It may also be a consideration that language in 46.2-749.2:7 could be amended to include money going to localities to support animal control efforts. From a political consideration standpoint, the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association would likely not oppose this initiative.

Note: It was also suggested when option #3 was discussed, that perhaps a dog owner might be incentivized by the government offering the first year of licensing at no charge and then charging after that. Considerations in regard to that strategy would be similar to what is detailed in option #2.

## **Attachment 19: Virginia Veterinary Medical Association Input in Response to Companion Animal Licensing Study Options Assignment**

### Input from Veterinary Practitioners on the Licensing Study

Terry L. Taylor, DVM  
Immediate Past President  
Virginia Veterinary Medical Association

After our June 14 meeting I conducted an e-mail survey of the VVMA Board of Directors. Board members were requested to seek input from their practitioner constituents for this survey. They were presented with the 3 options proposed by Dr. Julia Murphy at the end of July 14 meeting.

First (1): Change nothing. Keep the licensing procedures as they are. This does have a drawback; it is inconvenient for your clients to have to go to 2 places, your practice for a rabies vaccination and then to a county office or agent to buy the dog license. (Database issues discussed later.)

Second (2): Use the rabies vaccination as the license. The veterinary practitioner collects the licensing fee for the county, keeps a fee and forwards the rest to the county or state. (In this case the veterinary practitioner would be mandated to act as an agent of the government to sell and collect the licensing fee.) If you had to live with option number 2, then what would be a profitable licensing fee for you?

Third (3): License dogs but treat it as a government function. Dog license tags would be provided to the veterinary practitioner at no cost. Vaccination records would be forwarded to the county (as they are now) or the state. The client would not be charged a licensing fee and the veterinary practitioner would not collect or handle any licensing monies.

### Results:

VVMA supports the idea of a statewide database.

35% of the Board members who responded voted for Option #1.

12% voted for Option #2.

53% voted for Option #3.

(There are 18 Directors on the VVMA Board and 5 Executive Officers. 17 voted for an option. Several others commented without voting on a specific option.)

### Comments:

Who will track the one year license when a vaccine expiration date is 3 years? Will a 3 year license be issued and a 3 year fee be collected? What if an animal vaccine has a 3 year expiration date and the owner only wants a one year license, who will follow up for the next year license renewal?

I have worked in practices and public health department rabies clinics where owners come from as many as 5-8 licensing localities. Will vets have to have licenses for multiple localities? Since there is a discussion about a state wide data base, why not a state license tag? Let's see how the General Assembly wants to pay for that.

Has the committee considered how license renewal will be handled and by whom?

Dear Terry, we sent out your letter to the PVMA [Potomac region] membership. All respondents were strongly opposed to changing. Personally my primary concern is a public health one; we have many clients come in with just enough money for a rabies vaccine. We do not require an exam or any other fees. If we are required to sell them a license, some will walk away. Given the prevalence of rabies, this is a real public health concern for me.

As a high school student volunteer in Louisville Kentucky I remember having to fill out the license paperwork as well as the rabies certificate in our veterinary practice. It was convenient for our clients and because of this more people probably bought licenses. Then one day someone did an audit. They found that many hospitals had a discrepancy in the number of license forms they were issued and the revenue they turned in. This led to an article in the Courier Journal and eventually a list of every veterinarian's name and the number of shortages being published. Perhaps there may have been someone skimming, but I think the majority were just due to slack bookkeeping. Very quickly veterinarians no longer sold the licenses. I think they decided as a group to stop doing it, but I really don't remember, perhaps the county stopped the practice. My point is money and the government while it can start out simply enough can come back to haunt you.

If collecting license fees is a money losing proposition for the government I suspect it will be doubly so for us.

If selling tags is not profitable for the counties, it sure as heck won't be profitable for vet offices. We would need to change computer codes, have staff and vet training, inventory and store the tags, plus keep up with collecting and forwarding money. This is a county problem. If the county demands that licenses be sold, the county had to figure out how to do it.

Veterinarians are not and should not be tax collectors. The pressure for making us sell licenses is coming from the County Treasurers. It's their job and the job of local Animal Control. To require private veterinarians to sell dog licenses constitutes an additional tax on us. If the problem is that the localities say they can't afford to collect licensing fees and enforce licensing ordinances, then they need to raise fees on un-spayed dogs and un-neutered dogs to pay for it. It is our job to vaccinate animals for rabies as cheaply and easily as possible so that we reduce

the numbers of unvaccinated owned animals in our communities. Requiring us to issue dog tags materially hinders this activity. I am a sitting member of the Patrick County Board of Supervisors.

Responses to this question: If you had to live with option number 2, then what would be a profitable licensing fee for you?

I would agree to do option #2 only if we were compensated for the time and effort that it takes to collect and forward fees to the county or state...AND would ONLY do this if the state and/or county spends time, effort and funds to publicize this change in the protocol...Because the veterinarians will be "blamed" for all the changes.

I am opposed to option 2 unless the state wants to give me full state benefits. The issue that seems to arise would be oversight for this process. Mainly, the government would be trusting a private industry to carry out their business appropriately. Also, it creates more work for veterinary clinics for a small return while increasing the cost to the client.

As far as the licensing goes, I personally don't want the government to dictate to me that I have to sell license tags. That is putting undue burden out as veterinarians. Wouldn't want to take a fee for doing it either because, I suspect, the counties won't decrease their fees, so licensing your dog would be more expensive than it already is. Because the government wants to save money is no reason to put this burden on veterinary practices that already run on a small income margin. I would, therefore, prefer to keep things the way they are. It is bad enough that we have to break client confidentiality by reporting vaccines to the county and it takes time, paper and ink costs that we have had to absorb.

I am definitely opposed to having veterinarians having to collect the county's money for dog licenses. As a matter of fact, traditionally the county Treasurer is so anal about the county money that a treasurer's office employee must accompany a vet on county sponsored Rabies clinics because we are not bonded to handle the county's money. I do not want the responsibility or work of doing their job. We already have to supply hard copies of all Rabies certificates, because they are still so backward that they cannot take them electronically. Then they do not do anything with them because it is too much work to input them.

It is my understanding that licensing fees fund municipal animal control offices and allows for identifying animals vaccinated for Rabies. This is NOT the problem. The problem is the companion animals that remain UNVACCINATED for rabies. There are many owners in this region that DO NOT VACCINATE! If they don't vaccinate, they slide under the radar for compliance until they are reported to have nuisance, neglected or abused animals by neighbors. [Responder goes on to advocate taxing pet food to fund animal control instead of charging licensing fees.] We are not tax collectors!

I like Option 2 of the choices below...but I am not in private practice any more as you know (after ten years of doing so)...and I would think adding \$2-4 onto a rabies charge to cover licensing annually is doable and would save owners trip to another location.

## Attachment 20

### Virginia Alliance for Animal Shelters' Proposal as part of the 2016 Virginia Companion Animal Licensing Procedures Study (HJ160)

The members of VAAS who sit on the rabies/licensing committee believe that we can offer the following ideas for the workgroup to review. The basic premises of our proposal is as follows:

1. In our survey to VAAS members, 100% of the respondents, 13.3% of our survey pool, support continued animal licensing in VA. The Association of Shelter Veterinarians, the National Animal Control Association (NACA) and the AVMA all continue to support animal licensing for a variety of reasons. We have shared those position with you and can send the links again if required.
2. Our goal is to reduce inefficiencies, improve compliance, insure animals are vaccinated AND enable them to be returned to owner. We also believe that requiring that pet owners accept some additional responsibility for having pets in the community is a positive and responsible purpose of licensing.
3. We have attempted to reflect the complaints of some local Treasurers, not unduly burden veterinarians and utilize Animal Control Officers in a better and more comprehensive way.
4. Public health and safety are essential elements of licensing but the return of animals to their lawful owners is equally important. In 2015, 45,957 **stray** dogs were in shelters with a little more than 49% returned to owner. The ability to return more dogs more quickly will reduce taxpayer costs, reduce euthanasia, recognize the legitimate property rights of owners and mend the loss a family feels when their pet is lost.
5. We also want to recognize new technologies, progress that has been made in animal welfare and the advantages of engaging all communities in the social contract of animal welfare.
  - I. A state-wide data base, managed similar to the Dangerous Dog database, or the DGIF data base, with incremental levels of access will be developed with direct access to input information and to view information to veterinarians, local treasurers, animal control officers and any other agents designated by localities ( including license renewal by owners.) A percentage of each license, not to exceed \$1 shall be sent to the Commonwealth of VA (or the private contractor) to develop and manage this database. This will enable licensed animals which may cross city/county lines to be returned to owners and to enable veterinarians who serve multiple localities to register the animal in the locality where the animal resides with no delay. If a private contractor is preferred, the costs must not exceed \$1/animal.
  2. A veterinarian who vaccinates a dog or cat shall provide a rabies certificate. If the dog (or cat if licensing is required by the locality) is from the same locality as the veterinary practice, the veterinarian shall provide at no cost to the owner a license tag and receipt. This shall be called a probationary license and shall be valid for the remainder of

the calendar year or the date by which licenses are due for renewal in each locality. The veterinarian shall submit the rabies certificate information and when appropriate the license number directly to the state-wide data base. Obviously if the veterinarian is not computerized, this information will be relayed to the Treasurer as it is now. Updates to the animals rabies status, ownership or address may be made directly to the database (in real time) by a veterinarian, treasurer or other designated agent, including the owner with some restrictions.

3. An animal owner who has an animal micro chipped and registered at the time of the rabies vaccination shall be advised of his/her eligibility for a **lifetime license for \$25**. Such license shall be valid as long as the animal's rabies vaccination is maintained in a current status. The veterinarian shall provide the micro chip number to the local treasurer at the same time he/she submits the rabies certificate information. If the rabies vaccination expires and is not renewed within 60 days of the expiration date, the right to the lifetime license shall be terminated. The locality may determine whether it wishes to continue the lifetime status following the administration of a current rabies vaccination. The data base can easily be developed to notify Treasurers and the owner that the rabies certificate has expired.

4. License renewal forms shall be mailed in the same mailing as local personal property tax bill. Localities will be encouraged to offer multi-year license to coincide with the multi-year rabies vaccinations. The license renewal forms will include information as to the purpose and use of license fees in the locality. This will require that the license year be modified to coincide to the localities property tax mailing. License renewal may also be done by the owner on-line at the data base or at any of the designated agents willing.

5. Animal license violation shall be a civil penalty of \$50 (this is less than the \$250 current class 4 misdemeanor violation penalty) for a 1<sup>st</sup> time violation. Civil summonses may be posted on doors eliminating the requirement for the ACO to serve a summons in person or secure a summons from a magistrate. Localities may develop their own approach to the civil penalties (which this violation currently is.) The penalties can be paid in the same way a traffic ticket is paid but unless the rabies vaccination is secured and the license bought, the penalty for continued violations will escalate.

6. Second time violations shall be a civil penalty of \$100, and a third time violation shall be a civil penalty of \$250 which is equal to the \$250 current class 4 misdemeanor violation penalty. All violations will also incur court costs.

7. Cities and counties may enact ordinances to include fees for late payments-this reduces burden on ACO and Courts. A late fee for the current year for an animal that was too young the previous year, only acquired the current year, or was licensed the previous year may be imposed.

This proposal expedites the return of a licensed animal found in one jurisdiction but living in another by ensuring that all localities have access to the address information at the time the animal is found from the license tag or the microchip.

This proposal incentivizes microchipping with a lifetime license and enables the microchip to offer current information by having updated information in the data base.

This proposal reduces the burden on treasurers by reducing the overall number of licenses that are sold locally as well as encouraging multi-year license renewal. It also reduces the amount of information that the treasurer must enter into the system by eliminating the duplication of the rabies information already entered by the veterinarian. By including the license renewal in the property tax bill, it also eliminates separate mailing costs.

This proposal encourages the education of the pet owner by including information about the use of license fees at the local level.

This proposal reduces the burden on ACO's by making the violation a civil penalty but it also incentivizes license purchase and renewal by imposing fines and penalties for those who do not obey this statute.

For those who are concerned about privacy, this proposal does not expand the current availability of records to the public. For those who are concerned about owners in violation of the number of animal allowed by a locality, we can't participate in enabling such violations. That matter is not addressed by this proposal.

This proposal does not address every concern but we hope it reflects a responsible approach to this issue.

Regards,

--

Sharon Quillen Adams, MPA  
Chair, Virginia Alliance for Animal Shelters (VAAS)  
[\(757\) 409-2267](tel:7574092267)



## Attachment 21

### VIRGINIA FEDERATION OF HUMANE SOCIETIES PROPOSAL FOR VDH STUDY GROUP ON DOG LICENSING UNDER HJ160

The Virginia Federation of Humane Societies proposes the following solution for dog licensing:

- The Study Group has highlighted inefficiencies and issues with compliance with Virginia's current licensing laws and procedures.
  - Owners often do not realize that there is a two-step process, and often believe that the tag provided by veterinarians for rabies vaccinations is the actual license.
  - Even with the requirement that veterinarians provide copies of rabies vaccination certificates directly to local treasurers, the amount of funds to the localities for licensing is simply not enough of a motivating force for the localities to invest the time and effort in enforcing licensing requirements.
  - Moreover, animal control officers – not treasurers – are the ones who need to inspect rabies certificates to ensure the vaccination status of a dog involved in a bite incident, and the current laws do not provide animal control officers direct access to those certificates.
- The two main goals of our rabies and licensing laws are ensuring that: (1) dogs are vaccinated against rabies; and (2) dogs are identified and returned to owners as quickly as possible.
  - In order to obtain a license, a rabies certificate is required – meaning that licensing does not aid in compliance for rabies vaccinations. Virginia residents are already vaccinating their dogs for rabies with a very high compliance rate – and licensing neither provides a definitive answer for an animal control officer to rely on to ensure a dog involved in a bite incident has been vaccinated for rabies, nor addresses the very small fraction of owners who may not be vaccinating their dogs.
  - In the field, animal control officers are able to use identification tags and microchips to identify and return the dog to his or her owner as or even more efficiently than using a dog's license tag – assuming the dog even has a license tag.
- Although a statewide database may sound appealing in theory, there are steep hurdles concerning privacy, compliance, and a very high price tag that likely make such a database infeasible.
- The goals of ensuring rabies vaccinations and returning dogs to owners quickly can be accomplished in a very economical and simple manner, namely by doing the following:
  - Keep the rabies vaccination laws in place, but amend Virginia Code Section 3.2-6529 to abolish the requirement that veterinarians provide rabies vaccination certificates to local treasurers, and instead require veterinarians to provide those certificates directly to local animal control agencies.
  - Abolish the requirement of and statutes concerning owners obtaining licenses, and amend Virginia Code Sections 3.2-6524 and 3.2-6531 to require all dog owners to

- make their dogs readily identifiable by means of either a microchip or a physical identification tag or collar with the following information that is to stay current at all times: (1) the dog's name; (2) the owner's name; (3) the owner's address; and (4) a phone number for the owner.
- Require all animal control officers and releasing agencies who take in stray companion animals and who do not have a physical identification tag or collar to scan the companion animals for a microchip as part of the reasonable efforts to find the animal's owner.
  - Amend regulations that mandate that only veterinarians may microchip, to allow public shelters, private shelters, and rescues to microchip companion animals.
- Even if some localities wish either to move to a statewide database or to maintain dog licensing and the fees collected through licensing, localities should be given the ability to opt out and to implement VFHS's proposal to eliminate licensing and replace licensing with mandatory identification on the dog, by way of either a microchip or a physical identification tag or collar.

# VIRGINIA VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

3801 Westerre Parkway, Suite D | Henrico, Virginia 23233

(P) 804-346-2611 | 800-YES-VVMA | (F) 804-346-2655

(E) info@vvma.org | www.vvma.org



## Attachment 22

DATE: September 9, 2016

TO: Dr. Julia Murphy  
Members of the Animal Licensing Workgroup

FROM: Drs. Terry Taylor and Margaret Rucker  
Virginia Veterinary Medical Association

RE: Animal Licensing Workgroup Recommendations

### MISSION STATEMENT

The VVMA represents, promotes, and protects the interests of our diverse veterinary community and serves as a resource on matters of animal health, animal welfare, and the human animal bond.

### OFFICERS

Margaret Rucker, DVM  
*President*

Melinda McCall, DVM  
*President-Elect*

Jason Bollenbeck, DVM  
*Vice President*

Martin Betts, DVM  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

Terry Taylor, DVM  
*Immediate Past President*

The Virginia Veterinary Medical Association appreciates the work of Dr. Murphy and all of those serving on the Animal Licensing Workgroup. As we wrap up our work as directed by the General Assembly in HJ 160, our association would like to share with the workgroup some of the concepts our members have indicated they could support going forward.

- Requiring localities to offer multi-year licenses (currently a majority, 55%, do not);
- Allowing localities to allow for purchase of licenses online;
- Developing a "lifetime" license with a larger, one time fee that uses a microchip identifier rather than a metal tag; and
- Raising the maximum fee a locality may charge for a dog license (currently capped in the Code at \$10.00). This would be the most difficult "sell" but could help localities recover more of the administrative costs of licensing. If all parties to licensing – local government/treasurers, veterinarians, animal control and animal welfare came together in support of raising the cap, it could potentially pass the legislature.

These potential recommendations of the workgroup should garner legislative support. The last suggestion – raising the license fee cap – would be the most controversial but may be worth considering.

### DIRECTORS

Rebecca Beamer, DVM  
Nathaniel Burke, DVM

Edward Fallin, DVM  
Benjamin Halsey, DVM

Megan Hammond, DVM  
Lara Hertweck, DVM

David Hodgson, BVSc  
Chris Hussion, DVM

Jay Margolis, DVM  
Weston Mims, DVM

Margaret Minnich, DVM  
Stuart Morse, DVM

Wesley Parquette, DVM  
Stephanie Patterson, DVM

Katie Rohrig, DVM  
Cheryl Simpson-Freeman, DVM

Samuel Tate, DVM  
Kristina Peacock, Student

The VVMA has concerns with some of the suggestions the work group has discussed. Specifically, we oppose the:

- Elimination of dog licensing altogether (it would be difficult for us to advocate this position since our national AVMA policy strongly supports licensing) and;
- Requirement that veterinarians sell licenses.

We believe a couple other suggestions may not be well-received by the legislature, including:

- Across the board elimination of fees associated with licensing (VACO and VML will oppose this because of fiscal impact on localities); and
- Requirement to microchip (vs tags), particularly in the hunting dog community.

Scott Miller, the Hanover Treasurer, has indicated he is willing to forego licensing revenue and eliminate the sale of licenses in his locality. For him and any other locality interested in going down this road, one potential solution is for these localities to purchase county dog tags and supply them at no cost to the veterinarians in the county to distribute at the time of vaccination – at no cost to the dog owner. The rabies certificate could then be sent back to the locality, as they are now, with the county-issued tag number noted on the certificate. The locality would continue to maintain those records as they do now, either in a computer database or in paper files. They would continue to reside with the treasurer or animal control and would be available to review when investigating a bite incident or attempting to reunite a dog with its owner. While this would not work in those cases where the veterinarian is vaccinating a dog that doesn't reside in that locality, it would achieve the goal of immediately licensing a majority of dogs at the time of vaccination without any involvement of the treasurer.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer our comments and for everyone's efforts on this important issue.

### AVMA REPRESENTATIVES

Richard Godine, DVM  
*Delegate*

Erin Casey, DVM  
*Alternate-Delegate*

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Robin Schmitz

### ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Talya George

Margaret Rucker, DVM  
President

Terry Taylor, DVM  
Immediate Past President

## Attachment 23

### Treasurers' Association of Virginia Proposed Options for Final Report Consideration Companion Animal Licensing Study Group Meeting, 9/9/2016

Thanks for all your time and work spent reviewing the animal licensing procedures of Virginia. After all of the discussions and considering the various opinions of the affected parties, it does appear some sort of "local option" to expedite licensing stands the best chance of actually coming to fruition. In this regard, below are two options for your review and discussion tomorrow. You will note these two ideas are quite similar to others already presented.

1. **Locality option to automatically declare a vaccinated dog as licensed when the vaccination certificate reaches the locality (and each locality can designate what office keeps the records). The dog owner's responsibility would be to have some sort of identification on the dog. This identification could be a micro-chip, but also could be proper owner identification on the dog's collar (vaccination tag or some other type of "get me home" tag). *Except for kennels and dangerous dogs, this option would totally get a locality out of the non-profitable licensing business. However, I'm sure there will be those decision makers that will struggle with concept of no dog license.***
2. **Give locality's the option to sell Life-time dog licenses. This license would be valid in that jurisdiction as long as the dog's rabies vaccination is kept current. *Localities would need the option to set the life-time fee fairly low. If too high, dog owners will not purchase them in mass. Virginia's current max for a license is \$10 per year and some localities charge a full \$30 for 3 year tags. So we have to consider just how much higher an owner is willing to go and gamble on the remaining life of their dog, or if they might move to another locality in the future. In Hanover, we already offer a discount and only charge \$15 for a 3 year tag. My thoughts are anything over \$20 or \$25 for a life-time tag would limit life-time sales for us. Heck, I'd suggest my county consider only two purchase options, the current \$6 for a 1 year license, and \$15 for a life-time. Yes, I'd push to eliminate the 2 or 3 year option in Hanover so that more folks would consider the life-time option. I'm not opposed to a high price option of \$50 or something, but want a low floor also. The advantage of a life-time tag idea is just getting it approved. We would still be selling tags locally, which the decision makers will identify with and might be more likely to approve at the State level and then implement at the local level. If they set attractive life-time fees, localities could probably cut their workloads significantly.***

I like option # 1 the best, but # 2 could help to significantly reduce our work. Maybe both need to be put forward.

Thanks everyone, hope to see you tomorrow.

Scott

## **Attachment 24**

### **Proposal for an alternative database of rabies vaccination certificates, Les Foldesi Submitted and discussed as part of the public comment period of the September 9, 2016 meeting of the Companion Animal Licensing Study Group (HJ160)**

The proposed alternative database will be developed using Microsoft's ACCESS program stored on the agency's internal server and will not be web based. The structure of the database should be flexible and evolve over time, but within four to five years.

The agency should be the central repository of rabies certificates for the commonwealth. Agency staff will enter the data from the certificates and periodically create reports for each jurisdiction, which can be sent electronically and/or in hard copy.

Depending on funding, the agency could also provide the initial notification to the dog's owner of the licensing requirement and information to submit their licensing fee to the appropriate locality or provide location of the dog if there was a change in ownership or residency. The locality will be provided a list of mailings for their locality and it will be their responsibility to follow up.

Over time the database could be expanded to contain additional data fields and procedures streamlined to increase efficiency such as deleting records a year or so after the rabies certificate has expired or frequency of report to localities etc.

Perhaps the technology exists that the rabies certificates can be scanned directly into the database.

The proposal will require legislative change to require veterinarians to submit rabies certificates to the agency instead of their local government.

The proposal assumes there is staffing available with initiative to perform minor programming using Microsoft's ACCESS and support of other agency programs that have an internal database.

#### **Advantages**

Least expensive way to establish a database; otherwise agency cost begins at \$250,000 assuming program knows what the database structure will be and will make few if any modifications in development. Does not incur the cost of proprietary software with its limitations, i.e. kennel dogs.

Provides flexibility in modifying the database without creating significant programming costs.

Provides information for dogs vaccinated in their respective locality. Note: Veterinarians with clients from multiple jurisdictions send all certificates to the jurisdiction that the business is located. Therefore a given jurisdiction may receive certificates not only for their residents, but other jurisdictions as well.

Provides dog owners information regarding dog ownership responsibilities such as licensing requirements and contact information for their locality.

**Disadvantage**

This proposal will not provide real-time information to local animal control officers through a web based database for animal identification. A locality could develop its own web-based database using a combination of the proposed rabies certificate database plus locally gathered licensing data.

**Further considerations**

Given the poor enforcement record of localities for dog licensing, one would assume legislators are reluctant to provide substantial funding for an expensive web- based licensing activity without some assurance that localities would follow through with enforcement activities, which would require additional resources at the local level to surpass existing compliance levels.

The proposal is a less expensive alternative to the licensing database and still gives localities an opportunity to improve their enforcement level. If localities do substantially improve licensing compliance to within 85%, the proposed database may be adapted in the future to a web-based licensing database. Development costs should be substantially less as opposed to creating one with little prior experience with this activity.



## Attachment 25

### ***VIRGINIA ANIMAL CONTROL ASSOCIATION POSITION ON ANIMAL LICENSING***

- VACA supports the policy of animal licensing in the Commonwealth of Virginia
- VACA recognizes that revenue from animal licensing supports local animal control and animal welfare services such as sheltering, medical care, adoption and investigation/prosecution of animal abuse
- VACA supports the discretion of local government to determine the provisions of their animal licensing programs
- VACA encourages the adoption of multi year licensing programs and the inclusion of micro chipping in conjunction with or as part of animal licensing programs

**Attachment 26**



**P.O. Box 657  
Powhatan, Virginia 23139**

September 22, 2016

Alice Harrington  
Virginia Federation of Dog Clubs and Breeders  
Via email: [aharrington4832@verizon.net](mailto:aharrington4832@verizon.net)

Dear Alice:

Thank you for providing me a copy of the draft report of the Companion Animal Licensing Procedures Work Group as well as the minutes of the meetings. The report appears to be a good summation of the minutes of the meetings.

I believe that the small number of survey responses received has greatly limited the input necessary to justify sweeping changes. I am very concerned about the decision to exclude the kennel licenses from this discussion as it directly impacts hundreds of thousands of hunting dogs as well as the kennel club folks. I believe it is naïve to think that a new set of requirements can be created without a comprehensive look at all dog licensing. Option 5 is far and away the most reasonable proposal from our viewpoint, but it still leaves the kennel license and hunter concerns unanswered. Here is the current version as of 9-16-16:

5. Local treasurers should consider a licensing option whereby a dog is considered automatically licensed when the rabies vaccination certificate reaches the local treasurer's office or other local government agency coupled with a dog identification requirement.

The vast majority of hunting dogs are licensed by kennel licenses, which can impact local zoning. Without addressing kennel licenses, any new process is likely to establish conflicting requirements for hunting dogs versus "household pets."

Many, if not a majority of, counties assign the animal control function to law enforcement rather than to the County Administrator. Law enforcement challenges abound and budgets are not the



least of their problems. If the Treasurers think the Sheriffs will sit quietly by and let this transfer occur they are mistaken, based on the five sheriffs that I have spoken with.

A statewide database with its attendant overhead is not only costly (particularly in times of budget shortages) but it smacks of “Big Brother” and will likely require new taxes to implement. It is certainly obvious why proponents want the ability to increase fees without having to return to the legislature. We do see the benefit to local animal control offices.

While microchipping may not be cost prohibitive for the owner of a single dog, it is out of the question for the vast majority of hunting dog owners with kennel licenses, who have a minimum of 5 dogs, not to mention the large number of kennels with 40 or more dogs. Hunting dogs are often sold or traded, often across state lines, which aggravates the microchip problem since only one of the mentioned chips allows editing after implant.

If the rabies certificate becomes the dog license how would the locality enforce the kennel license requirement? Most existing kennels, if not all, should be grandfathered in under zoning laws, but then how does the locality identify dogs belonging to a kennel versus a household pet? A kennel license might be issued for 5 or 10 years and its identification number could be added to the rabies certification. Processing could then be routinely handled with household pets.

If the identification requirements were to be imposed in lieu of microchipping as stated in Option #5, with name address and phone number, it would be very difficult to accomplish with hunting dogs. The overwhelming majority of readable nametags available for dog collars used by hunters have only three lines of print. The size of the tag is limited by the width of the collar. The round or oblong tag often seen on household pets hangs from the collar. For hunting dogs, these tags are more likely to be lost as the dog hunts, and also are a potential danger to a dog if the tag catches on something in the woods. Many hunters put their name, cell phone number, and home number on a tag or at least the cell number. The tag is then riveted to the collar.

I hope you will share this with the group on behalf of the 84,000 members of the Virginia Hunting Dog Alliance.

Sincerely,

Kirby Burch  
Chief Executive Office

C: Wilmer Stoneman

## Public Veterinary Medicine: Public Health

# Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control, 2016

### National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control Committee

**Catherine M. Brown** DVM, MSc, MPH (Co-Chair)

**Sally Slavinski** DVM, MPH (Co-Chair)

**Paul Ettestad** DVM, MS

**Tom J. Sidwa** DVM, MPH

**Faye E. Sorhage** VMD, MPH

From the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, 305 South St, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130 (Brown); the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, 2 Gotham Center, CN# 22A, 42-09 28th St, Queens, NY 11101 (Slavinski); the New Mexico Department of Health, 1190 St Francis Dr, Room N-1350, Santa Fe, NM 87502 (Ettestad); and the Texas Department of State Health Services, PO Box 149347, MC 1956, Austin, TX 78714 (Sidwa).

Consultants to the Committee: Jesse Blanton, PhD (CDC, 1600 Clifton Rd, Mailstop G-33, Atlanta, GA 30333); Richard B. Chipman, MS, MBA (USDA APHIS Wildlife Services, 59 Chenell Dr, Ste 2, Concord, NH 03301); Rolan D. Davis, MS (Kansas State University, Room 1016 Research Park, Manhattan, KS 66506); Cathleen A. Hanlon, VMD, PhD (Retired); Jamie McAloon Lampman (McKamey Animal Center, 4500 N Access Rd, Chattanooga, TN 37415 [representing the National Animal Care and Control Association]); Joanne L. Maki, DVM, PhD (Meril a Sanofi Co, 115 Trans Tech Dr, Athens, GA 30601 [representing the Animal Health Institute]); Michael C. Moore, DVM, MPH (Kansas State University, Room 1016 Research Park, Manhattan, KS 66506); Jim Powell, MS (Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene, 465 Henry Mall, Madison, WI 53706 [representing the Association of Public Health Laboratories]); Charles E. Rupprecht, VMD, PhD (Wistar Institute of Anatomy and Biology, 3601 Spruce St, Philadelphia, PA 19104); Geetha B. Srinivas, DVM, PhD (USDA Center for Veterinary Biologics, 1920 Dayton Ave, Ames, IA 50010); Nick Striegel, DVM, MPH (Colorado Department of Agriculture, 305 Interlocken Pkwy, Broomfield, CO 80021); and Burton W. Wilcke Jr, PhD (University of Vermont, 302 Rowell Building, Burlington, VT 05405 [representing the American Public Health Association]).

Endorsed by the AVMA, American Public Health Association, Association of Public Health Laboratories, Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists, and National Animal Care and Control Association.

This article has not undergone peer review.

Address correspondence to Dr. Brown (catherine.brown@state.ma.us).

**R**abies is a fatal viral zoonosis and serious public health problem.<sup>1</sup> All mammals are believed to be susceptible to the disease, and for the purposes of this document, use of the term animal refers to mammals. The disease is an acute, progressive encephalitis caused by viruses in the genus *Lyssavirus*.<sup>2</sup> Rabies virus is the most important lyssavirus globally. In the United States, multiple rabies virus variants are maintained in wild mammalian reservoir populations such as raccoons, skunks, foxes, and bats. Although the United States has been declared free from transmission of canine rabies virus variants, there is always a risk of reintroduction of these variants.<sup>3-7</sup>

The rabies virus is usually transmitted from animal to animal through bites. The incubation period is highly variable. In domestic animals, it is generally 3 to 12 weeks, but can range from several days to months, rarely exceeding 6 months.<sup>8</sup> Rabies is communicable during the period of salivary shedding of rabies virus. Experimental and historic evidence documents that dogs, cats, and ferrets shed the virus for a few days prior to the onset of clinical signs and during illness. Clinical signs of rabies are variable and include inap-

petance, dysphagia, cranial nerve deficits, abnormal behavior, ataxia, paralysis, altered vocalization, and seizures. Progression to death is rapid. There are currently no known effective rabies antiviral drugs.

The recommendations in this compendium serve as a basis for animal rabies prevention and control programs throughout the United States and facilitate standardization of procedures among jurisdictions, thereby contributing to an effective national rabies control program. The compendium is reviewed and revised as necessary, with the most current version replacing all previous versions. These recommendations do not supersede state and local laws or requirements. Principles of rabies prevention and control are detailed in Part I, and recommendations for parenteral vaccination procedures are presented in Part II. All animal rabies vaccines licensed by the USDA and marketed in the United States are listed and described in Appendix 1, and contact information for manufacturers of these vaccines is provided in Appendix 2.

Modifications of note in this updated version of the compendium, compared with the previous version,<sup>9</sup> include clarification of language, explicit en-

couragement of an interdisciplinary approach to rabies control, a recommendation to collect and report at the national level additional data elements on rabid domestic animals, changes to the recommended management of dogs and cats exposed to rabies that are either unvaccinated or overdue for booster vaccination, reduction of the recommended 6-month quarantine period for certain species, and updates to the list of marketed animal rabies vaccines.

## Part I. Rabies Prevention and Control

### A. Principles of rabies prevention and control

**1. Case definition.** An animal is determined to be rabid after diagnosis by a qualified laboratory as specified (*see* Part I.A. 10. Rabies diagnosis). The national case definition for animal rabies requires laboratory confirmation on the basis of either a positive result for the direct fluorescent antibody test (preferably performed on CNS tissue) or isolation of rabies virus in cell culture or a laboratory animal.<sup>10</sup>

**2. Rabies virus exposure.** Rabies is transmitted when the virus is introduced into bite wounds, into open cuts in skin, or onto mucous membranes from saliva or other potentially infectious material such as neural tissue.<sup>11</sup> Questions regarding possible exposures should be directed promptly to state or local public health authorities.

**3. Interdisciplinary approach.** Clear and consistent communication and coordination among relevant animal and human health partners across and within all jurisdictions (including international, national, state, and local) is necessary to most effectively prevent and control rabies. As is the case for the prevention of many zoonotic and emerging infections, rabies prevention requires the cooperation of animal control, law enforcement, and natural resource personnel; veterinarians; diagnosticians; public health professionals; physicians; animal and pet owners; and others. An integrated program must include provisions to promptly respond to situations; humanely restrain, capture, and euthanize animals; administer quarantine, confinement, and observation periods; and prepare samples for submission to a testing laboratory.

**4. Awareness and education.** Essential components of rabies prevention and control include ongoing public education, responsible pet ownership, routine veterinary care and vaccination, and professional continuing education. Most animal and human exposures to rabies can be prevented by raising awareness concerning rabies transmission routes, the importance of avoiding contact with wildlife, and the need for appropriate veterinary care. Prompt recognition and reporting

of possible exposures to medical and veterinary professionals and local public health authorities are critical.

**5. Human rabies prevention.** Rabies in humans can be prevented by eliminating exposures to rabid animals or by providing exposed persons prompt postexposure prophylaxis consisting of local treatment of wounds in combination with appropriate administration of human rabies immune globulin and vaccine. An exposure assessment should occur before rabies postexposure prophylaxis is initiated and should include discussion between medical providers and public health officials. The rationale for recommending preexposure prophylaxis and details of both preexposure and postexposure prophylaxis administration can be found in the current recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.<sup>11,12</sup> These recommendations, along with information concerning the current local and regional epidemiology of animal rabies and the availability of human rabies biologics, are available from state health departments.

**6. Domestic animal vaccination.** Multiple vaccines are licensed for use in domestic animal species. Vaccines available include inactivated and modified-live virus vectored products, products for IM and SC administration, products with durations of immunity for periods of 1 to 3 years, and products with various minimum ages of vaccination. Recommended vaccination procedures are specified in Part II of this compendium; animal rabies vaccines licensed by the USDA and marketed in the United States are specified in Appendix 1. Local governments should initiate and maintain effective programs to ensure vaccination of all dogs, cats, and ferrets and to remove stray and unwanted animals. Such procedures have reduced laboratory-confirmed cases of rabies among dogs in the United States from 6,949 cases in 1947 to 89 cases in 2013.<sup>3</sup> Because more rabies cases are reported annually involving cats (247 in 2013) than dogs, vaccination of cats should be required.<sup>3</sup> Animal shelters and animal control authorities should establish policies to ensure that adopted animals are vaccinated against rabies.

An important tool to optimize public and animal health and enhance domestic animal rabies control is routine or emergency implementation of low-cost or free clinics for rabies vaccination. To facilitate implementation, jurisdictions should work with veterinary medical licensing boards, veterinary associations, the local veterinary community, animal control officials, and animal welfare organizations.

**7. Rabies in vaccinated animals.** Rabies is rare in vaccinated animals.<sup>13-15</sup> If rabies is suspected in a vaccinated animal, it should be reported to public health officials, the vaccine manufacturer, and the USDA APHIS Center for Veterinary Biologics

([www.aphis.usda.gov](http://www.aphis.usda.gov); search for “adverse event reporting”). The laboratory diagnosis should be confirmed and the virus variant characterized by the CDC’s rabies reference laboratory. A thorough epidemiologic investigation including documentation of the animal’s vaccination history and potential rabies exposures should be conducted.

**8. Rabies in wildlife.** It is difficult to control rabies among wildlife reservoir species.<sup>16</sup> Vaccination of free-ranging wildlife or point infection control is useful in some situations,<sup>17</sup> but the success of such procedures depends on the circumstances surrounding each rabies outbreak (See Part I. C. Prevention and control methods related to wildlife). Because of the risk of rabies in wild animals (especially raccoons, skunks, coyotes, foxes, and bats), the AVMA, American Public Health Association, Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists, National Animal Care and Control Association, and National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians strongly recommend the enactment and enforcement of state laws prohibiting the importation, distribution, translocation, and private ownership of wild animals.

**9. Rabies surveillance.** Laboratory-based rabies surveillance and variant typing are essential components of rabies prevention and control programs. A comprehensive surveillance program should not be limited to testing only those animals that have potentially exposed people or domestic animals to rabies. Accurate and timely information and reporting are necessary to guide decisions regarding postexposure prophylaxis in potentially exposed humans, determine appropriate management of potentially exposed animals, aid in the discovery of emerging variants, describe the epidemiology of the disease, and assess the effectiveness of vaccination programs for domestic animals and wildlife. Every animal submitted for rabies testing should be reported to the CDC to evaluate surveillance trends. Public health authorities should implement electronic laboratory reporting and notification systems.<sup>18</sup> Information reported on every animal submitted for rabies testing should include species, point location, vaccination status, rabies virus variant (if rabid), and human or domestic animal exposures. To enhance the ability to make evidence-based recommendations from national surveillance data, additional data should be collected and reported on all rabid domestic animals. In this regard, essential data elements include age, sex, neuter status, ownership status, quarantine dates (if any), date of onset of any clinical signs, and complete vaccination history. Rabid animals with a history of importation into the United States within the past 60 days are immediately notifiable by state health departments to the CDC; for all indigenous cases, standard notification protocols should be followed.<sup>19</sup>

## **10. Rabies diagnosis.**

a) The direct fluorescent antibody test is the gold standard for rabies diagnosis. The test should be performed in accordance with the established national standardized protocol ([www.cdc.gov/rabies/pdf/rabiesdfaspv2.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/pdf/rabiesdfaspv2.pdf)) by a qualified laboratory that has been designated by the local or state health department.<sup>20,21</sup> Animals submitted for rabies testing should be euthanized<sup>22,23</sup> in such a way as to maintain the integrity of the brain so that the laboratory can recognize anatomic structures. Except in the case of very small animals, such as bats, only the head or entire brain (including brainstem) should be submitted to the laboratory. To facilitate prompt laboratory testing, submitted specimens should be stored and shipped under refrigeration without delay. The need to thaw frozen specimens will delay testing. Chemical fixation of tissues should be avoided to prevent significant testing delays and because such fixation might preclude reliable testing. Questions about testing of fixed tissues should be directed to the local rabies laboratory or public health department.

b) Rabies testing should be available outside of normal business hours at the discretion of public health officials to expedite exposure management decisions.<sup>20</sup> When confirmatory testing is needed by state health departments (eg, in the event of inconclusive results, unusual species, or mass exposures), the CDC rabies laboratory can provide additional testing and results within 24 hours of sample receipt.<sup>24</sup>

c) Professional associations such as the Association of Public Health Laboratories should advocate for, distribute, and promote the development of guidelines for routinely assessing testing practices within rabies laboratories to ensure maintenance of quality and safety.

d) A direct rapid immunohistochemical test (referred to as dRIT) is being used by trained field personnel in surveillance programs for specimens not involved in human or domestic animal exposures.<sup>25-28</sup> All positive direct rapid immunohistochemical test results need to be confirmed by means of direct fluorescent antibody testing at a qualified laboratory.

e) Currently, there are no commercially available, USDA-licensed rapid test kits for rabies diagnosis. Unlicensed tests should not be used owing to the following concerns: sensitivity and specificity of these tests are not known, the tests have not been validated against current standard methods, the excretion of virus in the saliva is intermittent and the amount varies over time, any unlicensed test result would

need to be confirmed by validated methods such as direct fluorescent antibody testing on brain tissue, and the interpretation of results from unlicensed tests may place exposed animals and persons at risk.

**11. Rabies serology.** Some jurisdictions require evidence of vaccination and rabies virus antibodies for animal importation purposes. Rabies virus antibody titers are indicative of a response to vaccine or infection. Titers do not directly correlate with protection because other immunologic factors also play a role in preventing rabies and our abilities to measure and interpret those other factors are not well-developed. Therefore, evidence of circulating rabies virus antibodies in animals should not be used as a substitute for current vaccination in managing rabies exposures or determining the need for booster vaccination.<sup>29-32</sup>

**12. Rabies research.** Information derived from well-designed studies is essential for the development of evidence-based recommendations. Data are needed in several areas, including viral shedding periods for domestic livestock and lagomorphs, potential shedding of virus in milk, the earliest age at which rabies vaccination is effective, protective effect of maternal antibody, duration of immunity, postexposure prophylaxis protocols for domestic animals, models for treatment of clinical rabies, extralabel vaccine use in domestic animals and wildlife rabies reservoir species, host-pathogen adaptations and dynamics, and the ecology of wildlife rabies reservoir species, especially in relation to the use of oral rabies vaccines.

## **B. Prevention and control methods in domestic and confined animals**

**1. Preexposure vaccination and management.** Adherence to a regular rabies vaccination schedule is critical to protect animals against recognized and unrecognized rabies exposures. Parenteral animal rabies vaccines should be administered only by or under the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian on premises. Rabies vaccines may be administered under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian to animals held in animal shelters before release.<sup>33,34</sup> The veterinarian signing a rabies vaccination certificate must ensure that the person who administered the vaccine is identified on the certificate and has been appropriately trained in vaccine storage, handling, and administration and in the management of adverse events. This ensures that a qualified and responsible person can be held accountable for properly vaccinating the animal.

Within 28 days after initial vaccination, a peak rabies virus antibody titer is expected, and the animal can be considered immunized.<sup>31,35-37</sup> Regardless of the age of the animal at initial vaccination, a booster vaccination should be administered 1 year later (*see* Part II and Appendix 1). An animal is currently vaccinated and is consid-

ered immunized immediately after any booster vaccination.<sup>38,39</sup>

a) **Booster vaccination.** Following the initial vaccination, booster vaccinations should be given in a manner consistent with the manufacturer's label. If a previously vaccinated animal is overdue for any booster vaccination, including the first booster vaccination due 1 year after initial vaccination, it should be given a booster vaccination. Immediately after this booster vaccination, the animal is considered currently vaccinated and should be placed on a booster vaccination schedule consistent with the label of the vaccine used. There are no laboratory or epidemiological data to support the annual or biennial administration of 3-year vaccines after completion of the initial vaccine series (ie, the initial vaccination and 1-year booster vaccination).

b) **Dogs, cats, and ferrets.** All dogs, cats, and ferrets should be vaccinated against rabies and revaccinated in accordance with recommendations in this compendium (Appendix 1).

c) **Livestock.** All horses should be vaccinated against rabies.<sup>40</sup> Livestock, including species for which licensed vaccines are not available, that have frequent contact with humans (eg, in petting zoos, fairs, and other public exhibitions) should be vaccinated against rabies.<sup>41,42</sup> Consideration should also be given to vaccinating livestock that are particularly valuable.

d) **Captive wild animals and wild animal hybrids** (the offspring of wild animals crossed to domestic animals).

(1) Wild animals and wild animal hybrids should not be kept as pets.<sup>43,44</sup> No parenteral rabies vaccines are licensed for use in wild animals or wild animal hybrids.<sup>45</sup>

(2) Animals that are farmed (eg, for food, fur, or fiber) or maintained in exhibits or zoological parks and that are not completely excluded from all contact with rabies vectors can become infected.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, wild animals might be incubating rabies when initially captured. Therefore, wild-caught animals susceptible to rabies should be quarantined for a minimum of 6 months.

(3) Employees who work with animals in exhibits or zoological parks should receive preexposure rabies vaccination. The use of preexposure or postexposure rabies vaccination for handlers who work with animals at such facilities might reduce the need for euthanasia of captive animals that expose handlers. Carnivores and bats should be housed in a manner

that precludes direct contact with the public.<sup>41,42</sup> Consideration may be given to vaccinating animals that are particularly valuable (see Part II. D. Vaccination of wild-life and wild animal hybrids).

**2. Stray animals.** Stray dogs, cats, and ferrets should be removed from the community, and mechanisms should be put in place to facilitate voluntary surrender of animals to prevent abandonment. Local health departments and animal control officials can enforce the removal of strays more effectively if owned animals are required to have identification and be confined or kept on leash. Strays should be impounded for at least 3 business days to determine whether human exposure has occurred and to give owners sufficient time to reclaim animals.

Stray and feral cats serve as a significant source of rabies exposure risk.<sup>47</sup> If communities allow maintenance of feral cat colonies despite this risk, they should safeguard the health of the cats and the communities in which they reside by requiring that cats receive initial rabies vaccinations and appropriately scheduled booster vaccinations.

### **3. Importation and interstate movement of animals.**

a) Areas with dog-to-dog rabies transmission. Canine rabies virus variants have been eliminated from the United States<sup>3,7</sup>; however, rabid dogs and a rabid cat have been introduced into the continental United States from areas with dog-to-dog rabies transmission.<sup>4-6,48,49</sup> The movement of dogs for the purposes of adoption or sale from areas with dog-to-dog rabies transmission increases the risk of introducing canine-transmitted rabies to areas where it does not currently exist, and this practice should be prohibited.

b) International importation. Current federal regulations are insufficient to prevent the introduction of rabid animals into the United States and must be strengthened and appropriately enforced.<sup>4-6,48,49</sup> The CDC and USDA APHIS have regulatory authority over the importation of dogs and cats into the United States.<sup>6</sup> Importers of dogs must comply with rabies vaccination requirements.<sup>50,51</sup> These regulations require that dogs from rabies-endemic countries be currently vaccinated against rabies prior to importation. The appropriate health official of the state of destination should be notified by the appropriate federal authorities within 72 hours of the arrival of any unvaccinated imported dog required to be placed in confinement (as defined by the CDC<sup>52</sup>) under these regulations. Failure of the owner to comply with these confinement requirements should be promptly reported to the CDC's Division of Global Migration and Quarantine (CDCAnimalImports@cdc.gov).

All imported dogs and cats are also subject to state and local laws governing rabies and

should be currently vaccinated against rabies with USDA-licensed products in accordance with this compendium. Failure of the owner to comply with state or local requirements should be referred to the appropriate state or local official.

c) Interstate movement (including commonwealths and territories). Before interstate movement occurs, dogs, cats, ferrets, and horses should be currently vaccinated against rabies in accordance with this compendium. Animals in transit should be accompanied by a current, valid rabies vaccination certificate such as Form 51 from the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians.<sup>53</sup> When an interstate health certificate or certificate of veterinary inspection is required, it should contain the same rabies vaccination information as Form 51.

**4. Adjunct procedures.** Methods or procedures that enhance rabies control include the following<sup>54</sup>:

a) Identification. Dogs, cats, and ferrets should be identified (eg, metal or plastic tags or microchips) to allow for verification of rabies vaccination status.

b) Licensure. Registration or licensure of all dogs, cats, and ferrets is an integral component of an effective rabies control program. A fee is frequently charged for such licensure, and revenues collected are used to maintain rabies or animal control activities. Evidence of current vaccination should be an essential prerequisite to licensure.

c) Canvassing. House-to-house canvassing by animal control officials facilitates enforcement of vaccination and licensure requirements.

d) Citations. Citations are legal summonses issued to owners for violations, including the failure to vaccinate or license their animals. The authority for officers to issue citations should be an integral part of animal control programs.

e) Animal control. All local jurisdictions should incorporate training and continuing education of personnel regarding stray-animal control, leash laws, animal bite prevention, and rabies prevention and control into their programs.

f) Public education. All local jurisdictions should incorporate education covering responsible pet ownership, bite prevention, and appropriate veterinary care into their programs.

**5. Postexposure management.** This section refers to any animal exposed (see Part I.A. 2. Rabies virus exposure) to a confirmed or suspected rabid animal. Wild mammalian carnivores, skunks, and bats that are not available or suitable for testing should be regarded as rabid. The rationale for

observation, confinement, or strict quarantine periods of exposed animals despite previous vaccination is based in part on the potential for overwhelming viral challenge, incomplete vaccine efficacy, improper vaccine administration, variable host immunocompetence, and immune-mediated death (ie, early death phenomenon).<sup>13,55-57</sup>

a) Dogs, cats, and ferrets. Any illness in an exposed animal should be reported immediately to the local health department. If signs suggestive of rabies develop (eg, paralysis or seizures), the animal should be euthanized, and the head or entire brain (including brainstem) should be submitted for testing (*see* Part I.A. 10. Rabies diagnosis).

(1) Dogs, cats, and ferrets that are current on rabies vaccination should immediately receive veterinary medical care for assessment, wound cleansing, and booster vaccination. The animal should be kept under the owner's control and observed for 45 days.

(2) Dogs, cats, and ferrets that have never been vaccinated should be euthanized immediately. There are currently no USDA-licensed biologics for postexposure prophylaxis of previously unvaccinated domestic animals, and there is evidence that the use of vaccine alone will not reliably prevent the disease in these animals.<sup>58</sup> If the owner is unwilling to have the animal euthanized, the animal should be placed in strict quarantine for 4 (dogs and cats) or 6 (ferrets) months. Strict quarantine in this context refers to confinement in an enclosure that precludes direct contact with people and other animals. A rabies vaccine should be administered at the time of entry into quarantine to bring the animal up to current rabies vaccination status. Administration of vaccine should be done as soon as possible. It is recommended that the period from exposure to vaccination not exceed 96 hours.<sup>59,60</sup> If vaccination is delayed, public health officials may consider increasing the quarantine period for dogs and cats from 4 to 6 months, taking into consideration factors such as the severity of exposure, the length of delay in vaccination, current health status, and local rabies epidemiology.

(3) Dogs and cats that are overdue for a booster vaccination and that have appropriate documentation of having received a USDA-licensed rabies vaccine at least once previously should immediately receive veterinary medical care for assessment, wound cleansing, and booster vaccination. The animal should be kept under the own-

er's control and observed for 45 days.<sup>39</sup> If booster vaccination is delayed, public health officials may consider increasing the observation period for the animal, taking into consideration factors such as the severity of exposure, the length of delay in booster vaccination, current health status, and local rabies epidemiology.

(4) Dogs and cats that are overdue for a booster vaccination and without appropriate documentation of having received a USDA-licensed rabies vaccine at least once previously should immediately receive veterinary medical care for assessment, wound cleansing, and consultation with local public health authorities.

(a) The animal can be treated as unvaccinated, immediately given a booster vaccination, and placed in strict quarantine (*see* Part I.B. 5. a) (2)).

(b) Alternatively, prior to booster vaccination, the attending veterinarian may request guidance from the local public health authorities in the possible use of prospective serologic monitoring. Such monitoring would entail collecting paired blood samples to document prior vaccination by providing evidence of an anamnestic response to booster vaccination. If an adequate anamnestic response is documented, the animal can be considered to be overdue for booster vaccination (*see* Part I. B. 5. a) (3)) and observed for 45 days.<sup>39</sup> If there is inadequate evidence of an anamnestic response, the animal is considered to have never been vaccinated and should be placed in strict quarantine (*see* Part I. B. 5. a) (2)).

(5) Ferrets that are overdue for a booster vaccination should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration factors such as the severity of exposure, time elapsed since last vaccination, number of previous vaccinations, current health status, and local rabies epidemiology, to determine need for euthanasia or immediate booster vaccination followed by observation or strict quarantine.

b) Livestock. All species of livestock are susceptible to rabies; cattle and horses are the most frequently reported infected species.<sup>3</sup> Any illness in an exposed animal should be reported immediately to the local health department and animal health officials. If signs suggestive of rabies develop, the animal should be euthanized, and the head or entire brain

(including brainstem) should be submitted for testing (*see* Part I.A. 10. Rabies diagnosis).

(1) Livestock that have never been vaccinated should be euthanized immediately. Animals that are not euthanized should be confined and observed on a case-by-case basis for 6 months.

(2) Livestock that are current on rabies vaccination with a USDA-licensed vaccine approved for that species should be given a booster vaccination immediately and observed for 45 days.

(3) Livestock overdue for a booster vaccination should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration factors such as severity of exposure, time elapsed since last vaccination, number of previous vaccinations, current health status, and local rabies epidemiology, to determine need for euthanasia or immediate booster vaccination followed by observation or strict quarantine.

(4) Multiple rabid animals in a herd and herbivore-to-herbivore transmission of rabies are uncommon.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, restricting the rest of the herd if a single animal has been exposed to or infected with rabies is usually not necessary.

(5) Rabies virus is widely distributed in the tissues of rabid animals.<sup>62-64</sup> Tissues and products from a rabid animal should not be used for human or animal consumption<sup>65,66</sup> or transplantation.<sup>67</sup> However, pasteurization and cooking will inactivate rabies virus.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, inadvertently drinking pasteurized milk or eating thoroughly cooked animal products does not constitute a rabies exposure.

(6) Handling and consumption of uncooked tissues from exposed animals might carry a risk for rabies transmission.<sup>69</sup> Persons handling exposed animals, carcasses, and tissues should use appropriate barrier precautions.<sup>69,70</sup> State and local public health authorities, state meat inspectors, and the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service should be notified if exposures occur in animals intended for commercial use. Animals should not be presented for slaughter in a USDA-regulated establishment if such animals originate from a quarantine area and have not been approved for release by the proper authority. If an exposed animal is to be custom slaughtered or home slaughtered for consumption, it should be slaughtered immediately after exposure, and all tissues should be cooked thoroughly.

c) Other animals. Other mammals exposed to a rabid animal should be euthanized

immediately. Animals maintained in USDA-licensed research facilities or accredited zoological parks should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis in consultation with public health authorities. Management options may include quarantine, observation, or administration of rabies biologics.

#### **6. Management of animals that bite humans.**

a) Dogs, cats, and ferrets. Rabies virus is excreted in the saliva of infected dogs, cats, and ferrets during illness and for only a few days before the onset of clinical signs or death.<sup>71-73</sup> Regardless of rabies vaccination status, a healthy dog, cat, or ferret that exposes a person should be confined and observed daily for 10 days from the time of the exposure<sup>74</sup>; administration of rabies vaccine to the animal is not recommended during the observation period to avoid confusing signs of rabies with rare adverse vaccine reactions.<sup>15</sup> Any illness in the animal should be reported immediately to the local health department. Such animals should be evaluated by a veterinarian at the first sign of illness during confinement. If signs suggestive of rabies develop, the animal should be euthanized, and the head or entire brain (including brainstem) should be submitted for testing (*see* Part I.A. 10. Rabies diagnosis). Any stray or unwanted dog, cat, or ferret that exposes a person may be euthanized immediately, and the head or entire brain (including brainstem) should be submitted for testing (*see* Part I.A. 10. Rabies diagnosis).

b) Other animals. Other animals that might have exposed a person to rabies should be reported immediately to the local health department. Management of animals other than dogs, cats, and ferrets depends on the species, the circumstances of the exposure, the epidemiology of rabies in the area, the exposing animal's history and current health status, and the animal's potential for exposure to rabies. The shedding period for rabies virus is undetermined for most species. Previous vaccination of these animals might not preclude the necessity for euthanasia and testing.

**7. Outbreak prevention and control.** The emergence of new rabies virus variants or the introduction of nonindigenous viruses poses a significant risk to humans, domestic animals, and wildlife.<sup>75-82</sup> A rapid and comprehensive response involves coordination of multiple agencies (*see* Part I.A. 3. Interdisciplinary approach) to accomplish the following outcomes<sup>83</sup>:

- Characterize the virus at the national reference laboratory.
- Identify and control the source of the introduction.



- Enhance laboratory-based surveillance in wild and domestic animals.
- Increase animal rabies vaccination rates.
- Restrict the movement of animals.
- Evaluate the need for wildlife intervention activities (eg, point infection control, trap-vaccinate-release programs, and oral rabies vaccination programs).
- Provide public and professional outreach and education.

**8. Disaster response.** Animals might be displaced during and after man-made or natural disasters and require emergency sheltering.<sup>84-86</sup> Animal rabies vaccination and exposure histories are often not available for displaced animals, and disaster response can create situations where animal caretakers might lack appropriate training or preexposure vaccination. In such situations, it is critical to implement and coordinate rabies prevention and control measures to reduce the risk of rabies transmission and the need for human postexposure prophylaxis. Such measures include the following actions:

- Coordinate relief efforts of individuals and organizations with the local emergency operations center before deployment.
- Examine each animal at a triage site for possible bite injuries or signs of rabies.
- Isolate animals exhibiting signs of rabies pending evaluation by a veterinarian.
- Ensure that all animals have a unique identifier.
- Administer a rabies vaccine to all dogs, cats, and ferrets unless reliable proof of current vaccination exists.
- Adopt minimum standards for animal caretakers as feasible, including use of personal protective equipment, completion of the preexposure rabies vaccination series prior to deployment, and provision of appropriate training.<sup>87</sup>
- Maintain documentation of animal disposition and location (eg, returned to owner, died or euthanized, adopted, or relocated to another shelter with address of new location).
- Provide facilities to confine and observe animals involved in exposures (*see* Part I. B. 6. Management of animals that bite humans).
- Report human exposures to appropriate public health authorities (*see* Part I. A. 2. Rabies virus exposure).

## C. Prevention and control methods related to wildlife

The public should be warned not to handle or feed wild mammals. Wild mammals and wild animal hybrids that expose persons, pets, or livestock should be considered for euthanasia and rabies testing. A person exposed by any wild mammal should immediately wash the wound thoroughly and report the incident to a health-care provider who, in consultation with public health authorities, can evaluate the need for postexposure prophylaxis.<sup>11,12</sup>

Translocating infected wildlife has contributed to the spread of rabies,<sup>75-80,88</sup> and animals that appear healthy can still be rabid. Therefore, translocation (ie, moving live animals from their point of capture and releasing them) of known rabies reservoir species should be prohibited.<sup>89</sup> Whereas state-regulated wildlife rehabilitators and nuisance-wildlife control operators should play a role in a comprehensive rabies control program, minimum standards for these persons who handle wild mammals should include rabies pre-exposure vaccination, specific rabies prevention and control training, and ongoing continuing education.

**1. Carnivores.** The use of oral rabies vaccines for mass vaccination of free-ranging wildlife should be considered in selected situations, with the approval of appropriate state and local agencies.<sup>16,90</sup> There have been documented successes using oral rabies vaccines to control rabies in wildlife in North America.<sup>90-93</sup> The currently licensed vaccinia-vectored oral rabies vaccine is labeled for use in raccoons and coyotes. Research to improve existing oral rabies vaccine and baits and to develop and test novel products to determine safety and efficacy must be encouraged. The distribution of oral rabies vaccines should be based on scientific assessments of the target species and followed by timely and appropriate analysis of surveillance data, with results provided to all stakeholders. In addition, parenteral vaccination (trap-vaccinate-release) of wildlife rabies reservoir species may be integrated into coordinated oral rabies vaccine programs to enhance their effectiveness. Continuous and persistent programs for trapping or poisoning wildlife are not effective in reducing populations of wildlife rabies reservoir species on a statewide basis. However, limited population control in high-contact areas (eg, picnic grounds, camps, and suburban areas) might be indicated for the removal of selected high-risk species of wildlife. State agriculture, public health, and wildlife agencies should be consulted for planning, coordination, and evaluation of vaccination or point infection control programs.<sup>16</sup>

**2. Bats.** From the 1950s to today, indigenous rabid bats have been reported from every state except Hawaii and have caused rabies in at least 54 humans in the United States.<sup>94-103</sup> Bats should be excluded, using appropriate methods, from houses, public buildings, and adjacent structures to prevent direct association with humans.<sup>104,105</sup> Such structures should then be made bat-proof by sealing entrances used by bats. Controlling rabies in bats through programs designed to reduce bat populations is neither feasible nor desirable.

## Part II. Recommendations for Parenteral Rabies Vaccination Procedures

### A. Vaccine administration

All animal rabies vaccines should be restricted to use by or under the direct supervision of a veterinarian.

ian,<sup>106</sup> except as recommended otherwise (see Part I. B. 1. Preexposure vaccination and management).

## B. Vaccine selection

All vaccines licensed by the USDA and marketed in the United States at the time of publication of this compendium are listed (Appendix 1). Newly approved vaccines and changes in label specifications made subsequent to publication should be considered as part of this list. Any of the listed vaccines can be used for revaccination, even if the product is not the same as the one previously administered. Vaccines used in state and local rabies control programs should have at least a 3-year duration of immunity. This constitutes the most effective method of increasing the proportion of immunized dogs and cats in any population.<sup>107</sup>

## C. Adverse events

Currently, no epidemiological association exists between any particular licensed vaccine product and adverse events.<sup>15,34,108-110</sup> Although rare, adverse events such as vomiting, injection site swelling, lethargy, hypersensitivity, and the occurrence of rabies despite previous vaccination of an animal have been reported. Adverse events should be reported to the vaccine manufacturer and to USDA APHIS's Center for Veterinary Biologics ([www.aphis.usda.gov](http://www.aphis.usda.gov); search for "adverse event reporting"). Although ill animals may not have a full immunologic response to vaccination, there is no evidence to suggest that adverse events are more likely to occur with rabies vaccination of ill than healthy animals. A veterinarian choosing to temporarily delay vaccinating an animal with an acute illness or condition should ensure that the animal is vaccinated as soon as possible. Animals with a previous history of anaphylaxis can be medically managed and observed after vaccination.<sup>56</sup> Severe adverse events related to rabies vaccination are extremely rare in animals. Decisions concerning rabies vaccination of animals with well-documented severe adverse events to rabies vaccine must be made within the context of a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship. Due consideration should be given to the attendant risks and benefits of not vaccinating, including regulatory noncompliance. Animals not currently vaccinated that experience a rabies exposure are at greater risk for infection and death and also put their owners and the community at risk.

## D. Vaccination of wildlife and wild animal hybrids

The safety and efficacy of parenteral rabies vaccines in wildlife and wild animal hybrids have not been established, and no rabies vaccines are currently licensed for use in these animals. Thus, any use of rabies vaccines in these animals is considered extralabel use. Zoos or research institutions may establish vaccination programs in an attempt to protect valuable animals, but these should not replace appropriate public health activities that protect humans (see Part I. B. 1. d) (3)).

## E. Accidental human exposure to rabies vaccines

Human exposure to parenteral animal rabies vaccines listed in Appendix 1 does not constitute a risk for rabies virus infection. Human exposure to vaccinia-vectored oral rabies vaccines should be reported to state health officials.<sup>111,112</sup>

## F. Rabies certificates

All agencies and veterinarians should use Form 51, the rabies vaccination certificate recommended by the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians,<sup>53</sup> or should use an equivalent. The form must be completed in full and signed by the administering or supervising veterinarian. Computer-generated forms containing the same information are also acceptable.

## References

1. Rabies. In: Heymann D, ed. *Control of communicable diseases manual*. 20th ed. Washington, DC: American Public Health Association, 2015;497-508.
2. International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses. Virus taxonomy: 2014 release. Order *Mononegavirales*: family *Rhabdoviridae*: genus *Lyssavirus*. 2014. Available at: [www.ictvonline.org/virusTaxonomy.asp](http://www.ictvonline.org/virusTaxonomy.asp). Accessed Jun 15, 2015.
3. Dyer JL, Yager P, Orciari L, et al. Rabies surveillance in the United States during 2013. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2014;245:1111-1123.
4. Castrodale L, Walker V, Baldwin J, et al. Rabies in a puppy imported from India to the USA, March 2007. *Zoonoses Public Health* 2008;55:427-430.
5. CDC. Rabies in a dog imported from Iraq—New Jersey, June 2008. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2008;57:1076-1078.
6. McQuiston JH, Wilson T, Harris S, et al. Importation of dogs into the United States: risks from rabies and other zoonotic diseases. *Zoonoses Public Health* 2008;55:421-426.
7. Velasco-Villa A, Reeder SA, Orciari LA, et al. Enzootic rabies elimination from dogs and reemergence in wild terrestrial carnivores, United States. *Emerg Infect Dis* 2008;14:1849-1854.
8. Beran GW. Rabies and infections by rabies-related viruses. In: Beran GW, ed. *Handbook of zoonoses section B: viral*. 2nd ed. Boca Raton, Fla: CRC Press, 1994;307-357.
9. Brown CM, Conti L, Ettestad P, et al. Compendium of animal rabies prevention and control, 2011. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2011;239:609-617.
10. Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists Infectious Disease Subcommittee. *Public health reporting and national notification for animal rabies*. 09-ID-12. Atlanta: Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists, 2009. Available at: [c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.cste.org/resource/resmgr/PS/09-ID-12.pdf](http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.cste.org/resource/resmgr/PS/09-ID-12.pdf). Accessed Jun 15, 2015.
11. Manning SE, Rupprecht CE, Fishbein D, et al. Human rabies prevention—United States, 2008. Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. *MMWR Recomm Rep* 2008;57(RR-3):1-28.
12. Rupprecht CE, Briggs D, Brown CM, et al. Use of a reduced (4-dose) vaccine schedule for postexposure prophylaxis to prevent human rabies. Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. *MMWR Recomm Rep* 2010;59(RR-2):1-9.
13. McQuiston JH, Yager PA, Smith JS, et al. Epidemiologic characteristics of rabies virus variants in dogs and cats in the United States, 1999. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2001;218:1939-1942.
14. Murray KO, Holmes KC, Hanlon CA. Rabies in vaccinated dogs and cats in the United States, 1997-2001. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2009;235:691-695.

15. Frana TS, Clough NE, Gatewood DM, et al. Postmarketing surveillance of rabies vaccines for dogs to evaluate safety and efficacy. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2008;232:1000–1002.
16. Hanlon CA, Childs JE, Nettles VF, et al. Recommendations of a national working group on prevention and control of rabies in the United States. Article III: rabies in wildlife. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 1999;215:1612–1618.
17. Slate D, Algeo TD, Nelson KM, et al. Oral rabies vaccination in North America: opportunities, complexities, and challenges. *PLoS Negl Trop Dis* 2009;3:e549.
18. Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists Surveillance/ Informatics Subcommittee. *Recommendations for the implementation of electronic laboratory reporting in the United States*. 09-SI-03. Atlanta: Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists, 2009. Available at: [c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.cste.org/resource/resmgr/PS/09-SI-03.pdf](http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.cste.org/resource/resmgr/PS/09-SI-03.pdf). Accessed Jun 15, 2015.
19. Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists Surveillance/ Informatics Subcommittee. *Process statement for immediately nationally notifiable conditions*. 09-SI-04. Available at: [c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.cste.org/resource/resmgr/PS/09-SI-04.pdf](http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.cste.org/resource/resmgr/PS/09-SI-04.pdf). Accessed Jun 15, 2015.
20. Hanlon CA, Smith JS, Anderson GR, et al. Recommendations of a national working group on prevention and control of rabies in the United States. Article II: laboratory diagnosis of rabies. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 1999;215:1444–1446.
21. Rudd RJ, Smith JS, Yager PA, et al. A need for standardized rabies-virus diagnostic procedures: effect of cover-glass mountant on the reliability of antigen detection by the fluorescent antibody test. *Virus Res* 2005;111:83–88.
22. AVMA. AVMA guidelines for the euthanasia of animals: 2013 edition. Available at [www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Documents/euthanasia.pdf](http://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Documents/euthanasia.pdf). Accessed Jun 15, 2015.
23. American Association of Zoo Veterinarians. *Guidelines for the euthanasia of nondomestic animals*. Yulee, Fla: American Association of Zoo Veterinarians, 2006.
24. CDC. Public health response to a potentially rabid bear cub—Iowa, 1999. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 1999;48:971–973.
25. Niezgoda M, Rupprecht CE. *Standard operating procedure for the direct rapid immunobistochemistry test (DRIT) for the detection of rabies virus antigen*. Atlanta: CDC, 2006. Available at: [rabiessurveillanceblueprint.org/IMG/pdf/cdc\\_drit\\_sop.pdf](http://rabiessurveillanceblueprint.org/IMG/pdf/cdc_drit_sop.pdf). Accessed Jun 15, 2015.
26. Lembo T, Niezgoda M, Velasco-Villa A, et al. Evaluation of a direct, rapid immunohistochemical test for rabies diagnosis. *Emerg Infect Dis* 2006;12:310–313.
27. Dürr S, Naïssengar S, Mindekem R, et al. Rabies diagnosis for developing countries. *PLoS Negl Trop Dis* 2008;2:e206.
28. Saturday GA, King R, Fuhrmann L. Validation and operational application of a rapid method for rabies antigen detection. *US Army Med Dep J* 2009;Jan-Mar:42–45.
29. Tizard I, Ni Y. Use of serologic testing to assess immune status of companion animals. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 1998;213:54–60.
30. Greene CE. Rabies and other lyssavirus infections. In: Greene CE, ed. *Infectious diseases of the dog and cat*. 3rd ed. London: Saunders Elsevier, 2006;167–183.
31. Rupprecht CE, Gilbert J, Pitts R, et al. Evaluation of an inactivated rabies virus vaccine in domestic ferrets. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 1990;196:1614–1616.
32. Moore SM, Hanlon CA. Rabies-specific antibodies: measuring surrogates of protection against a fatal disease. *PLoS Negl Trop Dis* 2010;4:e595.
33. Welborn LV, DeVries JG, Ford R, et al. 2011 AAHA canine vaccination guidelines. *J Am Anim Hosp Assoc* 2011;47:1–42.
34. Scherk MA, Ford RB, Gaskell RM, et al. 2013 AAHP feline vaccination advisory panel report. *J Feline Med Surg* 2013;15:785–808.
35. Aubert MF. Practical significance of rabies antibodies in cats and dogs. *Rev Sci Tech* 1992;11:735–760.
36. Muirhead TL, McClure JT, Wichtel JJ, et al. The effect of age on serum antibody titers after rabies and influenza vaccination in healthy horses. *J Vet Intern Med* 2008;22:654–661.
37. Shimazaki Y, Inoue S, Takahashi C, et al. Immune response to Japanese rabies vaccine in domestic dogs. *J Vet Med B Infect Dis Vet Public Health* 2003;50:95–98.
38. Cliquet F, Verdier Y, Sagné L, et al. Neutralising antibody titration in 25,000 sera of dogs and cats vaccinated against rabies in France, in the framework of the new regulations that offer an alternative to quarantine. *Rev Sci Tech* 2003;22:857–866.
39. Moore MC, Davis RD, Kang Q, et al. Comparison of anamnestic responses to rabies vaccination in dogs and cats with current and out-of-date vaccination status. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2015;246:205–211.
40. American Association of Equine Practitioners. Core vaccination guidelines: rabies. Available at: [www.aep.org/i-165.html](http://www.aep.org/i-165.html). Accessed Jun 15, 2015.
41. National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians Animal Contact Compendium Committee 2013. Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings, 2013. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2013;243:1270–1288.
42. Bender JB, Shulman SA, Animals in Public Contact Subcommittee of the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians. Reports of zoonotic disease outbreaks associated with animal exhibits and availability of recommendations for preventing zoonotic disease transmission from animals to people in such settings. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2004;224:1105–1109.
43. AVMA. Position on canine hybrids. Available at: [www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Pages/canine-hybrids.aspx](http://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Pages/canine-hybrids.aspx). Accessed Jun 15, 2015.
44. Siino BS. Crossing the line: the case against hybrids. *ASPCA Animal Watch* 2000;Winter:22–29.
45. Jay MT, Reilly KF, DeBess EE, et al. Rabies in a vaccinated wolf-dog hybrid. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 1994;205:1729–1732.
46. Petersen BW, Tack DM, Longenberger A, et al. Rabies in captive deer, Pennsylvania, USA, 2007–2010. *Emerg Infect Dis* 2012;18:138–141.
47. Roebing AD, Johnson D, Blanton JD, et al. Rabies prevention and management of cats in the context of trap-neuter-vaccine-release programmes. *Zoonoses Public Health* 2014;61:290–296.
48. CDC. An imported case of rabies in an immunized dog. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 1987;36:94–96.
49. CDC. Imported dog and cat rabies—New Hampshire, California. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 1988;37:559–560.
50. Rabies vaccination requirements for dogs. 42 CFR §71.51(c).
51. CDC. Bringing a dog into the United States. Available at: [www.cdc.gov/animalimportation/dogs.html](http://www.cdc.gov/animalimportation/dogs.html). Accessed Nov 25, 2015.
52. CDC. Frequently asked questions. Available at: [www.cdc.gov/animalimportation/lawsregulations/frequently-asked-questions.html#Confinement](http://www.cdc.gov/animalimportation/lawsregulations/frequently-asked-questions.html#Confinement). Accessed Nov 25, 2015.
53. National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians. Rabies vaccination certificate. Available at: [www.nasphv.org/Documents/RabiesVacCert.pdf](http://www.nasphv.org/Documents/RabiesVacCert.pdf). Accessed Nov 25, 2015.
54. Global Alliance for Rabies Control. Rabies blueprint. Available at: [www.rabiesblueprint.com](http://www.rabiesblueprint.com). Accessed Nov 25, 2015.
55. Rabies vaccine, killed virus. 9 CFR 113.209.
56. Greene CE. Immunoprophylaxis. In: Greene CE, ed. *Infectious diseases of the dog and cat*. 3rd ed. London: Saunders Elsevier, 2006;1069–1119.
57. Willoughby RE. “Early death” and the contraindication of vaccine during rabies treatment. *Vaccine* 2009;27:7173–7177.
58. Hanlon CA, Niezgoda M, Rupprecht CE. Postexposure prophylaxis for prevention of rabies in dogs. *Am J Vet Res* 2002;63:1096–1100.
59. Wilson PJ, Clark KA. Postexposure rabies prophylaxis protocol for domestic animals and epidemiologic characteristics of rabies vaccination failures in Texas: 1995–1999. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2001;218:522–525.
60. Wilson PJ, Oertli EH, Hunt PR, et al. Evaluation of a postexposure rabies prophylaxis protocol for domestic animals in Texas: 2000–2009. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2010;237:1395–1401.
61. Mansfield K, McElhinney L, Hübschle O, et al. A molecular epidemiological study of rabies epizootics in kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*) in Namibia. *BMC Vet Res* 2006;2:2–11.
62. Debbie JG, Trimarchi CV. Pantropism of rabies virus in free-ranging rabid red fox (*Vulpes fulva*). *J Wildl Dis* 1970;6:500–506.
63. Fekadu M, Shaddock JH. Peripheral distribution of virus in dogs inoculated with two strains of rabies virus. *Am J Vet Res* 1984;45:724–729.
64. Charlton KM. The pathogenesis of rabies and other lyssavi-

- ral infections: recent studies. *Curr Top Microbiol Immunol* 1994;187:95-119.
65. Afshar A. A review of non-bite transmission of rabies virus infection. *Br Vet J* 1979;135:142-148.
  66. CDC. Mass treatment of humans who drank unpasteurized milk from rabid cows—Massachusetts, 1996-1998. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 1999;48:228-229.
  67. CDC. Public health service guideline on infectious disease issues in xenotransplantation. *MMWR Recomm Rep* 2001;50(RR-15):1-46.
  68. Turner GS, Kaplan C. Some properties of fixed rabies virus. *J Gen Virol* 1967;1:537-551.
  69. Wertheim HFL, Nguyen TQ, Nguyen KAT, et al. Furious rabies after an atypical exposure. *PLoS Med* 2009;6:e1000044.
  70. US Department of Health and Human Services. Viral agents. In: *Bio-safety in microbiological and biomedical laboratories*. 5th ed. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2007;234-235.
  71. Vaughn JB, Gerhardt P, Paterson JC. Excretion of street rabies virus in saliva of cats. *JAMA* 1963;184:705-708.
  72. Vaughn JB, Gerhardt P, Newell KW. Excretion of street rabies virus in the saliva of dogs. *JAMA* 1965;193:363-368.
  73. Niezgoda M, Briggs DJ, Shaddock J, et al. Viral excretion in domestic ferrets (*Mustela putorius furo*) inoculated with a raccoon rabies isolate. *Am J Vet Res* 1998;59:1629-1632.
  74. Tepsumethanon V, Lumlerdacha B, Mitmoonpitak C, et al. Survival of naturally infected rabid dogs and cats. *Clin Infect Dis* 2004;39:278-280.
  75. Jenkins SR, Perry BD, Winkler WG. Ecology and epidemiology of raccoon rabies. *Rev Infect Dis* 1988;10(suppl 4):S620-S625.
  76. CDC. Translocation of coyote rabies—Florida, 1994. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 1995;44:580-581, 587.
  77. Rupprecht CE, Smith JS, Fekadu M, et al. The ascension of wildlife rabies: a cause for public health concern or intervention? *Emerg Infect Dis* 1995;1:107-114.
  78. Constantine DG. Geographic translocation of bats: known and potential problems. *Emerg Infect Dis* 2003;9:17-21.
  79. Krebs JW, Strine TW, Smith JS, et al. Rabies surveillance in the United States during 1993 (Erratum published in *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 1995;206:650). *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 1994;205:1695-1709.
  80. Nettles VF, Shaddock JH, Sikes RK, et al. Rabies in translocated raccoons. *Am J Public Health* 1979;69:601-602.
  81. Engeman RM, Christensen KL, Pipas MJ, et al. Population monitoring in support of a rabies vaccination program for skunks in Arizona. *J Wildl Dis* 2003;39:746-750.
  82. Leslie MJ, Messenger S, Rohde RE, et al. Bat-associated rabies virus in skunks. *Emerg Infect Dis* 2006;12:1274-1277.
  83. Rupprecht CE, Hanlon CA, Slate D. Control and prevention of rabies in animals: paradigm shifts. *Dev Biol (Basel)* 2006;125:103-111.
  84. Pets Evacuation and Transportations Standards Act of 2006. Public Law 109-308.
  85. CDC. Disaster information for pet shelters. Available at: [www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/petshelters.asp](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/petshelters.asp). Accessed Nov 25, 2015.
  86. AVMA. Disaster preparedness for veterinarians. Available at: [www.avma.org/disaster/default.asp](http://www.avma.org/disaster/default.asp). Accessed Nov 25, 2015.
  87. National Animal Control Association. Guidelines. Available at: [c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.nacanet.org/resource/resmgr/Docs/NACA\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.nacanet.org/resource/resmgr/Docs/NACA_Guidelines.pdf). Accessed Jun 15, 2015.
  88. Chipman R, Slate D, Rupprecht C, et al. Downside risk of translocation. *Dev Biol (Basel)* 2008;131:223-232.
  89. The Wildlife Society. Standing position statement: wildlife disease. Available at: [wildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/SP\\_WildlifeDisease1.pdf](http://wildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/SP_WildlifeDisease1.pdf). Accessed Jun 15, 2015.
  90. Slate D, Rupprecht CE, Rooney JA, et al. Status of oral rabies vaccination in wild carnivores in the United States. *Virus Res* 2005;111:68-76.
  91. Sidwa TJ, Wilson PJ, Moore GM, et al. Evaluation of oral rabies vaccination programs for control of rabies epizootics in coyotes and gray foxes: 1995-2003. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2005;227:785-792.
  92. MacInnes CD, Smith SM, Tinline RR, et al. Elimination of rabies from red foxes in eastern Ontario. *J Wildl Dis* 2001;37:119-132.
  93. Rosatte RC, Power MJ, Donovan D, et al. Elimination of arctic variant of rabies in red foxes, metropolitan Toronto. *Emerg Infect Dis* 2007;13:25-27.
  94. Messenger SL, Smith JS, Rupprecht CE. Emerging epidemiology of bat-associated cryptic cases of rabies in humans in the United States. *Clin Infect Dis* 2002;35:738-747.
  95. De Serres G, Dallaire F, Cote M, et al. Bat rabies in the United States and Canada from 1950-2007: human cases with and without bat contact. *Clin Infect Dis* 2008;46:1329-1337.
  96. CDC. Human rabies—Missouri, 2008. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2009;58:1207-1209.
  97. CDC. Human rabies—Kentucky/Indiana, 2009. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2010;59:393-396.
  98. CDC. Human rabies—Virginia, 2009. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2010;59:1236-1238.
  99. CDC. Presumptive abortive human rabies—Texas, 2009. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2010;59:185-190.
  100. CDC. Human rabies—Michigan, 2009. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2011;60:437-440.
  101. CDC. Human rabies—Wisconsin, 2010. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2011;60:1164-1166.
  102. CDC. US-acquired human rabies with symptom onset and diagnosis abroad, 2012. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2012;61:777-781.
  103. CDC. Human rabies—South Carolina, 2011. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2013;62:642-644.
  104. Greenhall AM. *House bat management*. Resource publication 143. Falls Church, Va: US Fish and Wildlife Service, 1982.
  105. Greenhall AM, Frantz SC. Bats. In: Hygnstrom SE, Timm RM, Larson GE, eds. *Prevention and control of wildlife damage—1994*. Available at: [icwdm.org/handbook/mammals/bats.asp](http://icwdm.org/handbook/mammals/bats.asp). Accessed Jun 15, 2015.
  106. AVMA. Model rabies control ordinance. Available at: [www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Documents/avma-model-rabies-ordinance.pdf](http://www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Documents/avma-model-rabies-ordinance.pdf). Accessed Jun 15, 2015.
  107. Bunn TO. Canine and feline vaccines, past and present. In: Baer GM, ed. *The natural history of rabies*. 2nd ed. Boca Raton, Fla: CRC Press Inc, 1991;415-425.
  108. Macy DW, Hendrick MJ. The potential role of inflammation in the development of postvaccinal sarcomas in cats. *Vet Clin North Am Small Anim Pract* 1996;26:103-109.
  109. Gobar GM, Kass PH. World Wide Web-based survey of vaccination practices, postvaccinal reactions, and vaccine site-associated sarcomas in cats. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2002;220:1477-1482.
  110. Kass PH, Spangler WL, Hendrick MJ, et al. Multicenter case-control study of risk factors associated with development of vaccine-associated sarcomas in cats. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2003;223:1283-1292.
  111. Rupprecht CE, Blass L, Smith K, et al. Human infection due to recombinant vaccinia-rabies glycoprotein virus. *N Engl J Med* 2001;345:582-586.
  112. CDC. Human vaccinia infection after contact with a raccoon rabies vaccine bait—Pennsylvania, 2009. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2009;58:1204-1207.

# Appendix 1

Rabies vaccines licensed and marketed in the United States, 2016.

Product name	Produced by	Marketed by	For use in	Dose	Age at primary vaccination*	Booster vaccination	Route of inoculation
Monovalent (inactivated)							
RABVAC 1	Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica Inc License No. 124	Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica Inc	Dogs and cats	1 mL	3 mo	Annually	IM or SC
RABVAC 3	Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica Inc License No. 124	Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica Inc	Dogs and cats	1 mL	3 mo	1 year later and triennially	IM or SC
			Horses	2 mL	3 mo	Annually	IM
EQUI-RAB with Havlogen	Merck Animal Health License No. 165A	Merck Animal Health	Horses	1 mL	4 mo	Annually	IM
DEFENSOR 1	Zoetis License No. 190	Zoetis	Dogs	1 mL	3 mo	Annually	IM or SC
			Cats	1 mL	3 mo	Annually	SC
DEFENSOR 3	Zoetis License No. 190	Zoetis	Dogs	1 mL	3 mo	1 year later and triennially	IM or SC
			Cats	1 mL	3 mo	1 year later and triennially	SC
			Sheep and cattle	2 mL	3 mo	Annually	IM
NOBIVAC: 1-Rabies	Zoetis License No. 190	Merck Animal Health	Dogs	1 mL	3 mo	Annually	IM or SC
			Cats	1 mL	3 mo	Annually	SC
NOBIVAC: 3-Rabies and 3-Rabies CA	Zoetis License No. 190	Merck Animal Health	Dogs	1 mL	3 mo	1 year later and triennially	IM or SC
			Cats	1 mL	3 mo	1 year later and triennially	SC
			Sheep and cattle	2 mL	3 mo	Annually	IM
IMRAB 1	Merial Inc License No. 298	Merial Inc	Dogs and cats	1 mL	3 mo	Annually	SC
IMRAB 1 TF	Merial Inc License No. 298	Merial Inc	Dogs and cats	1 mL	3 mo	Annually	SC
IMRAB 3	Merial Inc License No. 298	Merial Inc	Dogs and cats	1 mL	3 mo	1 year later and triennially	IM or SC
			Sheep	2 mL	3 mo	1 year later and triennially	IM or SC
			Cattle and horses	2 mL	3 mo	Annually	IM or SC
			Ferrets	1 mL	3 mo	Annually	SC
IMRAB 3 TF	Merial Inc License No. 298	Merial Inc	Dogs and cats	1 mL	3 mo	1 year later and triennially	IM or SC
			Ferrets	1 mL	3 mo	Annually	SC
IMRAB Large Animal	Merial Inc License No. 298	Merial Inc	Dogs and cats	1 mL	3 mo	1 year later and triennially	IM or SC
			Cattle and horses	2 mL	3 mo	Annually	IM or SC
			Sheep	2 mL	3 mo	1 year later and triennially	IM or SC
Monovalent (rabies glycoprotein; live canary pox vector)							
PUREVAX Feline Rabies	Merial Inc License No. 298	Merial Inc	Cats	1 mL	3 mo	Annually	SC
PUREVAX Feline Rabies 3 YR	Merial Inc License No. 298	Merial Inc	Cats	1 mL	3 mo	1 year later and triennially	SC
Combination (inactivated)							
Equine POTOMAVAC + IMRAB	Merial Inc License No. 298	Merial Inc	Horses	1 mL	3 mo	Annually	IM
Combination (rabies glycoprotein; live canary pox vector)							
PUREVAX Feline 3/Rabies	Merial Inc License No. 298	Merial Inc	Cats	1 mL	8 wk	Every 3 to 4 wk until 3 mo and annually	SC
					3 mo	3 to 4 wk later and annually	SC
PUREVAX Feline 4/Rabies	Merial Inc License No. 298	Merial Inc	Cats	1 mL	8 wk	Every 3 to 4 wk until 3 mo and annually	SC
					3 mo	3 to 4 wk later and annually	SC
Oral (rabies glycoprotein; live vaccinia vector)†							
RABORAL V-RG	Merial Inc License No. 298	Merial Inc	Raccoons and coyotes	NA	NA	As determined by local authorities	Oral

\*One month = 28 days. †Oral rabies vaccines are restricted for use in federal and state rabies control programs.

NA = Not applicable.

Information is provided by the vaccine manufacturers and USDA APHIS's Center for Veterinary Biologics and is subject to change.

## Appendix 2

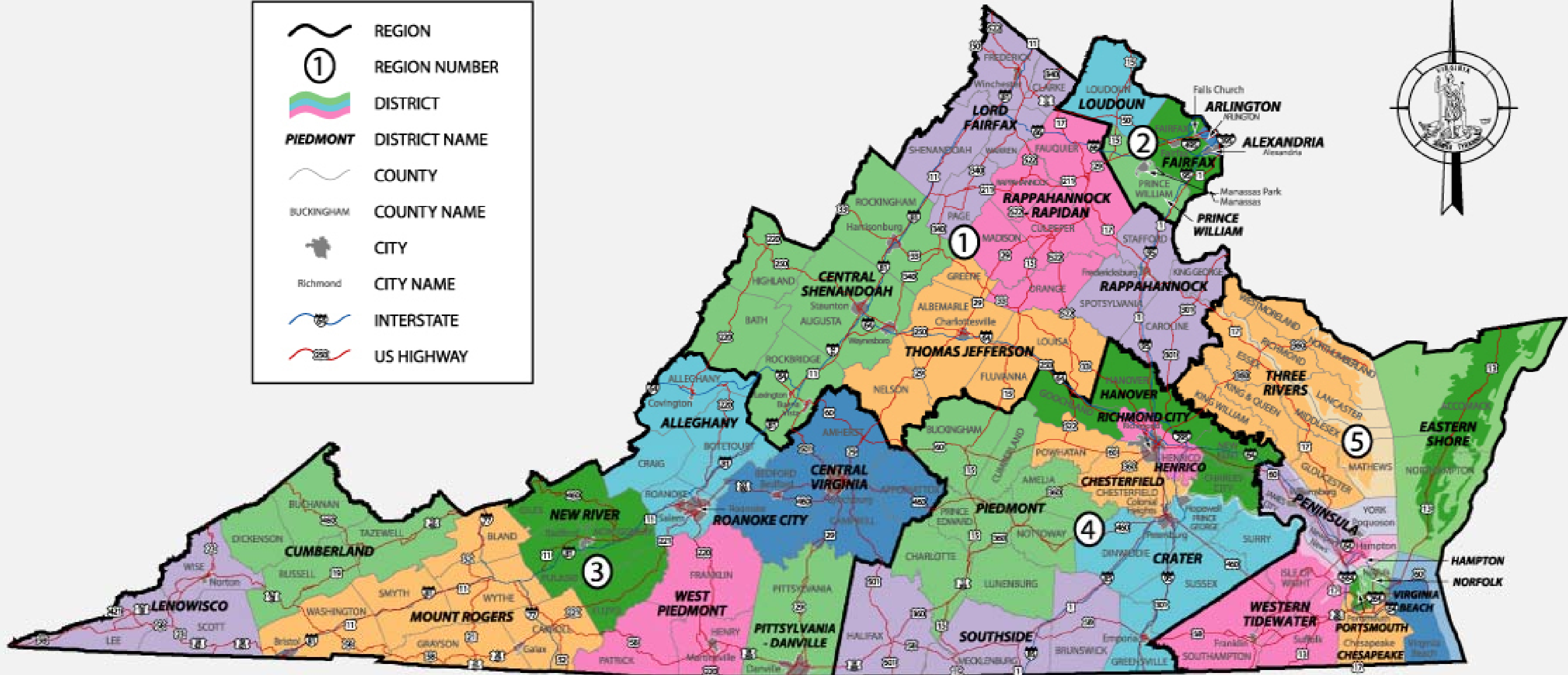
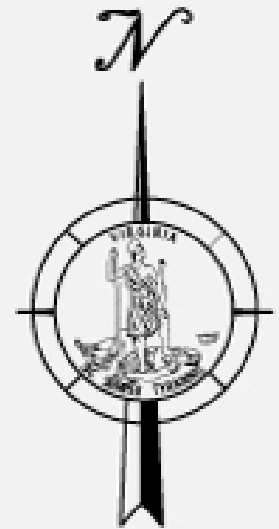
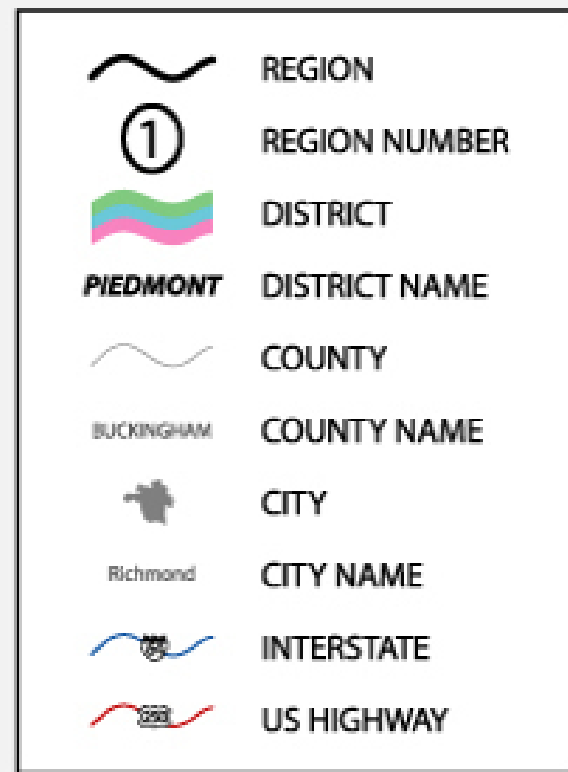
### Rabies vaccine manufacturer contact information

<b>Manufacturer</b>	<b>Phone No.</b>	<b>URL</b>
Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica Inc	800-638-2226	<a href="http://www.bi-vetmedica.com">www.bi-vetmedica.com</a>
Merck Animal Health Inc	800-521-5767	<a href="http://www.merck-animal-health-usa.com">www.merck-animal-health-usa.com</a>
Merial Inc	888-637-4251	<a href="http://us.merial.com">us.merial.com</a>
Zoetis	800-366-5288	<a href="http://www.zoetis.com">www.zoetis.com</a>

# Commonwealth of Virginia - Department of Health

## Division of Disease Prevention

Attachment 28



## Attachment 29

### Treasurers' Association of Virginia Dog Licensing Procedures Survey Summary, 2016

**Table 1. Summary of Selected Responses to Treasurers' Association of Virginia Dog Licensing Procedures Survey, 2016\***

\*For response rates, specific comments and complete responses to all questions see below

Questions	# (%) responding	Answers
Average number of licenses sold/year	51 (100%)	mean=3736.69, range: 205-18,927
Charge for 1 year license	49 (96%)	mean=\$8.19, range=\$2-10
Multiyear license offered?	51 (100%)	yes=23/51 (45%), no=28
Average total license revenue/year	51 (100%)	mean=\$23,953.23, range=\$942-95,000
Staff hours devoted to dog licensing/month	50 (98%)	mean=39.6, range=1-177
Dog licensing task that consumes most staff time	51 (100%)	data entry and maintenance, 32/51 (62.7%)
Dog licensing task that consumes most local gov't funding	51 (100%)	data entry and maintenance, 30/51 (58.8%)
Total program cost for dog licensing per year	50 (98%)	mean=\$14,873.22, range=\$650-72,500
How does your locality maintain dog license information?	51 (100%)	computer system 42/51 (82.3%) paper only 5/51 (9.8%) both computer and paper 4/51 (7.8%)
How does your locality maintain rabies certificate information?	48 (94%)	computer based 32/51 (62.7%) paper only 11/51 (21.5%) computer and paper files 5/51 (9.8%)
Is information manually keyed or is an automated system used?	47 (92%)	manual entry only 44/51 (86%) automated process or combination of automated and manual 3/51 (5.8%)
Percentage of dog owners purchasing a license/year < 60 days after rabies vaccination	42 (82%)	mean= 39.67%, range=<1-90%
Percentage of dog owners purchasing a license/year > 60 days after rabies vaccination	43 (86%)	mean=25.22%, range=1-80%
Interest in statewide database?	51 (100%)	yes=32/51 (62.7%), no=6/51 (11.7%), unsure=13/51 (25.5%)
Willingness to contribute funds to statewide system?	51 (100%)	yes=1/51 (2%), yes, provided contribution less than current admin costs=16/51 (31.3%), no=20/51 (39%), not sure=14/51 (27.4%)
Desire to opt out of a statewide system?	51 (100%)	yes=15/51 (29%), no=11/51 (21.5%), not sure=25/51 (49%)



**Survey distributed electronically through the Treasurers' Association of Virginia to 136 Virginia localities that sell licenses; 51 total responses, 51/136 localities that sell dog licenses = 37.5% treasurers who process dog licenses responded**

**Responding localities**

Counties: Stafford, Chesterfield, Tazewell, Spotsylvania, Gloucester, Rockbridge, Montgomery, Franklin, Middlesex, Accomack, Fauquier, Hanover, James City, Rockingham, Southampton, Augusta, Halifax, Nottoway, Northumberland, Mecklenburg, Alleghany, Amherst, Russell, Appomattox, Bedford, Powhatan, Culpeper, King William, Orange, Dickenson, Floyd, Nelson, Page, Patrick, Washington, Pulaski, Grayson, Rappahannock, Suffolk

Cities/Towns: Winchester, Franklin, Buena Vista, Falls Church, Harrisonburg, Waynesboro, Bristol, Roanoke, Emporia, Chesapeake, Charlottesville, Vinton

Using VDH regions responses came from:

Northern	1
Northwest	16
Southwest	17
Eastern	10
Central	<u>7</u>
	<b>51</b>

**(General note in regard to calculations below: where average ranges were given as an answer for any question, eg 500-600, middle of the ranges was used to calculate averages.)**

- 1. Please identify your jurisdiction: see summary above**
- 2. On average, how many county/city licenses for dogs does your locality sell per year?**  
51 responses (100% of respondents) mean=3736.69 range: 205-18,927
- 3. What does your locality charge for a 1 year county/city dog license for a spayed/neutered dog?**

51 responses (100% of respondents) mean=\$5.00 range=\$2-10

- 4. What does your locality charge for a 1 year county/city dog license for a dog that is NOT spayed/neutered?**

49 responses with one answer, 2 responses with 2 answers, but 51 responses total (100% of respondents); localities with 2 answers responded as follows: County of Rockbridge charges \$7.50 for an intact female and \$5.00 to license an intact male; Washington County charges \$6.00 for an intact female and \$7.00 for an intact male

**Mean and range of 49 localities                      \$8.19, \$2-10**

### Categories

No difference in price between neutered and intact: 12/51 (23.5%)

\$1 more for license for intact vs neutered dog: 1/51 (2%)

>\$1 (range of \$2-7 more) charge between intact and neutered: 38/51 (74.5%)

#### 5. Does your locality offer multiyear county/city dog licenses?

51 responses (100% of respondents) No	28/51 (55%)
Yes, in addition to 1 year licenses we offer 3 year licenses	15/51 (29%)
Yes, in addition to 1 year licenses we offer 2 and 3 year licenses	8/51 (15.6%)

#### 6. On average, how many county/city kennel licenses does your locality sell each year?

51 responses (100% of respondents); 2 localities indicated that they do not offer such licenses and 5 localities indicated that 0 kennel licenses are sold each year and it was presumed that these localities do not offer these licenses, therefore, 7 localities of those responding were assumed to not offer these licenses. Mean of the 44/51 (86.2%) localities that offer kennel licenses is 77.7 and the range is \$2-300.

mean=77.7                      range=2-300

#### 7. What does your locality charge for a county/city kennel license?

44 responses (100% of respondents who sell kennel license); of the remaining 44, kennel license fees ranged from \$15-200; 13/44 (32%) localities that offer kennel licenses reported only once price the median of 25 and a range of 15-50; of the remaining 31, fees are offered on a graduated scale from 5 to 50 dogs in a kennel or priced per number of dogs (eg, \$50 fee for every 20 tags)

#### 8. What is the average total revenue your locality obtains from dog licensing each year?

51 responses (100% of respondents) mean=\$23,953.23                      range=\$942-95,000

#### 9. How is the revenue from dog licensing typically used? (Circle all that apply)

**50 responses (100% of respondents)**

**Respondents were asked in this question to indicate all answers that applied:**

- a. The salary and expenses of the animal control officer and necessary staff; 7/51 (13.7%)
- b. The care and maintenance of a public animal shelter; 7/51 (13.7%)
- c. The maintenance of a rabies control program 2/51 (3.9%)

- d. Payments as a bounty to any person neutering or spaying a dog up to the amount of one year of the license tax as provided by ordinance 0
- e. Payments for compensation as provided in § 3.2-6553 (ie payments for death or injury of livestock and poultry) 2/51 (3.9%)
- f. Efforts to promote sterilization of dogs and cats 2/51 (3.9%)
- g. Funds just placed in General Fund. 42/51 (82%)
- h. Other. Describe

**number of localities responding “funds just placed in general funds” ONLY: 40/51 (78%)**

**number of localities that identified both general funds and other dispositions for licensing money: 2/51 (4%)** Alleghany reports that funds are placed in general funds and funds are also used for “the salary and expenses of the animal control officer and necessary staff”; Culpeper reports that in addition to these funds going into the general fund they are also used for the salary and expenses of the animal control officer and necessary staff, the care and maintenance of a public animal shelter and efforts to promote sterilization of dogs and cats

**number of localities that identified only other ways funds are used (ie did not identify general funds as a disposition for dog licensing money) 9/51 (17.6%)**

Spotsylvania: The salary and expenses of the animal control officer and necessary staff

The care and maintenance of a public animal shelter

The maintenance of a rabies control program

Efforts to promote sterilization of dogs and cats

Middlesex: The salary and expenses of the animal control officer and necessary staff

The care and maintenance of a public animal shelter

The maintenance of a rabies control program

Fauquier: The care and maintenance of a public animal shelter

City of Franklin: The care and maintenance of a public animal shelter

Appomattox: Payments for compensation as provided in § 3.2-6553 (ie payments for death or injury of livestock and poultry)

Washington: The salary and expenses of the animal control officer and necessary staff

The care and maintenance of a public animal shelter

Grayson: The salary and expenses of the animal control officer and necessary staff  
Payments for compensation as provided in § 3.2-6553 (ie payments for death or injury of livestock and poultry)

Rappahannock: The care and maintenance of a public animal shelter

Charlottesville: The salary and expenses of the animal control officer and necessary staff

**10. What is the average total revenue from dog licensing your locality transfers to the general fund of your locality each year?**

51/51 responses, range=0-95,000, mean= 22, 437.94

**11. On average per month, how many staff hours are devoted to the administrative tasks (eg data entry, data maintenance, license sales, follow up with owners who have not yet purchased a license, other customer service, etc) associated with dog licensing in your locality?**

50/51 localities gave a specific answer (98%), of the 50 responses range=1-177, mean=39.6

**12. Of the staff activities needed to administer your licensing program, which one consumes the most staff time? 51/51 (100%) responded to this question**

- a. Data entry and maintenance 32/51 (62.7%)
- b. Customer service (e.g, selling licenses and answering questions about/discussing license procedures with members of the general public) 12/51 (23.5%)
- c. Follow up with owners who have not purchased a license 7/51 (13.7%)
- d. Other intraoffice activities and discussions about licensing 0

**13. Of the staff activities needed to administer your licensing program, which one consumes the most local government funding? 51/51 responded (100%)**

- a. Data entry and maintenance 30/51 (58.8%)
- b. Customer service (e.g, selling licenses and answering questions about/discussing license procedures with members of the general public) 11/51 (21.5%)
- c. Follow up with owners who have not purchased a license 10/51 (19.6%)
- d. Other intraoffice activities and discussions about licensing 0

**14. On average per year, what is the total program cost associated with dog licensing in your locality (include management & staff time, postage, envelopes, license tags, software support, etc)?**

50/51 responded (98%), of the 50 responses Mean=14,873.22, range=650-72,500

**15. How does your locality maintain dog license information?**

51/51 responded (100%)

42/51 (82.3%) responded that a computer system was used to maintain records

5/51 (9.8%) paper only

4/51 (7.8%) both computer and paper

**16. How does your locality maintain rabies certificate information?**

51/51 responded, however 3 responses were unclear and could not be categorized

32/51 (62.7%) computer based

11/51 (21.5%) paper only

5/51 (9.8%) computer and paper files

**17. How long do you maintain records associated with dogs licensed in your locality? 51/51 responded**

a. <1 year 3 (5.8%)

b. 1-5 years 34 (66.6%)

c. 6-10 years 11 (21.5%)

d. >10 years 3 (5.8%)

**18. If a computer program is used to maintain rabies and/or dog licensing information, what type of system do you use?**

44/51 localities reported using at least one computer program related to these activities (86.2%)

Note: Wherever only one program is listed, only one of its kind was reported.

Programs included: Bright and Associates (BAI) (n=19)

Access database (n=3)

Alpha 4

AS 400 (n=7)

SunGard Community Plus

Munis (=2)

Excel

Petztrack

HTE

MCSJ

Keystone

DaveWare

In house program (n=6)

Naviline

EGTS

**19. Is the rabies certificate and dog licensing information manually keyed into your computer system or do you have an automated system that assists with data entry?**

51/51 responded (100%) although for 5 localities this question was not applicable because they use only paper based files for both rabies certificate and license data or it was not stated clearly that a computer system was used

Where this question was applicable/statistics could clearly be calculated:

44/51 (86%) responded manual entry

3/51 (5.8%) responded automated process (Petztrack, key in only new info, combination of manual and email download)

**20. What efforts are made if an owner does not present himself in 60 days to buy a license after you have received the rabies certificate information?**

51/51 responded

a. No follow up 13/51 (25.5%)

b. One reminder is mailed to the owner 19/51 (37.2%)

c. A reminder is mailed to the owner and, if no response within a certain period of time, a second reminder is mailed 8/51 (15.6%)

d. Other. (n=11; 21.5%) Describe: Given to Animal Control (n=6)  
Reminder(s)/bill sent to owner and if no reply, then sent to animal control (n=4)  
One reminder is sent when time permits

**21. On average per year, what percentage of dog owners in your locality purchase a license within 60 days of your office receiving a rabies certificate?**

42/51 responded (82.3%)

Of the 42 responding Mean= 39.67% range=<1-90%

**22. On average per year, what percentage of owners in your locality purchase a dog license after 60 days have passed from when your office receives a rabies certificate?**

43/51 (86.2%) responded

Of the 43 responding Mean=25.22% range=1-80%

**23. Would you be willing to have veterinarians in your locality license dogs when they vaccinate them for rabies and supply them with the necessary tags?**

51/51 responded

31/51 (60.7%) Yes

9/51 (17.6%) No

11/51 (21.5%) Not sure

**24. Would you be willing to pay veterinarians in your locality to license dogs when they vaccinate them for rabies?**

51/51 responded

9/51 (17.6%) Yes

26/51 (51%) No  
16/51 (31.3%) Not sure

**25. Would your locality be interested in having rabies certificate and licensing information from your locality included in a statewide database that could be accessed remotely by animal control officers?**

51/51 responded  
32/51 (62.7%) Yes  
6/51 (11.7%) No  
13/51 (25.5%) Not sure

**26. Would your locality want the option of opting out of a statewide database that could be accessed remotely by animal control officers?**

51/51 responded  
15/51 (29%) Yes  
11/51 (21.5%) No  
25/51 (49%) Not sure

**27. Would you be willing to participate in a statewide database that captured rabies certificate and licensing information that animal control officers could access if the administrative time associated with processing licensing and rabies certificate information was reduced for your office?**

51/51 responded  
31/51 (60.7%) Yes  
5/51 (9.8%) No  
15/51 (29%) Not sure

**28. Would you be willing to participate in a statewide database that captured rabies certificate and licensing information that animal control officers could access if, as a result, your locality received less or no money from dog licensing?**

51/51 responding  
17/51 (33.3%) Yes  
16/51 (31.3%) No  
18/51 (35.3%) Not sure

**29. Would you be willing to participate in a statewide database that captured rabies certificate and licensing information that animal control officers could access if all or part of the information contained in this database was exempted from Freedom of Information Act requests?**

51/51 responded  
23/51 (45%) Yes

7/51 (13.7%)            No  
21/51 (41%)            Not sure

**30. Would you be willing to participate in a statewide database that captured rabies certificate and licensing information that animal control officers could access if your office or locality was required to contribute funding for the maintenance of such as system?**

51/51 responded

- a. Yes 1/51            (2%)
- b. Yes, provided our contribution was less than our current cost of administering a licensing program 16/51            (31.3%)
- c. No 20/51            (39%)
- d. Not sure 14/51 (27.4%)

**31. Would your locality be interested in transferring all of the responsibility of licensing to another entity such as a state government agency?**

51/51 responses

- 33/51 (64%)            Yes
- 18/51 (36%)            No

**32. Would your locality need to modify any existing local ordinances related to licensing if another entity such as a state government agency assumed the complete responsibility of licensing?**

- 34/51 (66.6%)            Yes
- 3/51 (5.8%)            No
- 14/51 (27.4%)            Not sure

**33. What aspect of a statewide database that captured rabies certificate and licensing information that animal control officers could access would prevent you from participating or be a nonstarter in regard to participation? (circle all that apply)**

**49/51 (96%) responded; respondents had the option of choosing more than one answer and so the sum total of the responses will be more than 51**

- a. Contributing any funds to such a system 21/51 (41%)
- b. No ability to exempt all or part of the information captured in this system from being requested via the Freedom of Information Act 7/51 (13.7%)
- c. Loss of any licensing revenue 10/51 (19.6%)
- d. No aspect of a statewide database would be so concerning that my office would not want to participate 13/51 (25.5%)
- e. Other. Describe:
  - 1 none
  - 1 Open to full discussion of idea
  - 1 would need more information
  - 1 Would not want the cost to exceed what it is already costing the locality to administer



1 All of the above

1 That be a management question. As Treasurer I would say contributing any fund to such a system

1 No statewide participation at all

All of the above (this response was noted here and not included in the statistics above)

#### Comments:

Forty three percent (22/51) local treasurers offered general comments about dog licensing. The majority of comments (n=8) related to the dog licensing process. Other comments were associated with topics including licensing compliance, the concept of a statewide system, the concept of licensing, microchip implants, the need for additional information and/or dialogue about licensing and the desire to maintain licensing as function of local government.

- Only 30% of the dogs in Stafford County that are vaccinated are in compliance with purchasing a dog tag.
- County Administration feels that animal licensing should be done at the locality and that more consideration should be given to the cost and process of using microchips vs. the licensing program
- Dog licensing takes an inordinate amount of time to administer since the state began requiring Treasurers' Offices to track all rabies vaccinations given in our respective localities.
- The collecting of this information is a benefit and concern of the Health Dept and/or Animal Control NOT the Treasurer. Therefore the task for collection of such information should be administered and enforced by those departments.
- It's a waste of time.
- I'd like to hear more about the various options listed in this survey and the impact it would have on my office.
- Current process is slow, generates little net-profit, it's inconvenient for dog owners.
- It is my feeling that the vets that vaccinate the dogs should issue the licenses that run concurrent with the rabies, all maintained for the state by the vet.
- based on the vet rabies certificates received, we only have about 40% compliance overall
- BILLING HAS BEEN A REAL ISSUE AND A PROBLEM FOR THIS OFFICE. WE ARE UNDER STAFFED TO DEVOTE THE TIME TRULY NEEDED.
- We do have a \$10.00 late fee for tags not purchased on time. Per dog
- The online Petztrack database had made a significant impact on reducing time spent on Rabies licensing. Provided the statewide database would also be absorbing any additional cost of operation we would be willing to participate.
- This is a prime example of the inefficiency of government. The revenue received by the locality is de minimis. There is no reason to duplicate documentation of compliance of rabies vaccinations with a "PET" license and create another government entity to oversee it.
- Council would have to adopt ordinances; however I believe our City would be very interested in working on a State-Wide system.
- For the items answered "unsure", I feel that I am not in a position to make a stand on behalf of my locality.

- Extremely high maintenance and workload for very little revenue. Should have never been unloaded on the Treasurer's Office. Good common sense to let the vets offices sell them when the animal is vaccinated.
- The way dog licensing is currently handled does not make dog owners get their dogs vaccinated. No vaccination results in no bill - Getting a vaccination results in receiving a bill. Our dog tag sales are steadily declining each year.
- We already have vets issue dog license when they give the rabies shot. Some of the questions are better answered by Animal control officers.
- The recent dog lic system was and still is STUPID. Our dog tag sales have gone down each year.
- Localities need to sell a dog tag. This cuts down on dog diseases, and people hoarding animals, abusing animals, etc. Without control by local government, the enforcement is lost.
- The sooner a statewide agency accepts this task the better!
- I don't believe that the dog license program increases rabies vaccination in our locality. Many people just don't purchase a license, and the ones who do are the responsible people who would get their dog vaccinated anyway.

### **Notes for consideration and summary narrative of Treasurers' Association of Virginia Dog Licensing Procedures Survey:**

Below is a summary of the information contained above as it relates to the language of the resolution and the TAV's original comments about and stated goals of this study. The resolution language instructed the Virginia Department of Health to "review Virginia's companion animal licensing procedures and assess the feasibility of establishing a statewide system for recording rabies vaccinations and licensing that may include a statewide database of licensed companion animals that can be remotely accessed by animal control officers in the field." The TAV's overarching thoughts about the licensing process and need for this study included the concern that the current process is inefficient in that a citizen must first obtain a rabies vaccination for his dog through his veterinarian and then purchase a license through his local treasurer's office. Further, a TAV pilot study performed in 2015, which included nine Virginia localities, reflected a 57% compliance rate associated with licensing with a range of 28-85% compliance. In addition, the TAV representative offered that local governments do not generate much funding via companion animal licensing and the administrative effort to contact owners who do not present to purchase a licensing within 60 days of receiving a rabies certificate was often unrewarding in its return. From the TAV's perspective, the main goals of this study included the following: (i) for animals to be vaccinated for rabies and be traceable with the goal of reducing local animal control time and expense associated with reuniting lost animals with their owners and (ii) to create a more efficient system of licensing that would involve either the rabies vaccination certificate serving as a license or veterinarians issuing licenses at the point of vaccination and perhaps having localities consider an automated data entry system for rabies vaccination. The TAV representative also articulated that it was not his association's desire, in proposing the consideration of a statewide database, to create a database that was subject to the Freedom of Information Act emphasizing that the main goal was to

create a way that animal owners could be identified quickly.

Of the responding local treasurers, the average annual revenue from dog licensing each year is \$23,953.23 with a range of \$942-\$95,000. One treasurer's office did not report an annual average total program cost. Of the 50 (98%) localities reporting annual total program cost, the average cost was \$14,873.22 with a range of \$650-\$72,500. Fifty localities (98%) reported both an approximate annual revenue and an approximate annual total program cost in regard to dog licensing. Of these 50 localities, 10 (20%) reported that the total program cost associated with dog licensing was greater than the revenue it generated and 3 localities reported that licensing was cost neutral. Of the localities reporting a dog licensing revenue that was greater than the program costs, (37/50, 74%) reported an average of \$13,026.18 in revenue with a range of \$110-\$50,000. The majority of all respondents (78%, 40/51) indicated that all dog licensing revenue is placed in the locality's general fund. All 51 local treasurers reported the typical number of dog licenses sold in that locality each year. On average, each locality sells 3,737 licenses per year with a range of 205-18,927. Forty-nine localities responded when asked for the charge of a one year dog license for a dog that is spayed or neutered, the average of which is \$5 with a range of \$2-\$10. The average associated with those same 49 localities for dogs not spayed or neutered is approximately \$8 with the same range of \$2-\$10. Fifty-five percent (28/51) of localities indicated that they do not offer multi-year county/city dog licenses.

The average of the 42/51 (82.3%) localities that responded when asked for the percentage of dog owners in the locality who purchased a license within 60 days of the treasurer's office receiving a rabies certificate is 39.67% (range=<1-90%) and that after 60 days have passed, an average of 25.2% (range=1-80%) of the remaining dog owners will purchase a license. All 51 local treasurers responded that of all the activities needed to administer the dog licensing program, the one that consumes the most staff time and government funding is data entry (32/51, 62.7% and 30/51, 58.8% respectively). Of the 50 localities that responded when asked about staff time requirements, localities reported an average of 39.6 hours per month are devoted to the administrative tasks associated with dog licensing. The majority of respondents indicated that a computer based system is used to capture both rabies certificate and dog licensing information (32/51 and 42/51 respectively) and of the localities whose response clearly indicated that a computer based system was used to capture rabies certificate information and/or dog licensing information, 44/51 (86.2%) reported that this information was entered manually while three localities (5.8%) reported some type of automated system for data entry.

Of the local treasurers who responded to the study, the majority (31/51, 60.7%) indicated that they would be willing to have veterinarians in the locality license dogs when they vaccinate them for rabies and would supply them with the necessary tags. The majority (26/51, 52%) also indicated that they would not be willing to pay veterinarians to license dogs.

In regard to a statewide system, the majority (32/51, 62.7%) of respondents indicated that they would be interested in having rabies certificate and licensing information from their locality included in a statewide database that could be accessed remotely by animal control officers. A similar majority (31/51, 60.7%) indicated support for participating in a statewide system if that resulted in a reduction in administrative time associated with processing licensing and rabies certificate information for the localities. Sixty four percent of local treasurers (33/51) were interested in transferring all of the responsibility of licensing to another entity such as a state government agency. The majority (34/51, 66.6%) indicated that existing local ordinances related to licensing would need to be modified if another entity, such as a state government agency, assumed the complete responsibility of licensing. In regard to opting out of participating in a statewide system, 29.4% (15/51) of local treasurers responded that they would want the option of not participating in such a system with 49% (25/51) responding that they were not sure if they would want the ability to opt out. Responses pertaining to the potential loss of local funding associated with a statewide system were evenly distributed with 17/51 (33.3%) of localities reporting that they would be willing to participate in a statewide system even if, as a result, the localities received little or no funding from dog licensing, 16/51 (31.3%) indicating that they would not be willing to participate in a statewide system if this was the result and the remaining 18/51 (35.3%) indicating they were not sure.

When asked about a willingness to contribute funds for the maintenance of a statewide database that captured rabies certificate and licensing information that animal control officers could access, 39% (20/51) of responding localities indicated that they would not be willing to contribute funds to such a system while 27.4% (14/51) were unsure about their willingness to contribute funds to support such a system. Twenty-three of 51 respondents (45%) indicated that they would be willing to participate in a statewide database provided all or part of the information in such a system was exempt from Freedom of Information Act requests while 21/51 (41%) reported being unsure about their willingness to participate in such a system on this condition. The most common response when asked about what would prevent localities from participating in a statewide system was contributing any funds to such a system (21/51, 41%); however, 25.5% (13/51) of responding localities indicated that no aspect of a statewide database would be so concerning that they would not want to participate.

Forty-three percent (22/51) of local treasurers offered general comments about dog licensing. The majority of comments (n=8) related to the dog licensing process. Other comments were associated with topics including licensing compliance, the concept of a statewide system, the concept of licensing, microchip implants, the need for additional information and/or dialogue about licensing and the desire to maintain licensing as function of local government.



**Attachment 30**

**Animal Control Officers Dog Licensing Procedures Survey Summary, 2016**

**Table 1. Summary of Selected Responses to Animal Control Officers Dog Licensing Procedures Survey, 2016\***

\*For more complete responses to all questions and response rates, see below

<b>Question (all designed to capture per locality data)</b>	<b># responses/% of responses</b>	<b>Answers</b>
Average number of dogs with county/city tags picked up/sheltered per year	35 (68%)	mean=42, range=1-190
Average number of dogs picked up with county/city tags successfully returned to their owner per year	32 (63%)	mean=38.5, range=1-170; dogs with tags returned to owner on average each year/dogs with tags on average presenting to animal control per year=38.5/42=91.6%
Average number of dogs without county/city tags picked up/sheltered per year	34 (66%)	mean=308, range=2-1710;
Average number of dogs picked up without county/city tags successfully returned to their owner per year	32 (63%)	mean=105.5, range=5-425; dogs without tags returned to owner on average each year/dogs without tags on average presenting to animal control per year=105.5/308=34%
Average length of stay in public shelter for dogs with county/city tags	41 (80%)	mean=2.5 days, range=0.75-17.5 days
Average length of stay in public shelter for dogs without county/city tags	38 (75%)	mean=18.9, range=1.13-105 days
Average cost to a locality for a dog to spend one night in public shelter	40 (78%)	mean=\$15.64, range=\$0-97
Average hours per month, devoted to the tasks associated with county/city dog licensing	39 (76%)	mean=43.5 hours, range=1-458 hours
Direct access to locality's county/city dog licensing information vs. asking someone at the Treasurer's Office	51 (100%)	direct access=23/51 (45%), no direct access=28/51 (55%)
Interest in having rabies certificate and county/city dog licensing information from your locality included in a statewide database that could accessed remotely	51 (100%)	yes=34/51 (66%), no=4/51 (8%), not sure=9 (17%), no opinion=4/51 (8%)
Interest in statewide system if locality received less money as a result	51 (100%)	yes=18 (32%), no=18 (32%), not sure=18 (32%)

**Responding localities (out of 133 to which survey was distributed)**

This survey was distributed electronically to animal control agencies in 133 Virginia localities. Initially, a link to the online survey was distributed via the Virginia Animal Control Association listserv. Responses were received from ten localities. VACA was not able to verify how many local animal control agencies received the link, and not all animal control officers are members of VACA. The Department of Health elected to redistribute the survey. Using contact email provided on the 2015 Animal Control Survey, collected by VDACS, the survey and a link to the online survey were sent to 133 animal control agencies. The independent cities of Fredericksburg, Poquoson and Williamsburg were not sent surveys, as their animal control enforcement is performed under contract by other localities.

Counties: Botetourt, Chesterfield, Spotsylvania, Gloucester, James City, York, Portsmouth, Henrico, Bath, Fluvanna, Wythe, Bland, Westmoreland, Richmond, Montgomery, Loudoun, King George, Roanoke, Charlotte, Franklin, Rockingham, New Kent, Alleghany, Cumberland, Fairfax, Campbell, Pulaski, Caroline, Bedford, Madison, Greensville, Augusta, Goochland, Carroll, Dickenson, Powhatan, Hanover, Smyth, Mathews

Cities/Towns: Winchester, Galax, Vienna, Lynchburg, Norfolk, Wytheville, Chesapeake, Alexandria, Martinsville, Falls Church, Franklin, Staunton, Suffolk, Colonial Heights, Radford

VDH Regions represented:

N Loudoun, Fairfax, Vienna, Alexandria, Falls Church n=5

NW Spotsylvania, Bath, Fluvanna, King George, Rockingham, Caroline, Madison, Augusta, Winchester, Staunton n=10

C Chesterfield, Henrico, Charlotte, New Kent, Cumberland, Greensville, Goochland, Powhatan, Hanover, Colonial Heights n=10

E Gloucester, James City, York, Portsmouth, Westmoreland, Richmond, Mathews, Norfolk, Chesapeake, Franklin (city), Suffolk n=11

SW Botetourt, Wythe, Bland, Montgomery, Roanoke, Franklin, Alleghany, Campbell, Pulaski, Bedford, Carroll, Dickenson, Smyth, Galax, Lynchburg, Wytheville, Martinsville, Radford n=18

Responses received for 54 localities (54/133=40%); as answers for Wythe/Bland/Wytheville as well as Westmoreland County/Richmond Co are combined, total number of answers possible to any question other than question #1 in survey is 51.

**Note: When a range of numbers was given for an answer, the median of that range was used as the answer.**

## 1. What county/city jurisdiction do you serve? (see summary above)

### 2. For dogs with county/city license tags:

a. On average, how many dogs with county/city tags does your locality pick up/shelter per year?

- 35/51 responses were reported in a way that a number could be calculated, mean=42, range=1-190
- 32/51 responded in a way such that a percentage of total dogs coming to their attention each year who have tags could be calculated; mean=15.9%, range=0.5-66%

b. How many dogs that you pick up with county/city tags are successfully returned to their owner?

- 32/51 responses were reported in a way that a number could be calculated, mean=38.5, range=1-170 and so percentage of dogs with tags that are returned to owner =  $38.5/42=91.6\%$
- 38/51 responses to this question with either a percentage or in such a way that a percentage could be calculated; average=89.5%, range=25-100%

c. What is the average length of stay for a dog with a county/city tag in your shelter? 41/51 responses, average=2.5 days, range=0.75-17.5 days

### 3. For dogs without county/city license tags:

a. On average, how many dogs without a county/city tag does your locality pick up/shelter per year?

- 34/51 responses were reported in a way that a number could be calculated, mean=308, range=2-1710
- 37/51 responses were reported in a way such that a percentage of total dogs coming to localities' attention each year who do not have tags could be calculated; mean=82%, range=16-99.5%

b. How many dogs that you pick up without county/city tags are successfully returned to their owner?

- 32/51 responses were reported such that a number could be calculated, mean=105.5, range=5-425, so using the mean from 3a,  $105.5/308=34\%$  of dogs w/out tags successfully returned
- 37/51 responses were reported in such a way that a percentage of total dogs without county tags who are successfully returned to their owners could be calculated, mean=37%, range=5-95%

c. What is the average length of stay for a dog without a county/city tag in your shelter?

- 38 of 51 responses; mean=18.9 days, range=1.13-105

### 4. What is the cost to your locality for 1 dog to stay in the shelter for 1 night?

- 40 of 51 responses indicated one dollar figure per night; average\$15.64, range=\$0-97



- 7 localities indicated an initial/intake fee plus then a different fee per night: \$25.00 First night, \$11.00 all other days; \$17 per day plus \$50 vacc fee; \$20 first night \$10 each additional; \$20 pickup fee, \$8 per additional nights; \$28.50 up to \$9/day; 10 first 5 each night there after; \$20.00 impoundment fee + \$10.00 a day

**5. What does your locality charge for a 1 year county/city dog license for:**

- a neutered/spayed dog? 51/51 responses; mean=\$5.27; range=\$2-10
- an intact (NOT spayed/neutered) dog? 49/51 responses; mean=\$9.22; range \$2-25

**6. How many county/city kennel licenses does your locality sell each year?**

42/51 responses; average=539, range=0-5527

**7. What does your locality charge for a county/city kennel license? (Please list all options available)**

- 12/51 responses indicated one price, median=\$50, range=\$15-50
- 9 responses indicated that either a locality did not offer kennel licenses and one was unsure
- 28 responses indicated a range of prices depending on the number of dogs housed in a kennel. Reported prices range from \$10 to \$140. Number of dogs associated with kennel tags ranges from 1-50.

**8. Do you have microchip scanner? YES or NO**

48/51 Yes

3/51 No

**9. If you do have a microchip scanner:**

a. How many do you have for use in the shelter? 47/51 responses could be analyzed; mean=2.3, range=1-8

b. How many do you have for use in the field? 51/51 responses; mean=2, range=0-11

**10. What does your locality do regarding non-compliance with county/city dog licensing?**

(Check all that apply)

a. Go door to door in search of non-complaint owners, n=11

b. Go only to homes where there are complaints of noncompliance, n=37

c. Go to dog parks or other areas where dogs and owners may congregate in search of non-compliant owners, n=5

d. No action taken to track down non-compliant dog owners, n=2

e. Assess charges on a dog that is brought in without a county/city license, when claimed by an owner, n=30

f. Other:

- List of non-compliant owners are given to ACO by treasurer's office
- Address on calls for service
- call from list from treasures office

- officers go door to door only in cases of rabies exposure in a specific area; Licenses are routinely checked when responding to any type of complaint
- compliance checks on other animal complaints
- Enforce non-compliance on any complaints we respond to
- we also send out a series of notices for compliance before we go knocking on doors
- If we pick up an animal and the owner is non-compliant with Rabies or License they get a summons or warning
- Treasury department contacts me with noncompliance and summons issued if not complied with immediately
- The Deputy will issue a comply order for a county license
- they are mailed monthly reminders
- Call non-compliance owners to remind them to purchase after receiving list from treasurers office.
- Mail a notice of non-compliance
- give 5 days to comply
- summons issued once the determination is made that the dog does not have county tags or rabies vaccine.
- post signs in neighborhoods as reminder to get tags and warn people picking up their dog from the shelter if they do not have a current tag
- Every domestic animal complaint, owner is checked
- Match vaccination reports to licensed dogs

**11. How is the revenue from county/city dog licensing in your locality typically used?**

(Check all that apply)

- a. Salary and expenses of the animal control officer and necessary staff, n=11
- b. Care and maintenance of the public animal shelter, n=8
- c. Maintenance of a rabies control program, n=0
- d. Payments as a bounty to any person neutering/spaying a dog, up to the amount of one year of the license tax as provided by ordinance, n=1
- e. Payments for compensation as provided in §3.2-6553 (payments for death or injury of livestock and poultry, n=4
- f. Efforts to promote sterilization of dogs and cats, n=2
- g. Funds are placed in General Fund, n=41 (n=35 of responses that indicated fees go into GF only)
- h. Other
  - Not sure, all the money is turned into the Treasurers Office
  - our fees collected fail to cover the shelters expenses for a year

**12. On average per month, how many man hours are devoted to the tasks associated with county/city dog licensing in your locality?** 39 responses; average=43.5 hours, range 1-458 hours

**13. Do you have direct access to your locality's county/city dog licensing information vs. asking someone at the Treasurer's Office? YES or NO, 51 responses**

Yes n=23

No n=28

**14. How does your locality maintain dog county/city license information? 50/51 responses**

- a. Computer program n=39 (computer only)
- b. Paper files, n=1
- c. Other. Describe \_n=10 number of responses where localities indicated both computer and paper are used

Other responses also recorded included; Treasurer's office, Treasurer's office has on computer, only at treasurers office, we can access the info 24 hours a day

**15. How does your locality verify rabies certificate information? 52 responses (some responding in more than one category)**

- a. Computer program, n=5
- b. Proof of license, n=13
- c. Paper files, n=14
- d. Other.
  - Computer; paper files kept to enter in computer
  - Proof of license and paper files
  - Computer and actual rabies certificate from vet
  - Proof of license and Paper files
  - Computer program, proof of license, and paper files
  - Proof of license and paper files
  - Proof of license circled above; plus noted if no proof, will contact their veterinarian
  - Proof of license and paper files
  - computer program; proof of license; and paper files were all circled on paper copy
  - Computer program (also checked); Verify information from the vet where the rabies vaccine was given
  - paper files, computer files, calling the veterinary office,
  - Call the vet and must see certificate
  - proof of license and paper file
  - Certificate information provided by Veterinarians as per 3.2-6529
  - Must present rabies certificate to purchase license
  - contact the vet if owner can not provide the original
  - Proof of Rabies certificate required
  - Certificate must be shown to get license
  - Ask for rabies certificate
  - calling veterinarian/clinic for verification

**16. Do you have access in the field to any of the following? (Check all that apply)**

- a. Computer with access to county databases, n=10
- b. Computer with wifi access, n=17
- c. Smart phone with wifi access, n=18
- d. Smart phone with limited data access, n=10
- e. Cell phone or radio only, n=30
- f. None of the above. Describe/explain what you do have access to

- cell phone or radio to contact dispatch
- computer with wifi access as well as cell phones and radios, but do not have direct access to county databases
- some have smart phone with wifi access
- Paper copy printed off each year
- Call treasurers office
- We call the treasurer and ask or the shelter has a paper file
- Computer, phone, and radio contact with dispatchers that can access the system
- MDT, Radio
- cell phone with no wifi access
- Radio only
- We have computers in each truck but they have limited access to the internet because of VCIN/NCIC
- radio and personal cell phone is used

**17. Would you be interested in having rabies certificate and county/city dog licensing information from your locality included in a statewide database that could accessed remotely?** a. Yes b. No c. Not sure d. No opinion

51 responses

Yes n=34

No n=4

Not sure n=9

No opinion n=4

**18. Would you be interested in having rabies certificate and county/city dog licensing information from your locality included in a statewide database, even if you could not access it remotely from the field?**

a. Yes b. No c. Not sure d. No opinion

51 responses

Yes n=30

No n=10

Not sure n=8

No opinion n=3

**19. Would you be willing to participate in a statewide database that captured rabies certificate and county/city dog licensing information which animal control officers could access if, as a result, your locality received less money from licensing?** a. Yes b. No c. Not sure

51 responses

Yes n=18

No n=18

Not sure n=15

**20. Would you be willing to participate in a statewide database that captured rabies certificate and county/city dog licensing information which animal control officers could**

**access, if all or part of the information contained in this database was exempted from Freedom of Information Act requests?** a. Yes b. No c. Not sure

51 responses

Yes n=27

No n=5

Not sure n=19

**21. How would mandatory microchipping of dogs affect your locality? (Check all that apply)**

- a. Save your locality money due to more animals being identified and returned to home, thereby reducing the total number of animal-hours in the shelter, n=23
- b. Save your locality time, due to a faster return to owner, n=21
- c. Result in less compliance with licensing, n=8
- d. Result in greater compliance with licensing, n=8
- e. Make no difference in cost, n=5
- f. Make no difference in time, n=3
- h. Not sure, n=9

**22. Please feel free to share any general comments about county/city licensing of dogs:**

- Requiring dog license information to be entered into a database is an unfunded mandate most jurisdictions in Virginia can not afford. In Chesterfield County, the Office of the Treasurer would fund the cost of entering the data with additional staff and man hours associated with the task. In reference to microchips, not all citizens in the County could afford the purchase of the microchip and the maintenance cost associated with the microchip, such as cost to register or change address information. The burden placed on the county for unfunded mandates and cost associated to citizens is too great.
- Database would be good if only used by animal control officers. Not to be used by rescue [cannot read] or just general public should not be allowed to see info on database. Make stronger penalties for non-compliance of tags.
- would most likely be difficult to enforce with the community, similar issue with rabies and licensing already
- Ref. To microchipping if they are not registered then its still hard to locate owner. Note--on fax cover page there was a note: summary reflects information from Wythe & Bland Counties and town of Wytheville. Difficult to separate out/know exact #s for 2 & 3. -estimate maybe 30-50 dogs/year with tag and 300-500 without tags -estimated that ~90% of dogs with tags are returned to owner
- For questions #2 and 3 we do not track those statistics in our system. Last year we renewed/or issued 25,315 dog licenses. We allow owners to purchase up to a 1, 2, or 3 year license to over the length of the rabies vaccine. We estimate that we license ~49% of the dogs in our county based on national averages on #of dogs/populations. We generate over \$450,000 in revenue for our department from dog licenses. We have justified and pay for department positions from the revenue that we generate. We would like to see some way to use microchip as part of or in place of the license tag itself for both dogs and cats.

- number 13: "Yes and No the licenses we sell at the Shelter we keep a copy and send the other to the Treasurer. They do not give us copies of theirs because their form is computerized. However, we can call and ask during business hours.
- we hold a rabies clinic every year in October. Our county dog license for the new year goes are available for purchase, we always offer both. it's very effective with 80% success rate.
- Feel a system similar to Tennessee would be the best option.
- Seems to be another example of "big government". Strongly disagree with this concept which will again put more work on the local grass roots level while straining and reducing local revenue; only to add this money to the state's coffers. . The concept of mandating a microchip for dogs sounds appealing to some, but those in the field know that seldom are these chips ever activated or registered by the owner at the time of implantation and even fewer still maintain a yearly contract on the chip, therefore rendering them completely ineffective. Unfortunately, most residents that we encounter think they are installing a "GPS tracking device" that allows them to obtain a real time location of their pet when it is missing. ( Mandatory micro-chipping of TNR cats should be strongly considered long before enforcing dog owners to do so.)
- chips are good and chips are bad Helps find owners quicker, New owners don't change the name with the chip company and can lead to a goose chase a lot of lost time
- If everyone micro chipped their dog, there would be a faster return of animals reclaimed. I do recommend having your pet micro-chipped. However, I do not agree in making it mandatory.
- All shelters should have same data base for tracking license even if we don't collect license. We should have owners info stored or accessible
- Microchipping will only work if the dog owners actually register the chips after they are bought.
- 75% of microchipped animals picked up by officers have either incorrect owner information registered for chip or no information at all.
- Make mandatory microchipping a part of or in lieu of licensing fee. If you have a microchip ID#, often the county license metal tag is redundant.
- Rabies tags if worn is just as easy to find an owner as a county tag. Name plate or tag with the owners information, address, name, and a contact number is the fastest, and easiest.
- Who would be responsible for entering rabies certificates and licenses if it were a state wide data base Also do not believe mandatory micro chipping would be all that beneficial
- I believe that when ever they have a Rabie clinic they should sell the city/county dog tags right there. Also in my City we sell cat tags all cats in the City of Galax are required by law to have a current cat tag.
- We do not have an automated system for the animal shelter operations. We do everything by hand, so I do not have the breakdown of the number of dogs that came I with or with out tags. However, in 2015 844 dogs were picked up & 515 dogs were returned to owner.

## **Summary narrative of Animal Control Officers Dog Licensing Procedures Survey:**

ACOs were asked about the disposition of dogs with county or city tags. When asked about the average number of dogs with county/city tags that a locality picks up or shelters annually, 35 (35/51, 68.6%) responses were recorded in such a way that an absolute number of dogs could be calculated. The average of these 35 responses was 42 with a range of 1-190. Because some of the 51 surveys contained both average absolute numbers and average percentages of dogs with county/city tags that a locality picks up or shelters annually, 32 (32/51, 62.7%) responses to the same question were reported in a way that an average percentage of dogs each year with county/city tags that are picked up or sheltered could be calculated. The average of these 32 responses was 15.9% with a range of 0.5-66%.

When asked about the number of dogs without county/city tags that a locality picks up or shelters annually, 34 responses (34/51, 66.5%) were reported in such a way that an absolute number could be calculated. The average of these 34 responses was 308 with a range of 2-1710. Because some of the 51 surveys contained both average absolute numbers and average percentages of dogs without county/city tags that a locality picks up or shelters annually, 37 responses (37/51, 72.5%) to the same question were reported in a such a way that an average percentage of dogs each year without county/city tags are picked up or sheltered could be calculated. The average of these 37 responses was 82% with a range of 16-99.5%.

When asked how many dogs with county/city tags are successfully returned to their owners, 32 responses were reported in such a way that an absolute number could be calculated and resulted in an average of 38.5 and a range of 1-170. When compared to the average number of dogs with evidence of a county/city tag that come to the attention of animal control each year (n=42), this results in a 91.6% average return to owner rate per year for those dogs presenting to animal control with county/city tags. Because some of the 51 surveys contained both average absolute numbers and average percentages of dogs with county/city tags that are successfully returned to their owners each year, 38 responses (38/51, 74.5%) to this same question were reported in such a way that a percentage of dogs with county/city tags that come to the attention of animal control that are successfully returned to their owners could be calculated, resulting in an average yearly percentage of 89.5% with a range of 25-100%.

When asked about the success rate of returning dogs to their owners when a dog presents to animal control without evidence of a county/city tag, 32 responses were reported in such a way that an absolute number could be calculated and resulted in an average of 105.5 and a range of 5-425. This average result for return to owner when compared with the average number of dogs that come to the attention of animal control each year without county/city tags, results in an average of 34% (105.5/308) of dogs each year without tags successfully returned. Because some of the 51 surveys contained both average absolute numbers and average percentages of dogs without county/city tags successfully returned to their owners each year, 37 responses (37/51, 72.5%) to this same question were reported in a way that a percentage of dogs without

city/county tags who come to the attention of animal control are successfully returned to their owner each year resulting in an average yearly percentage of 37% with a range of 5-95%.

Forty-one responses were received when animal control officers were asked about the average length of stay in a local shelter for a dog with a county/city tag. Average length of stay for dogs with a county city tag was 2.5 days with a range of 0.75-17.5 days. When asked about dogs without evidence of a county/city tag, the average length of stay calculated from the 38 responses to this question was 18.9 days with a range of 1.13-105 days.

Animal control officers were also asked for information about dog license fees and costs to the locality for sheltering. While seven localities indicated an intake cost plus a daily cost for sheltering dogs, 40 localities indicated one fee per day for sheltering a dog. The average daily fee for these 40 localities was \$15.64 with a range of \$0-95. Fifty-one responses were obtained when ACOs were asked about the locality charge for a one year dog license resulting in an average of \$5.27 and a range of \$2-10 for a neutered dog and an average of \$9.22 with a range of \$2-25 for an intact animal. Forty-two responses were received in regard to the number of kennel licenses sold in each locality per year with an average of 539 and a range of 0-5527 calculated. Twelve responses indicated only one price for a kennel license the average of which was \$50 with a range of \$15-50 and 28 responses to this question reporting indicated a range of prices depending on the number of dogs housed in a kennel. Reported prices range from \$10 to \$140. The number of dogs associated with kennel tags ranged from 1-50 within the 36 responses associated with kennel tag cost.

When ACOs were asked about microchip scanners, 48 responses (48/51, 94%) indicated possession of a microchip scanner with only 3 responses indicating a lack of a scanner. Of the forty-seven responses that could be analyzed when ACOs were asked about how many microchip scanners were available for use in a locality's shelter, an average of 2 scanners with a range of 1-8 was calculated. Fifty-one responses were obtained when ACOs were asked about the number of scanners available in the field, with an average of 2 and a range of 0-11 calculated.

When asked for responses to non-compliance with county/city dog licensing, ACOs were offered a number of possible responses and were told to choose all that applied or offer other responses. Responses were as follows: (i) go door to door in search of noncompliant owners, n=11, (ii) go only to homes where there are complaints of noncompliance, n=37, (iii) go to dog parks or other areas where dogs and owners may congregate in search of non-compliant owners, n=5, (iv) no action taken to track down non-compliant dog owners, n=2 and (v) assess charges on a dog that is brought in without a county/city license, when claimed by an owner, n=30. Additional answers (n=18) indicated a range of responses to non-compliance from active outreach, such as contacting dog owners who have not presented to purchase a license in person, by telephone or mail, to incident based responses such as inquiring about licensure when responding to another complaint or if a case of rabies has been reported in an area.



Similarly, when asked about how the revenue from county/city dog licensing in a locality is typically used, ACOs were offered a range of possible responses and were told to choose all that applied. The majority (n=41) indicated that this revenue was placed directly in the locality's general fund and, of these 41 responses, 35 indicated no other disposition for licensing funds. Specific responses were as follows: (i) salary and expenses of the animal control officer and necessary staff, n=11, (ii) care and maintenance of the public animal shelter, n=8, (iii) maintenance of a rabies control program, n=0, (iv) payments as a bounty to any person neutering/spaying a dog, up to the amount of one year of the license tax as provided by ordinance, n=1, (v) payments for compensation as provided in §3.2-6553 (payments for death or injury of livestock and poultry, n=4, (vi) efforts to promote sterilization of dogs and cats, n=2, (vii) funds are placed in General Fund, n=41. The survey question regarding the number of man hours per month that ACOs devote to the tasks associated with county/city dog licensing in a locality received 39 responses, the average of which was 43.5 hours with a range of 1-458 hours.

ACOs were asked about the information technology available in their localities to assist with dog licensing and rabies certificate information. When asked if ACOs had direct access to the locality's county/city dog licensing information versus asking someone at the Treasurer's Office, 51 responses were received with 23 (45%) indicating no direct access and the remaining 28 (55%) indicating that there was direct access to this information. When asked about how their locality's dog licensing information was maintained, 50 responses (50/51, 98%) were obtained with 39 indicating that this information was computer based, 1 response indicating a paper based system only with the remainder reporting a combination of both computer and paper records. When asked how a locality verifies rabies certificate information, some ACOs indicated more than one answer with 14 indicating paper files, 13 reports of proof of license and 5 reporting a computer program. Additional responses (n=20) to this question represented a combination of the possible answers listed previously as well as other methods such as contacting veterinary hospitals and obtaining a rabies certificate from an owner. Animal control officers responding to this survey reported a wide variety of information technology provided for use in the field and were prompted to choose all answers that applied. Answers to this question included (i) computer with access to county databases, n=10, (ii) computer with Wi-Fi access, n=17, (iii) smart phone with Wi-Fi access, n=18, (iv) smart phone with limited data access, n=10 and (v) cell phone or radio only, n=30.

ACOs were asked several questions to elicit their thoughts about a statewide database that captured rabies certificate and county/city dog licensing information. When asked if they would be interested in having rabies certificate and county/city dog licensing information from their localities included in a statewide database that could be accessed remotely, 51 responses were received with 34 (66.6%) indicating support for this type of database, 4 not being in favor and the remainder unsure or having no opinion. When ACOs were asked about their interest in a statewide database containing this same information, even if it could not be accessed from the field, 30 (30/51, 59%) responded in support, 10 responded as not in favor and the remaining 11

were unsure or had no opinion. ACOs were also asked about their perspective on a statewide database as previously described if, as a result of the development of such a system, their locality received less or no money from licensing and of 51 responses, 18 indicated support (35.3%), 18 indicated opposition (35.3%) and the remaining 15 (29.4%) were unsure about their willingness to participate. Finally in regard to a statewide database, ACOs were asked about their willingness to participate in a system like this if all or part of the information contained in this database was exempted from Freedom of Information Act requests. To this question 51 responses were captured with 27 (53%) in support, 5 (9.8%) indicating opposition and 15 (29.4%) choosing “unsure.”

ACOs were asked how making microchip implant mandatory in their localities might affect them and were asked to indicate all responses offered that applied. Responses were as follows: (i) save your locality money due to more animals being identified and returned to home, thereby reducing the total number of animal-hours in the shelter, n=23, (ii) save your locality time due to a faster return to owner, n=21, (iii) result in less compliance with licensing, n=8, (iv) result in greater compliance with licensing, n=8, (v) make no difference in cost, n=5, (vi) make no difference in time, n=3 and (vii) not sure, n=9.

Twenty general comments were received from the ACOs completing this survey. Topics associated with these comments included considerations about the value of microchip implants, dog license revenue and compliance and further considerations about a statewide database.

## Attachment 31

### Virginia Veterinary Medical Association Dog Licensing Procedures Survey Summary, 2016

Survey distributed electronically to 887 veterinarian members of the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association's (VVMA) through that organization's member directory. These 887 VVMA members represent 88% of the total veterinarian membership of the VVMA at the time the survey (n=1008) was distributed and 100% of the VVMA veterinarian membership for which email addresses were available. Of the 887 veterinarian VVMA members contacted, there is evidence that 886 (99.9%) received the survey. Of the 886 who received the survey, 76 responded and of those, one survey was discarded as it only contained one response. This resulted in a response rate of 8.5% (75/886) of those VVMA members contacted. Of the 1008 veterinarians who were members of the VVMA when this survey was distributed, 31/1008 (~3.0%) were listed within the VVMA directory as veterinarians associated with industrial/government/research work, 23/1008 (2.3%) were listed as veterinarians who work in academia, 30/1008 (3.0%) were listed as retired and 20/1008 (2.0%) are listed as 2016 graduates. Using the remaining membership categories, all of which are associated with private hospitals or private practitioners, for the purposes of this study, it was assumed that the majority (904/1008, 89.7%) of veterinarians who were VVMA members at the time the survey was distributed were clinicians currently engaged in private practice work and, therefore, represent a population of veterinarians who work in settings where performing the clinical service of rabies vaccination is common.

#### Responding localities

Counties: Roanoke, Stafford, Orange, Page, Chesterfield, Montgomery, James City, Frederick, Fairfax, Augusta, Prince George, Greene, Rockingham, Mecklenburg, Fauquier, Bedford, Pittsylvania, Clarke, Accomack, Loudoun, Henry, Hanover, Shenandoah, Henrico, Rappahannock, Northumberland, King George, Albemarle, Goochland, Suffolk, Henry, Craig, Prince William, Louisa, Patrick

Cities/Towns: Alexandria, Arlington, Virginia Beach, Falls Church, Richmond City, Hampton Norfolk, Staunton, Manassas, Chesapeake

Of the 75 surveys analyzed, 73 (97.3%) responded in a manner that allowed their practice county or city to be categorized by VDH region and results were as follows:

Northern	16
Northwest	17
Southwest	16
Eastern	11
Central	<u>13</u>
	73

**1. In what county do you practice or have your practice headquarters? \_\_\_ (see responses noted above)\_\_\_\_\_**

**2. Approximately how many dogs do you vaccinate for rabies annually?\_\_\_\_\_**

63/75 (84%) responses

Average=1275

Median=725

Range=0-15,000

**3. On average, approximately how many hours per week do you or your staff devote to communicating with/sending to your local treasurer's office information about rabies certificates associated with dogs your practice vaccinates?\_\_\_\_\_**

49/75 (65%) responses

Average=2.4 hours

Median=1 hour

Range= 0-20 hours

**4. Would you be willing to license dogs at the point of vaccination? (Choose any that apply) 74/75 (98%) responses**

a. Yes n=10/74 (13.5%)

b. Yes, provided there was very little additional administrative time associated with the licensing aspect of the service to my client 34/74 (50%)

c. Yes, provided I was compensated for my time 21/74 (28%)

d. Yes, provided I did not have to administer any other part of a locality's licensing program 21/74 (28%)

e. Yes, provided I did not need to handle or keep track of any local government funds 24/74 (32%)

f. No 20/74 (27%)

**5. Would you be in favor of the development of a statewide database containing rabies certificate and licensing information that animal control officers could access? (choose any that apply) 72/75 (96%) response**

a. Yes 17/72 (23%)

b. Yes, as long as animal control officers found this system useful 30/72 (41.6%)

c. Yes, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly 30/72 (41.6%)

d. Yes, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public 35/72 (48.6%)

e. No 12/72 (16.7%)

**6. Do you offer microchipping as a clinical service through your practice?**

74/75 (98.6%) responses

a. Yes 67/74 (90.5%)

b. No 7/74 (9.5%)

**7. Approximately what percentage of your clients use microchips as a form of pet identification?**

57/75 (76%) numerical responses from which an average could be calculated indicated that an

Average=25%

Range=3-75%

**8. Would you support requiring that all dogs be microchipped?**

73/75 (97.3%) responses

a. Yes 35/73 (48%)

b. No 38/73 (52%)

**9. Would you support a microchip serving as the county or city license, instead of the dog tag?**

74/75 (98.6%) responses

a. Yes 42 (56.8%)

b. No 32 (43.2%)

**10. Please feel free to share any general comments about county/city licensing of dogs:**

- Forty-One (41) respondents did not answer this question
- Thirty-four (34) provided comments
- General trends:
  - Two (2) asked recommended licensing cats (6%)
  - Ten (10) thought this should be a government duty and vets should not be involved (29%)
  - Four (4) had no opinion (12%)
  - Six (6) were concerned about owner noncompliance and how to enforce the requirements (18%)
  - Twelve (12) respondents commented about microchips (35%)
    - Four (4) were not in favor of a microchip requirement (all cited the cost of microchipping as prohibitive).
    - four (4) were in favor of a microchip requirement and liked the idea of using the microchip as the license for ease of tracing ownership
    - Two (2) were unsure about including a microchip requirement.
    - Two (2) respondents were in favor of a microchip requirement only if it was low-cost/free to owners
  - Other miscellaneous responses included:
    - one respondent who wanted to do away with county licenses entirely and go to a statewide licensing system
    - one who had concerns about how veterinarians would be taxed/reimbursed for selling licenses at their clinics
    - a few had concerns that dogs owners don't see any benefit in licensing their dogs currently and would likely not be amenable to further requirements.
- All Comments:
  - If you charge lower fees for spayed and neutered dogs and micro-chipped dogs it would be good. Private veterinarians are not tax-collectors.

- I'm unsure if it benefits or not. I'm neutral.
- clients already do not vaccinate their dogs now because I am required by law to turn them in to the county. I also have clients that drive to WV to get their vaccine, only 20 -40 minutes away. I think requiring us to be responsible for licensure will drive more people away and result in less animals being vaccinated. Its only a tax and we are taxed enough now
- People need to be responsible for vaccinating and government needs to stay out of it. If people don't then they will suffer the consequences.
- We are currently selling county dog license at our clinic and the owners love getting them at the same time of their rabies vaccine. It does involve more administrative work for our staff, which we are not receiving compensation. We do it as an added service for our clients. While microchipping all dogs would make it easier to return lost dogs home it would be cost prohibitive for many owners. It is hard to get some owners to get a 5-10 dollar rabies and so asking that they get a \$42 microchip which provides no health benefit is ridiculous. Also, there may be difficulty for new owners of previously microchipped owners to update/change their information. A statewide database for rabies vaccinations and licensure would be ok if there was appropriate staff to enter information. It is probably not needed though because most dogs get their rabies vaccination and tags within their county and their county ACO would be able to check with the county/clinics when/if needed.
- It is an excessive burden to force veterinarians to be bill collectors for the state by issuing dog licenses. We are not a state funded organization that enforces dog or cat licensure.
- how would a microchip serve as licensing when Rabies has to be given every 3 years?
- Renewal notices need to be sent! I have once allowed my own dog to lapse because I was never billed. Online and by mail renewal needs to be easy.
- we do little vaccinating because we are an emergency practice. We do need a more user friendly way to id dogs brought in after hours
- Keep government out.
- I think owners would like it if the RV certificate or microchip could double as the state license.
- dogs lose tags and they can be transferred to another dog. I think a microchip is a good form of permanent identification.
- I am a faculty member at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital at Virginia Tech. I am a specialist and don't practice general practice (e.g. vaccines). I answered this survey as a dog owner and an active volunteer at the Montgomery County Shelter.
- I might support mandatory Microchips if there were a cheap alternative for clients. I charge \$75. Many clients cannot afford this.
- As usual you forget the obvious situation of requiring licensing for dogs and not cats. The licensing was originally begun as a way of ensuring that dogs were vaccinated for rabies. For every dog that tests positive for rabies approximately 5-10 cats positive. Cats must be required to be licensed!! Check with the City of Alexandria for information.

- I would love to offer licenses at my practice, but have been denied by Chesterfield County to sell them here (saying the market is saturated and they can't sell any more licenses) but I especially like the idea that if pets are microchipped, that can serve as their licensure and the state-wide database would really help animal control officers and be more available to practioners who want to reunite found-dogs with their owners
- Micro chipping is a much better system for tracing animals, but the administration might put a financial burden on many dog owners. Compliance would be difficult to enforce!
- County licenses should be able to be used to reunite lost pets and their owners. Promoting this as a benefit would likely increase licensing compliance. As it is now, pet owners don't see any benefit to licensing other than complying with legal requirements and providing income to the county.
- I work in a county that borders 3 others. It is quite frustrating dealing with all of the individual county licenses. There should be more uniformity in the licensing, e.g. the license should be good state wide.
- The reason why I said no to supporting the microchip serve as the city license because you are not able to visualize it at a dog park or on a stray dog from afar.
- I think it would be too cumbersome to update the microchip info every time. that would add a ridiculous amount of work for my staff that I would come out of my bottom line. Also I do not want to be in any way part of the city's enforcement of their licensing. that is not my job.
- I think it is a lost revenue stream since Animal Control Agencies are too understaffed to enforce any rules you make.
- What about cats and ferrets?
- Is the thought to have the dog microchipped and then scanned each time a Rabies vaccine is done and that information entered into a data base? Would the localities still charge for licensing? Would people assume that if the dog has been microchipped that it wouldn't need to be boosted for Rabies? Does this make assumptions that everyone (animal control, police, veterinarians) would have a scanner that would read all chips?
- I am generally not in favor of acting like the DMV. I vaccinate dogs from different states and different counties outside the scope of what I already report to Loudoun County. I gather this will mean I need to report to other counties as well. I must be compensated in order to collect, whether reimbursement or straight Tax credit of the percentage of what I collect. 90% plus people pay with credit card and roughly 1.8-2.0% (higher for AMEX) is the transaction percentage that the business should be compensated...minimally. Are we going to be required to collect data on every dog? I don't want to be required to tell any government agency if so and so is not licensed.
- I just do not want to work for the government. I would like the responsibility for government functions to stay in government employee hands.
- Animal control has a difficult time as it is now. Some times it is very difficult to scan a dog in that when picked up. We scan each pet brought in for euthanasia now.

- Would prefer to see veterinarians stick to medicine and government agencies stick to enforcing laws. If license compliance needs to increase then the government agencies should find a solution without involving veterinarians.
- I feel a fair majority of people do not get their dogs licensed either due to ignorance or willful disobedience. I know some clients refuse rabies vaccines because they do not want to get their dogs licensed. I believe penalties need to be enforced for those that do not vaccinate or license their dogs.
- My clients would be highly in favor of getting the tag at my office. I personally do not favor the government requiring anything of me. If there is to be a microchip requirement then the client should not have to pay for it.
- Suggest Lic. expiration be the same as the rabies vacc. exp. date. The owner would pay for a 1yr or 3yr lic. at the time of vaccination.
- statewide database would work if animal control officers and veterinarians could easily access it; ease of access is key
- I'm retired and only do a little relief work limited to 3 hrs/month (to clarify the small numbers of dogs I vaccinate.)
- This is a government duty to oversee and issue pet licenses and should not take time/energy from the practice of veterinary medicine. I mail my pet's rabies certificate to the county for licensing and find it no hardship to do so.

### **Summary narrative of Virginia Veterinary Medical Association Dog Licensing Procedures Survey:**

Sixty-three respondents (84%) responded with a numerical answer when asked to estimate the number of dogs they vaccinate annually. The mean of the number of dogs vaccinated annually by respondents was calculated as 1,275 with a median of 725 and a range of 0-15,000. When asked to estimate the number of hours per week veterinarians or their hospital staff devote to interacting with their local treasurer's office in regard to rabies vaccination certificate transmission, 49 (65.3%) responded with a numerical answer that resulted in an average of 2.4 hours with a median of 1 and a range of 0-20 hours.

Veterinarians were asked if they would be willing to license dogs at the point of vaccination and were given several options and were instructed to choose all that apply. Of the 74 (74/75; 98.6%) responses provided, 10/74 (13.5%) responded "yes," 37/74 (50%) responded "Yes, provided there was very little additional administrative time associated with the licensing aspect of the service to my client," 21/74 (28.4%) responded "Yes, provided I was compensated for my time," 21/74 (28.4%) responded "Yes, provided I did not have to administer any other part of a locality's licensing program," 24/74 (32.4%) responded "Yes, provided I did not need to handle or keep track of any local government funds," and finally 20/74 (27%) indicated "no."

When asked if they would be in favor of the development of a statewide database containing rabies certificate and licensing information that animal control officers could access and instructed to choose any answers that applied, 72/75 respondents (96%) offered at least one



answer. Twenty-three percent (17/72) responded “yes,” 30/72 (41.6%) responded “Yes, as long as animal control officers found this system useful,” 30/72 (41.6%) responded, “Yes, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly,” 35/72 (48.6%) responded “Yes, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public,” and 12/72 (16.7%) responded “no.”

Veterinarians were asked several questions about microchip implants. The majority of veterinarians who responded to a question about microchip implants as a clinical service (74/75, 98.6%) indicated that they offer this service through their practice (67/74, 90.5%). When asked about client use of this service, 57/75 (76%) numerical responses from which an average could be calculated indicated that an average of 25% of veterinary hospital clients of these respondents avail themselves of this clinical service with a range of 3-75%. In regard to mandatory microchip implants in dogs, 73/75 (97.3%) veterinarians responded with 35/73 (48%) indicating support and 38/73 (52%) responding that they would not be in favor of making microchip implants mandatory. Of the veterinarians who responded (74/75, 98.6%), 42 (56.8%) were in favor of a microchip serving as the city or county license with 32 (43.2%) not in favor.

Forty-five percent (34/75) veterinarians offered general comments about dog licensing. Topics related to dog licensing shared by veterinarians responding to the survey included 12 comments associated with mandatory microchip implants, 10 comments emphasizing that licensing should remain a purely government function without involvement from veterinarians in clinical practice, 6 comments concerned about owner noncompliance with licensing laws and 2 recommending licensing of cats.

**General Public Dog Licensing Procedures Survey Summary, 2016**

**This survey was distributed electronically and in paper form to members and partner organizations of the Virginia Alliance of Animal Shelters, the Virginia Federation of Dog Clubs and Breeders, the Virginia Federation of Humane Societies and the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association. A total of 2602 responses were captured. Of these, 2477 (95%) recorded localities that could be categorized into VDH regions and 2529 (2529/2602; 97%) recorded geographic information that indicated residency in Virginia. Of the 2477 responses where VDH region could be assigned, 729 (29.4%) responded from the eastern region, 442 (17.8%) from the central region, 624 (25.2%) from the northern region, 471 (19%) from northwest region, 211 (8.5%) from southwest region.**

**Responding localities**

Counties: Accomack, Albemarle, Alexandria, Alleghany, Amelia, Amherst, Appomattox, Arlington, Augusta, Bedford, Bland, Botetourt, Brunswick, Fairfax, Buckingham, Campbell, Caroline, Carroll, Charles City, Charlotte, Chesterfield, Clarke, Culpeper, Cumberland, Dickenson, Dinwiddie, Essex, Fauquier, Floyd, Fluvanna, Franklin, Frederick, Giles, Gloucester, Goochland, Grayson, Greensville, Halifax, Hanover, Henrico, Henry, Highland, Isle of Wight, James City, King and Queen, King William, Lancaster, Lee, Lexington, Loudoun, Louisa, Lunenburg, Madison, Mathews, Mecklenburg, Middlesex, Montgomery, Nelson, New Kent, Northampton, Northumberland, Nottoway, Orange, Page, Pittsylvania, Powhatan, Prince Edward, Prince George, Prince William, Pulaski, Rappahannock, Richmond, Roanoke, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Russell, Scott, Shenandoah, Smyth, Southampton, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Suffolk, Surry, Sussex, Tazewell, Virginia Beach, Warren, Washington, Westmoreland, Wythe, York

Cities/Towns: Cape Charles, Chesapeake, Colonial Heights, Danville, Franklin, Hampton, Hopewell, Lynchburg, Manassas, Manassas Park, Newport News, Norfolk, Petersburg, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Richmond City, Salem, Staunton, Tappahannock, Waynesboro

**1. What is your county of residence \_\_\_\_\_ see information listed above \_\_\_\_**

**2. Are you aware that dogs are required to have a rabies vaccination?**

2521/2529 (99.7%) respondents

YES 2501/2521 (99.2%)

NO 20/2521 (0.8%)

**3. Are you aware that dogs are required to be licensed by your county or city?**

2522/2529 (99.7%) respondents

YES 2386/2522 (94.6%)

NO 136/2522 (5.4%)

**4. Is your dog microchipped?**

2491/2529 respondents (98%)

YES 1436/2491 (57.6%)

NO 1055/2491 (42.6%)

**5. Would you support requiring all dogs to be microchipped?**

2467/2529 (97.5%) consumers respondents

YES 1477/2467 (59.8%)

NO 990/2467 (40.1%)

**6. Would you support a microchip serving as your county/city license instead of the county/city tag?**

2469/2529 (98%) respondents

YES 1548/2469 (62.6%)

NO 921/2469 (37.3%)

**7. Does the process of first having your dog vaccinated for rabies and then purchasing a county/city license from your local treasurer make it less likely that you will purchase a county/city license?**

2485/2529 (98.3%) respondents

a. Yes 535/2485 (21.5%)

b. No 1540/2485 (62%)

c. I thought dogs were automatically licensed when they were vaccinated for rabies 243/2485 (9.7%)

d. I can buy a county license from my veterinarian after my dog is vaccinated 167/2485 (6.7%)

**8. Would you prefer to purchase your county/city license through your veterinarian as opposed to your county/city treasurer?**

2497/2529 (98.7%) respondents

a. Yes 1309/2497 (52.4%)

b. No 414/2497 (16.5%)

c. Yes and I would be willing to pay a nominal fee for this convenience 283/2497 (11.6%)

d. No, I do not mind purchasing my county/city license elsewhere 381/2497 (15.6%)

e. I already purchase my county/city license through my veterinarian 109/2497 (4.3%)

**9. Would you be willing to have your dog's county/city license and rabies certificate information entered into a statewide database that could be accessed by animal control officers?**

2490/2529 (98.5%) respondents; many chose more than one answer

a. Yes 690/2490 (27.7%)

\* b. Yes, as long as animal control officers found this system useful

\* c. Yes, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly

\*d. Yes, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

e. No 438/2490 (17.5%)

\*1343/2490 (53.0%) of respondents chose one or more of these responses

**10. Please feel free to share any general comments about county/city licensing of dogs:**

Nearly thirty percent (744/2529) consumers offered comments as part of this survey process. While 106 (14%) comments were of a more general nature, comments related to dog licensing shared by consumers responding to the survey included (i) 157 in regard to a statewide database that could be accessed by animal control officers including comments specifically associated with survey question 9, (ii) 13 additional comments associated with question 7 related to licensing as a two-step process, (iii) 27 comments about cat licensing, (iv) 7 comments about hunting as it relates to dog licensing, (v) 144 about the concept of dog licensing (vi) 11 about dog licensing enforcement, (vii) 79 comments associated with maintaining the current system of licensing, (viii) 87 comments associated with the process of licensing, (xi) 30 associated with educating the general public about licensing, (x) 88 about veterinarian's role in licensing including comments specifically associated with survey question 8 and (xi) 161 associated with microchip implants including comments specific to survey questions 4 and 6.

See Attachment 56 for all comments

### **Summary narrative of General Public Dog Licensing Procedures Survey Summary:**

When the 2,529 consumers who recorded geographic information indicating residency in Virginia were asked if they were aware of the Virginia requirement for dogs to have a rabies vaccination, 2,521 consumers (99.7%) responded and of those 2,501/2,521 (99.2%) responded that they were aware of this requirement. When asked about the requirement for dogs to be licensed by the county or city, 2,522/2,529 (99.7%) consumers responded and 94.6% (2,386/2,522) indicated they were aware of this requirement.

Approximately 98% (2,491/2,529) of consumers responded when asked about microchip implant use in their dogs with 57.6% (1,436/2,491) indicating their dogs had a microchip implant while 42.3% (1,055/2,491) indicated that their dogs were not microchipped. When asked about support for mandatory microchip implant requirements for dogs, 2,467/2,529 (97.5%) consumers responded with 1,477 (59.8%) indicating support. Nearly 98% of consumers (2,469/2,529) responded when asked about the concept of microchip information serving as the county/city license instead of the county/city tag and 1,548/2,469 (62.6%) indicated they were in favor of this idea.

When consumers were asked if the process of first having your dog vaccinated for rabies and then purchasing a county/city license from your local treasurer made it less likely that they would purchase a license, 2,485/2,529 (98.3%) responded with 1,540 (62%) indicating that this process did not make it less likely that they would purchase a license and 21.5% (535/2,485) indicating this two-step process did make purchasing a license less likely. In addition, 167/2,485 (6.7%) reported that they were already able to purchase county license tags from their veterinarians and 243/2,485 (9.7%) indicated that they thought dogs were automatically licensed when they were vaccinated for rabies. When consumers were asked if they would prefer to purchase a dog license through their veterinarians as opposed to the treasurer's office, 2,497/2,529 (98.7%) responded with 52.4% (1,309/2,497) supporting this idea while an additional 11.6% (283/2,497) indicated that not only did they support this idea, but would be willing to pay a nominal fee for this convenience. Those not in favor of purchasing their county tags through their veterinarians totaled 414 (16.5%) of those who responded with an additional 381 (15.6%) indicating that they did not mind purchasing their licenses via the treasurer's office. Finally, 109/2,497 (4.3%) of those responding to this question indicated that they already purchased county licenses through their veterinarians.

Consumers were also asked about their willingness to have their dog's license and rabies certificate information entered into a statewide database that could be accessed by animal control officers. While consumers were not instructed to choose any answer to this question that applied, many chose more than one answer. To this question, 2,490/2,529 (98.5%) consumers responded as follows: 17.5% (438/2,490) indicated they were not willing to participate in such a system, 27.7% (690/2,490) indicating a willingness to participate without any further qualifications and 1,343/2,490 (53.0%) supportive with the qualifications offered in the possible responses, namely (i) as long as animal control officers found it useful and/or (ii) as long as it increased the likelihood of that a lost dog could be returned to its owner more quickly, and/or (iii) provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public.

Nearly thirty percent (744/2,529) of consumers offered comments as part of this survey process. While 106 (14%) comments were of a more general nature, comments related to dog licensing shared by consumers responding to the survey included (i) 157 comments in regard to a statewide database that could be accessed by

animal control officers including comments specifically associated with survey question 9, (ii) 13 additional comments associated with question 7 related to licensing as a two-step process, (iii) 27 comments about cat licensing, (iv) 7 comments about hunting as it relates to dog licensing, (v) 144 about the concept of dog licensing (vi) 11 about dog licensing enforcement, (vii) 79 comments associated with maintaining the current system of licensing, (viii) 87 comments associated with the process of licensing, (xi) 30 associated with educating the general public about licensing, (x) 88 about veterinarian's role in licensing including comments specifically associated with survey question 8 and (xi) 161 associated with microchip implants including comments specific to survey questions 4 and 6.

**Attachment 33**

**General Public Survey responses Categorized as part of the Companion Animal Licensing Procedures Study (HJ160)**

**Additional responses/comments in regard to question #4 (Is your dog microchipped?)**

some are, some aren't

**Additional responses/comments in regard to question #6 (Would you support a microchip serving as your county/city license instead of the county/city tag?)**

Maybe

Don't care

Need more info

**Additional responses/comments in regard to question #7 (Does the process of first having your dog vaccinated for rabies and then purchasing a county/city license from your local treasurer make it less likely that you will purchase a county/city license?)**

I can buy a county license from my veterinarian after my dog is vaccinated

I already get my city tags through my vet. I like that

I thought dogs were automatically licensed when they were vaccinated for rabies

I can buy a county license from my veterinarian after my dog is vaccinated

I can buy a county license from my veterinarian after my dog is vaccinated

I thought dogs were automatically licensed when they were vaccinated for rabies

I thought dogs were automatically licensed when they were vaccinated for rabies

I can buy a county license from my veterinarian after my dog is vaccinated

I thought dogs were automatically licensed when they were vaccinated for rabies

I can buy a county license from my veterinarian after my dog is vaccinated

I thought dogs were automatically licensed when they were vaccinated for rabies.

I can buy a county license from my veterinarian after my dog is vaccinated

I thought dogs were automatically licensed when they were vaccinated for rabies

## Cats

Cats should be licensed as well.

Cats should be added to the licensing process.

Did you know the same applies to CATS!

Also - not sure why this is geared to just dogs as it's important that cats are licensed and microchipped as well :)

Can we do microchip licensing for cats too? Thoughts for the future.

What about Cats ??? No leash laws, they frequently don't get vaccinations, roam @ large, decimate wildlife, poop all over never gets picked up, I could go on.....!!

Why are dogs targeted? Cats have a greater risk of rabies ?

Why are cats allowed to roam free with no licenses and you want to tax dog owners to extreme. License cat the same as dogs

Need same rules for my pet cats - they go outdoors sometimes.

And, if pets are going to be "tracked" and "taxed" by the state government, it ought to be equal opportunity for all pets, not singling out dogs. Responsible pet owners want to do the very best for their dogs and cats, and other pets.

looks like a tax on owning a dog is coming whats next cats?

Since the purported reason for requiring dog licenses is to ensure rabies vaccinations, it makes no sense that cats are not similarly required to be licensed. Both are rabies vector animals, and, unlike dogs, cats are permitted to roam. As it currently stands, licensing feels like a tax and inconvenience on dog owners only.

Why do cats need to be licensed. Sounds like a local revenue maker to me.....

What about cats? Cats running the neighborhoods is a big problem.

I hope a similar survey is going to cat owners. There are far more stray cats than stray dogs.

why not licence cats also i have to buy a license for my dogs which is nothing more than a tax so make cat owners do the same

Why should cats be excluded if the state is going to require this? Cats are just as likely to be exposed to rabies as dogs.

Cats should be licensed and microchipped also. And cat owners should be held more responsible for their animals.

What about cats?

What about cats? They are the real menace roaming around unsupervised all day long.

I believe all dogs and cats should be vaccinated against rabies. However, I find it unfair that dogs have to be licensed and cats do not. Why am I paying a tax on my dog? What do I receive for this? My dog does not go to dog parks.

We pay a dog tax, no cat tax, and no a horse tax. Look it up, cats and raccoons are the rabies problem, not dogs.

We need to license cats too! Limit the number per household- enforce s/n and running loose somehow/someway!! :) It is not the responsibility of animal shelters to take in nor decide the disposition of someone else's negligence and then be harassed by the same public that cause the problem in the first place.

I feel if there is licensing fee for dogs there should be for cats as well.

I oppose to licensing of only dogs when cats pose more of a problem. My dogs are contained within a fenced yard and do not interact with dogs I don't know. I find it is only a way for the City to make more money. They say it goes to support the animal shelter and if that is true, then cats need licenses too.

I think cats should have to be licensed in my county as well. Why just dogs?

We should license cats as well.

### **General**

Thanks for the reminder

End deer dog hunting!

Harrisonburg Rockinglock Animal Control does a great job.

Hunting dogs need to be included in this program. Suffolk Animal Care is full of both hunting hounds and pitbulls.

Would like to see some adverse actions for letting unneutered/spayed dogs run loose. Maybe some incentive for people to get animals fixed.

i have problem that my vet sends in when they are vaccinated but doesn't put on the form that they are spayed so that the city wants \$25 instead of small amount

I support efforts that promote responsible pet ownership. I believe these programs should be affordable to all citizens and help to educate the public on animal welfare issues/concerns. Partnering



with veterinarians and low cost pet clinics would promote these valuable programs and serve a large portion of the public.

Why do city license come from TX? The jobs should stay in VA beach!

All hunting dogs should be required by law to wear rabies tags and be microchipped. These dogs routinely come in contact with vector species and have the potential to spread rabies throughout the areas where they are released.

The licensing is not the problem, its the lack of a state wide leash law and current hound hunting practices that are the real issue.

It might help in bringing down abusers of all kinds. and the return of a pet faster if it gets away from the owner.

It sounds like more money being drawn from the dog owners. No thanks

What wonderful ideas! I hope they are implemented.

I like the way it is done. When we visit the vet our bills are very expensive so to add more onto it for tags I say no. Decrease the price and then it might not be so bad.

We need to make all the requirements for having a pet easy, affordable, and good for the pets! We want the animal rescuers to be safe! And owners responsible!

I believe that those who choose to keep dogs should pay into the animal control system and that these fees should serve to help defray the cost to the general taxpayer. I believe fees should be increased - esp. for unneutered animals.

For some of your questions I would have entered more than one answer. I think that it would be fantastic to have a way to get lost animals returned to their owners more quickly. I would also love to see animal control officers be able to stop at a residence where a dog is chained and possibly has inadequate food/ water available. I personally know of a couple of dogs who are somewhat underweight and always see them on a chain - one is about a 70 pound dog who has just a small bowl of water near him (I don't know how often the owner checks that water is in the bowl). He's a friendly dog but seems to pull his own hair out at times (there's been tufts of hair laying all around him) because he's rather large and is likely not to be getting adequate exercise and social interaction.

How will you track that every owner does this?

Survey is poorly designed in the sense that questions offer qualified responses should allow for multiple responses. For example, in question 9 I would have liked to select B and D, but had to choose A. Similar issues in 7 and 8. Probably would have been better to keep the survey simple and stick to straight "Yes" and "No" answers. Survey also doesn't work well for multiple dog owners. (e.g., Not all of my 5 dogs are microchipped.)

I think Lyme disease vaccination proof should be a requirement to keep a dog license current in the same way that a Rabies vaccine is required.

What is being done with all these feral cats that you see around business's and dump sites that aren't being taken care of and people are feeding?

The people in power should get off of their lazy behinds & put an end to people chaining their dogs 24/7. It CAN be done, they're just too lazy to do it.

The current law requires dogs to be OVER VACCINATED. The county's requirements puts veterinarians in a difficult position of pushing for vaccinations that are NOT necessary, hurting our animals. The government is ill-informed. LESS government control is what we need, not more.

For those of us who do what we are supposed to, we get no benefits whatsoever and as usual, we pay for those who do not do what they are supposed to.

My only comment is the fear of over vaccinating especially in older dogs and cats. Prefer titer testing and then vaccinating if levels are low.

I understand and agree with the importance of having current rabies shots. I am concerned with the collection of data on dog ownership as I have seen it misused by 'rabid' Animal Rights advocates. I have personally witnessed microchipped animals that were turned over to rescue and sold to unsuspecting new owners, and the years that it took the original owner to get their dog back. I would rather see the money for this program spent on other educational programs or low cost/free spay-neuter programs.

It would also be helpful to have the dog park user fee included as an option as well.

Too many loose deer hounds! This will be a good way of at least tracking who they belong to and ether they actually have been vaccinated.

It is unreasonable the I can NOT purchase rabies vaccines and administer them myself as I currently do with other shots! Typical with the Commonwealth of Virginia, it is another way to pad pockets of others (veterinarians) or to find another way to tax!

Any measure that facilitates a dog being returned to its rightful owner has my vote. This would help with stolen dogs as well.

My dogs are well taken care of as they need to be.

They should keep more of a watch on who is owning a pet and whether or not they are fit owners

It would be nice if Clarke County had an animal control officer instead of local sheriff deputy's. Also if the officers sent out would actually do their jobs. (Dog neglect reported #'s of times and dog still at the same place

The staff was very helpful and patient with my dog! Thank you for all of your help!

We think this service is great and were happy to see that pit bulls are fixed free of charge! Thank you!

They did an amazing job

I really love your program.

It helps all of us

Why don't you make rabies shots more affordable and easier to get if they are so important. A rabies shot only cost \$1.60 and everyone is charging \$14 to \$25.

Great idea!

At this time, people who own chickens have fewer restrictions than dog owners. One sick chicken can cause significant economic damage in the area. Yet, dog owners have to pay much more money and enjoy a larger number of restrictions on their pets.

All great ideas!

I don't have a dog, I like the idea to get rabies and license from your vet, or free agencies that give free shots to animals. What ever will help to have dogs and cats shot, license and registered. Every dog should be licensed, neuter/spay, rabies vaccine also, microchipped. .

Require all the above to get into dog parks! Fine the human parents for "aggressive" dogs, e.g. Koa the pitbull on Freezeland Loop Road in Linden, VA 22642

I would like the city to consider a law that requires Pitbulls to be spayed or neutered. This would help volume in shelters and encourage responsible pet owners.

Dogs with chronic illness should be allowed exemption from rabies vaccine if titer test shows it is unnecessary.

I have no problem with either issue. I feel it is important to keep vaccinations on my pet current. I worked with California Dog rescue for 4.5 yrs before moving to Virginia. We made sure all our rescue dogs were current in vaccinations so they were always ready to be adopted. Virginia is far more expensive for shots, spaying & neutering.

State needs a mandatory animal abuse offender list like the sex offenders. Are people who have sex with dogs on the sex offenders list? Convicted animal abusers should never be allowed to own animals ever again.

You should have had an "I don't know" option for the questions above.

Government needs to be more involved in the sale and ownership of dogs (animals in general really). The majority of owners are ok, but there are a few that need structure and support of state and local government

I love my dogs and make sure they properly penned from running, spade and neutered and vaccinated for rabies. I do believe that many animals are over vaccinated just as humans are receiving too many prescriptions. As always are governments, may it be local state or federal have to their nose in our business and find the need to take any extra money we work so hard for.

No SPCA did all she needed

I'm in favor without any additional cost associated wit it

No one wants to work anymore, they just pass the job onto someone else. I enjoy meeting and speaking with office employees that I vote for. If we give away the county jobs, do these people close their offices and the county saves more money?

Local health departments i.e. West. don't follow up on possible rabies reports unless pressed to do so

Why can't folks own more than 4 dogs if they can afford it. It seems too restrictive to set that as a city.

AC officers should come under the jurisdiction of the local Sheriff's office. The two should be more intertwined in the A.C. officers carry guns and they could be utilized more by the Sheriff's office is needed.

She's doing much better

Off leash should be a tag so it can be worn out and about

Work in animal control

Don't even think about having more government intrusion into our lives.

Is this such a problem that government resources are committed to? Perhaps there are much bigger issues our tax dollars should be spent on that this

All dogs not used for retail breeding should be required to be spayed or neutered.

Keep the use of hunting with dogs legal and stop messing with our right and heritage

Another effort by animal activists to track and harass people who love and care for their canine companions!

My dog has a NJ License. Do I need to have VA License or will the NJ License be OK until my dog needs a Rabies shot due 8/2016

The county should have monthly shot clinics for all animals. Also, the general police should be required to take a course to better understand dogs instead of shooting them or complaining about their behavior.

I am ONLY in favor of measures that will HELP animals. That will benefit them, and their families.

There are a lot of dogs out here that are not registered or have their shots. The dog needs to be registered before sale is final. That way someone can check on the mandatory shots needed

Hunting dogs should have to abide rabies tag laws too!

I think it's stupid, it's all about the dollar....

I don't have a dog anymore.

Also, this is a ridiculous way to do a survey in the 21st century. Most people will not know how to download, edit and return a pdf doc that is not already set up to be fillable. You might try this again with Survey Monkey.

I thought that all rabies certifs were sent to the county and they were crosschecked with licenses already

2 dogs

I also support paying a small fee to support low income pet owners getting their pets properly vaccinated.

I am in favor of less Government intrusion into our lives and also our animals' lives. I would hope the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association would soon be in favor of a Rabies titer in lieu of a vaccination as my dog is titer tested for distemper and parvo. Regards, Mari L.

We should be able to give our own shots we can buy online, as long as we have a receipt for rabies. Do to the fact that other states allow this. People from out of state can run their dogs in this state by using their out of state records which they can get online for a lot cheaper.

The reduction of rabies should be your primary concern, not licensing (taxing) pets. Associating the license with the rabies shot was a moronic idea to begin with. In many situations this will drive down compliance with rabies vaccinations. The government has stepped in between the doctor and patient and soured the relationship that people had with their veterinarian. If the Virginia Department of Health is truly interested in the health aspect and rabies eradication, the vaccination should not be associated with licensing.

Unfortunately, our system is not a good one in Rockingham County/Harrisonburg. Our SPCA and Animal Control need to have a better system. Too many dogs are euthanized without finding rescues for them.

Great survey. Hope it has an impact and brings some change.

The cities new reg. on dog being tied out is too restrictive. Some dogs can't tolerate being pinned and need to be tired to reduce stress. If an animal is tied less than 8 hours in temperatures over 25 degrees; has a non-tangling cable and access to food, water and a bedding supplied shelter; it should be allowed.

I have one dog that is highly allergic to the rabies vaccine, and do not see how waivers are handled in this survey. Without a waiver process for a chip or vaccine, I could not support this.

Also I believe there needs to be a law on the books and enforced about picking up your dogs feces.

Most dogs in shelters are hounds and pitbull. Let's do something about this

They need to quit putting a limit on how many dogs you can have as long as you are a responsible pet owner.

Making spay & neuter mandatory or charging a fee for people who refuse to spay & neuter. The \$\$ collected for license go for people who cannot afford to spay & neuter. We MUST find MORE ways to reduce pet overpopulation.

in Virginia you have always to consider the ones who do nothing. in that case the local animal control officer will have to do more to be able to get local dogs licensed.

I don't think it is necessary when they are microchipped

Things are fine.

I don't like all this county /city stuff possible to have people do times are hard enough on people financially you out more out there people have to have with dogs your gonna have more dogs homeless

I lost a dog to heat stroke at a county rabies clinic. There needs to be certain measures taken (ie, shade, water, evening hours etc..) to ensure the well being of both dog and owner.

Another way for the government to control people this is wrong. We should be able to give the rabies shot ourselves instead of having to pay a vet to do it.

Non spayed or neutered dogs should cost more.

I am a veterinarian myself so I am more compliant than most

I don't have a problem with county/city licensing of dogs in general. The problem I have with our county stems more from the way the Animal Control Officer handles the situation. If the owners are responsible and takes the dogs to the vet for rabies vaccinations, then those owners are automatically released to the County Treasurer as owning a dog. If the license isn't purchased in a timely manner, they are sent a notice. If the owners do not take their animals for vaccinations, then they often get by without ever purchasing a license because our Animal Control Officer doesn't follow up even when told about it. Case in point - I own one dog - small house dog. Neighbors across the street have seven that they let in and out of the house into a small closed in section of the yard, which they often get out of. They claim they are "rescue" animals and they are trying to find them homes. They have had the same seven dogs for the two plus years that they have lived there. When I mentioned it to the Animal Control Officer, his response was he had not had any other complaints. I got the same response when I told him several years ago about a Doberman that was running loose through the neighborhood when there is a leash

law in that area. My concern is have any of these dogs been vaccinated? There needs to be a system to make sure that every owner has a rabies certificate and I just don't think that's a possibility.

Having done eight years as a kennel cleaner/dog walker at Aug. Regional SPCA, I can say with certainty there are "low info" people here who will "have/own" dogs, but will not put forth money nor time to have them neut/spay/chipped. They just do not give a damn about others...including those of different species!!

This is a joke and you can make the questions as tricky as you want I'm sick of government sticking their nose where it doesn't belong.

Stop taxing people to death

Comment; our dogs were brought to another vet when picked up by a citizen. That vet couldn't find their microchip. Rechecking w/ our vet it was found.

spay/neuter should also be mandatory or pay much higher fees along with rabies license

I bring my valid rabies certificate to the town registrar and pay my \$5 every year for all of my dogs. The state has more important things to be bothering us with. How about mental health care!! Thank you

I am a dog owner as well as a police officer assigned to animal control.

Segregating govt regulatiin and health care functions is always preferred. No nanny state here.

I think this survey is looking for the excuses for all animal hospitals and county to add additional restrictions to the pet's owners for their own benefits and tie to secure their businesses in the long run but not for the pet owners best interest ! I believed the owner's info. should not be shared to the animal control officers voluntarily unless the owners them self call in and provide it.

Responsible people are going to follow the law while irresponsible people are going to continue to be irresponsible. Government can't accept responsibility for everyone.

## **Hunting**

This is an attempt to limit hunting dogs.

This is trying to be pushed through just to make more money and to get rid of dog hunting.

This looks like a way to go in the back door to determine how many hunting dogs are out there, and to increase costs to try and slow the dog hunting community.

So the state wants to ban dog hunting but as long as they can figure out a way to get taxes out of dog owners they will not ban this. My issue is this for every dog or just dog hunters if that's the case the discrimination. And if I pay a state fee or a tax lets say which it is for a hunting dog then I should be able

to hunt my dog on my land and if it runs onto adjacent landowners my dog should be protected by the state and landowners who shoot or steal these dogs should be brought up on charges.

I feel all dog including hunting/deer dogs be required to be chipped and carry proof of rabies tag.

I have never seen a loose hunting dog on my land that had proof of rabies vaccination on its collar. This is a public health hazard. Hunting hounds are the most likely dogs to encounter rabid wild animals and they typically leave the hunting land they were released on.

Its is my understanding that all dogs are to be vaccinated regularly and that they be registered in county in which they reside and myself and all dogs owning friends have and always plan to do so. If changes in the way this is done causes any increase in the cost of owning a dog that is primarily use to hunt then it will create a significant issue with the sport itself. It would seem a lot of these changes that are proposed or changes made are for the sake of forcing the tradition of hunting with dogs in the state of VA. to decline or go away all together. Unlike what most people think, there are a lot of clubs who hunt with dogs simple for the fellowship of the hunt. It brings family and friends together thru the holiday season to enjoy a chance at not only harvesting an animal but also very inexpensively providing education and enjoyment in the sport of hunting for youth or for working, tax paying citizens who don't have additional income to lease or purchase a large piece of property to do so. The hunting programs that have been allowed to be on TV of deer being harvested over food plots is the problem. For my entire life it has been illegal to bait for the purpose of harvesting deer. It would seem the loop hole that has been found is that if you use a tractor to plant your bait instead of throwing it on the ground makes it ok to bait a deer to harvest. Where is the sport in that. So if you have the money and resources to do so then your allowed to hunt? And if not, sorry about your luck? I whole heartedly agree that there are individuals that put a bad name on the sport of hunting with dogs, but why punish the whole group. Seek out those individuals. Investigate rumors, tips that lead to the stop of these unethical practices. \*\*One more thing to add, a lot of the guys who can purchase and care for an animal take a lot of pride in the sport and do their part in preserving the sport. A lot of these guys use these animals to help them in the hunt to harvest deer cause they may not have the time to just sit down in the woods for weeks on end waiting for that right opportunity. A lot of these guys provide food for their families for the year with the deer that they harvest. The hunting shows on TV where the folks seek out these massive deer has created in industry for folks to make money off a past time that has been enjoyed cheaply for my entire life. To let the method of folks charging others ridiculous rates in order to enjoy the sport absurd and unfair. Take a study. How many still hunters are willing to share the woods with multiple individuals? How many dog hunters are not only willing to share the woods with multiple hunters and give up an opportunity for a new hunter or youth to have their opportunity? My guess is dogs are more willing to do so because of the group effort in the harvest of the animal. Its not bout the trophy its about the fellowship that revolves around the taking of the animal. The safe handle of firearms and education of being an ethical person are what is typically gained from the tradition of dogs hunting. So in short, a lot more people stand to benefit from the tradition of dog hunting than the few that decide that since they have money to bait deer with a planted food plot. It is also a thought that if a man who spends 500 a year to enjoy 2 months of the year to provide meat for his family may end up harvesting deer in lights of a truck if the sport is made unaffordable for him. I would say there is a good possibility that it would be



more frequent. I have plenty more I could say but it would just aggravate me to do so. I would be more than happy to take a critic to the sport of dog hunting with me on one of my organized hunts. Im sure that I could change their opinion on the thoughts of the sport before we even hit the woods.

### **Licensing (general)**

It's redundant and taxation without representation

County tax on dogs is ridiculous

I think county licensing should be eliminated. This should be privatized as the microchipping is. As with much in Fairfax county the system is antiquated. Its amazing this still needs to be done thru the mail. It leaves me with very little confidence that the program should be at all expanded by a state entity. I already have proof from my vet that my dog has been vaccinated, why does he/she need to registered with the county? Revenue generation?

Responsible dog owners are the ones answering this survey. A bigger concern is how to enforce vaccination and licensing for negligent owners.

It is inconvenient to go to the city!

Remove dog tax fees

I am not opposed to getting the dog license through my vet and I actually think it would be great if the county automatically received notice of my dog's rabies vaccination, but I pay enough money to the vet and I do not wish to pay more for a license than is necessary. It would actually discourage me from getting the license if I have to pay more for it at the vet. It's easy enough as is now.

Licensing of dogs by Fairfax County, or any jurisdiction, is an obvious tax to help fund animal control officers and/or shelters. Animals that aren't vaccinated or which are allowed to run around without a leash or unsupervised are a universal concern and control of them should be universally funded. To make responsible owners pay this tax exclusively is like asking people who live in Reston to fund a metro line that serves everyone. It's easy money.

It is a simple and necessary process.

It's a fairly easy process now, but I'm in favor of combining chip, vaccine, license without increased expense.

The vet should and can more expertly track licensing of dogs. We see our Vet hroughout the year as dogs must be vaccinated to protect against disease to other animals and people. We don't bring our dog to the county office ever. Keep it simple and consolidate for accuracy.

The licensing fee and process is just another way for the state/county to get money. It's BS!

Make it simple and affordable.

The licensing of dogs is nothing more than just another way to squeeze money from the public.

I spend enough on purchasing my dog, and all the veterinarian bills. Paying a tax to Arlington County on top of all that is ridiculous.

I feel the tax for owning a dog is ridiculous. How often does the county or city we live in actually help us find our lost dog? How many dogs actually go missing? If the microchip is placed in our animal by vet, why is the county involved? Our animal's vet monitors the animal's rabies vaccines along with every other vaccine as well as the microchip information. Why do we even need the county/city to be paid for anything to do with our pet??

Making a pet owner pay for a dog license is ridiculous.

Whatever helps lost animals reunite with their owners and assists in the county's care of strays is what I support. I license and vaccinate my pets yearly. It is not a tremendously difficult process as is.

Animal licensing is ridiculous. What next? Kids, for 2? 3?, What about my potted plants. Put animal control into the base general revenue expense and leave it at that. All the licensing is, is a nuisance.

Just another way to tax us. I'm opposed to it.

I think that it's silly that we have to pay for vaccines and pay for a dog license. Just another way for the state to make a Buck. If we pay for the shots then you should get the tag for free instead of paying to have the shot then paying the state for a dog tag saying they had the shot! Bunch of crooks

Paying a tax to own a dog is wrong. The county doesn't require ppl who own horses to pay a "license" fee.. I mean tax.

Don't like number of tags a dog has to wear. Am uneasy sending original rabies certificate to town through msil

I have had issues with licensing before. One year, the county cashed our check, but never sent the license, and it was a total hassle to dispute it. Eventually we just gave up.

I think it's necessary to license pets.

Licensing dogs is stupid and a waste of time and money. Licensing any animal is stupid. What about cats, cows, horses, any pets, any animals? Bureaucracy at its finest. What a waste.

For the health of our dogs, I would like to see some sort of titer for rabies vaccination. For example, if at the end of 3 years, the titer shows that the dog is still vaccinated, then we should be able to renew our license without an additional vaccination.

I think the process of licensing animals is nothing more than a way for the government to take money from people. If an animal is chipped and an animal is already recorded by the vet as being vaccinated for rabies then licensing serves no other purpose than for the county to acquire money.

I would like to see a significant increase in licensing fees of animal that have not been spayed or neutered. Fees for animals that have been spayed or neutered should be lowered.

Just more BIG BROTHER. I will get my dog vaccinated for rabies every three years and I will get the county dog tags. No more government involvement is needed.

I should not have to be require to pay on my pet. cat owner do not have to license their cat so why do I have to license my dog.

I font think there should be any city/county license. They already het more than enough revenue from me through the DMV, Taxes and other "required" fees.

Dogs that are not neutered or spayed should be charged more for a license and the fine for not having a license should be at least 10 times the cost of a yearly license to encourage people to get licences.

Our county uses this only as a source of revenue. I would prefer my vet keep Our records of vaccination and don't see reason for the county to be involved

we pay enough now we DO NOT NEED ANYMORE FEES

Licensing is antiquated. Law abiding citizens don't do it b/c they recognize that. Rabies vax should be all that is required.

The more the state makes these "big brother" laws, the less people are going to get the rabies vaccine in the first place. The state needs to stay out of peoples private business

I feel that ultimately, if the changes cause the cost to become prohibitive, or add unnecessary or additional paperwork which requires more administrators/staff, they should not be implemented.

I am from a place that does not require this. I think it is an unnecessary fee.

I found a stray dog with a current license and because it was Friday no one was available to access his tag information until Monday. So honestly, I don't see any use in the tags -

I don't mind getting the license from the treasurer. I wouldn't mind getting it from the vet either but I won't pay more for it.

Licensing of dogs is a ridiculous government overreach.

Thankfully I am able to get my dog's license from my vet, because more than once, I've not received anything from my city to renew the license. It seems to be a hit or miss deal with them. So, anything that would make it easier on everyone (dog owner's, vet, animal control, city) would be outstanding (i.e. statewide database, info on microchip).

IN Harrisonburg, dog licenses run from Jan 1.....my dogs were obtained in October, so my license is always short with a 3 year vaccine, because ten months of the year were already gone.

Don't use this to fund killer shelters like the Rock. SPCA

The city license tag fee should be used for a spay/ neuter program instead of going into the general fund

The revenue from the sale of dog licenses should go back into a program to help animals, such as a low-cost spay/neuter program, rather than into the general fund.

A great idea would be to have the license/tag money go back into a program that benefits the animals, such as a low-cost spay/neuter program and not back into the city or county general fund.

I am in support of much higher licensing fees for unfixed animals vs. lower for fixed in our county

If this additional tax is put into effect to improve animal control and the shelters then it better be used for that purpose solely!

It's just another way to get more money. Anybody that owns a dog and cares about it buys the shot or goes to vet. I give the state and county enough money already and don't wanna give any more. Has nothing to do with dogs just getting more money.

I do not understand the need for dog licensing, especially with an annual fee associated with it. I don't have a problem with an initial licensing and small fee, but I do not understand or presently support the associated annual fees.

I feel a license to own a pet is ridiculous. All dogs should be microchipped and if one is found and owner is identified and its NOT..then a fine be assessed ..same with proof of up to date shot records

License is really bs...the rabies should be the only requirement. Its just a way for counties to collect more money

As usual, Virginia is scrounging for more revenue. Adding a few to make it more convenient at the vet's office is a perfect example of this.

Those people who are on limited incomes sometimes have difficulties purchasing city licenses, if they can reduce the license fees for those on disability or limited income this would help greatly.

I think licensing is ridiculous. A license doesn't make a neighborhood safer, a dog more well-behaved, or a pet owner more responsible.

I should not have pay town more damage money because I have a dog!!! And I dont. All my dogs are vaccinated but none have ever been licensed. Just another way to get more money from us!

Think the system now works as long as people use it. If you make it more difficult people will find ways around it.

It makes sense for licensing and rabies exams be stream-lined in some way.

Licensing is an unnecessary second step. Rabies vaccination should be enough. You're already given a rabies tag by the vet at the time of vaccination.

This is another example of the continuing search for a revenue stream; it has nothing to do with the well being of companion animals!

I will not pay for a license for my pets. Period. They are vaccinated and licensing is just yet another way for the local government to make money that isn't needed. A Micro chip should be sufficient which my animals also have.

It's kind of a hassle, but it only has to be done every 3 years

dog licensing is just another excuse to tax citizens. licensing should be abolished.

I feel as if it's a luxury tax for the county.

I don't think most people even get county/city licenses for their dogs...

I'm guessing only about 1/3 of all dog owners here have co license and only 2/3 are rabies vaccinated

the policy of requiring Vets to report all dogs that receive a rabies vaccine has two negative issues , in my opinion. The first is, it is labor intensive for all Vets , who already have a stressful job. It is not the Vets' job to insure that dogs are licensed. The second issue is, instead of encouraging people to license their dog(s) , it encourages many to not vaccinate so they feel they can get away with not licensing their dog (s)

a rabies certificate alone should be sufficient. no need to double dip by having a license on top of it.

The information said nothing about a kennel license for more than one dog. What about clubs with 100 dog kennel license or so? I tag per dog would kill you on payment compared to multiple kennel license. I think the process for having a kennel license should be a little easier if you have a farm with no neighbors. Or if your closets one already has a kennel license instead of keeping my dogs at a club they could be at my farm. I don't always use the same vet as some give cheaper rates than others. Some charge 6 dollars and some charge 36 dollars for a rabies shot.

No mention is made of kennel licenses. Currently Counties charge more than allowed by law. Powhatan charges a minimum of \$50.00 for a ten dog kennel license and \$250 .00 for a 50 dog license. The law should be re-worded to limit the tax on kennels to NO MORE THAN \$50.00 for any Kennel License no matter how many dogs. Be careful that the process you propose does not conflict with the kennel license process.

I am not in favor of government taxes on my animals...

People who microchip already vaccinate their dogs. It's the idiots with a dog chained in the yard who don't and they aren't spending the money for microchips. County licenses are nothing more than a way to squeeze pet owners for more money and there is zero correlation between vaccinating for rabies and

purchasing a license. Counties spend a lot more on schools and lunch programs than on animal control officers but I don't see anyplace that taxes children. I think that would be much more fair than taxing pet owners.

I think licensing is a good thing. It encourages people to spay and neuter their pets because the fee is cheaper. I believe it encourages people vaccinating for rabies. There will always be that group of people that will feel it's inconvenient. There are good and bad dog owners everywhere and licensing won't change that, but it encourages and reminds the good dog owners to comply with the law.

I have lived in many states and find the whole process ridiculous! Along with many other city of Chesapeake rules and regulations!!!

I see no reason for it....only half of us do get a license ..and pay for it ...however, a lot of people Do Not !

I don't think people should have to buy a license for a pet

The licensing of dogs is unbelievably outdated, especially for such a technologically advanced county. It's beyond overdue for an overhaul and update. This kind of update could have the added benefit of deterring abuse/abandonment of dogs. Please update this antiquated system ASAP!

I believe that licensing is a helpful and useful thing, as it supports animal control and animal shelters

Inserting Government tax fee licenses between pet owners and pet medical providers is just a way of distancing owners from good quality care. The past legislation linking rabies vaccinations to pet license fees has resulted in reduced rabies vaccinations. Why would we risk the spread of such a deadly disease in order to receive a few dollars The government should not invasively insert their tax schemes into that decision making process!

I don't agree the requirement to have a license to own a dog. I think we pay enough to the city without having to pay to own a pet

Another taxation without representation

**STOP TRYING TO GET MORE MONEY FROM PET OWNERS**

Shouldn't be required to vaccinate or purchase a license

I think all dogs should be required to display a metal license on a collar

i am happy to licence my dog for her safety & others

I have a kennel license so all of my dogs are licensed already

I know people who used a vet in a neighboring county. Thus when the dog received a rabies vaccine, it was not reported to the "home" county and the owner never bothered with the license.

I don't mind paying the fees for a license. It would be nice if some of the money went to replace the inadequate county shelter.

Though originally intended as a tracking device to return a lost dog to its owner, the dog license has become little more than a cash cow for county governments. Tales abound of dogs euthanized at kill shelters while wearing their license tags or being microchipped. I routinely add a 3rd tag that includes my dog's name and home address because very little I have confidence that the county license confers any protection. Having rescued many lost dogs over the years I've learned that my county has only 2 animal control officers in duty and they are not working after 5:00 pm. When I've called in about a lost dog, I'm told to hold the dog overnight and they'll get to me the next day. If the dog has fleas or might be antagonistic toward my dog, should I tie it up outside in the cold, let it in the house or turn it loose? All of those options are a result of the inadequate service that our dog license fees purchase.

Unfortunately my dog is now deceased, I think the current system works well. What are the veterinarians/ clinics feelings on this matter?

This survey is nothing more than counties/cities wanting to incur income, but do nothing to earn it, and in addition, add more requirements by the Commonwealth of Virginia, to do the job for which the county/city derives income from an additional tax. A "license" is nothing more than a "TAX" for letting an individual own an animal!

I have 2 dogs. Licensing is not a problem for me.

I buy a kennel license every year for my dogs from the city of Suffolk. I feel our rights as Americans are being infringed on more all the time. I feel like more regulations would make more people not take their animals to the vet for the threat of having to pay a tax on their animals.

This is an overreach of government. A dog license is a thinly veiled tax on the ownership of a pet. Ludicrous government policy. Just another way to make money off of its citizens.

I agree that all dogs should have rabies vaccinations but I think it's ridiculous to have to pay a tax/license just to own a dog. Just another way for the county to get money.

The fee should be used for local pounds/shelters for dogs and cats as well. This could provide them with food, water and/or other items that will keep them safe and comfortable. And let's put a stop on kill shelters!!!!

I have absolutely no reason to want big brother, prince william county, to know about my dogs. It is run by the police department. As much as I revere the police department, they need to stay out of the citizens business. Feel they have more important work to do. Should be run by an animal rescue.

Just another tax

Our dogs are up to date on vaccinations for rabies, but I find the licensing process tedious. I did it when we frequented a dog park.

I think yall already make enough money from my dog tags I would hate to see how much this convenience fee would increase the cost of my tags

Regular vaccination should be considered a license/compliant. Database vaccination records should be enough

This seems like another bureaucratic way to generate revenue at the taxpayers expense.

I'm against them taxing me for my dog period. Next they will want to tax your children. I believe charging for dog tags discourages some people from getting pets vaccinated.

County License is no more than a tax on law abiding dog owners! My 4 immediate neighbors have multiple dogs, never take them to the vet, get no preventative shots and so they pay no kennel fees or license fees. Why am I as a responsible dog owner being taxed.

Licensing is just another way to get money out of good people who own dogs and serves no other purpose.

I feel your trying to get more money

I find the higher fees for intact animals aren't enough to deter people from keeping intact animals. This needs to be rethought.

I believe much higher cost license fees for intact male and female dogs should be used to encourage spay/neuter.

Not everyone can afford extra fees. Make sure things are absolute necessities for a dog's health/safety before making from requirements.

Henrico County is fine if we have to its more convenient where we live - need to keep track of medical issues here

This is just a money making racket. Rabies shots is all you should have to have.

My dog has always had his rabies vaccination but never a county/city license. If it were more convenient to obtain and not too expensive, I wouldn't mind doing that step at all.

I think the proposed changes above will be definitely make a great asset for a large number of pet lovers

I feel that the information about licensing is not easily available through city. I want to be compliant :)

It was very difficult to figure out where and when to purchase the dog license. I was under the impression that there was a short window of time to do that and it was entirely too short.

Wish there were bigger discounts for spayed/neutered dogs!

That is another way to intrude on my life. Tax something even my dog companion



While I do agree with requiring Rabies vaccination, I do not agree, in general, with licensing as it is just another way of saying taxation.

Unnecessary, another way for government to get more money

Vaccine should be enough, city tags are not needed - just extra cash from us and some of us are on a fixed income

Rabies is not a big problem in Virginia. This smacks of politics and control. It does nothing to encourage up to date rabies shots. Bad idea, increases the cost to the dog owner, puts more on vets who are not state employees and gives access to animal rights activists like HSUS and PETA that works hand in hand with HSUS.

It would be great if they were automatically licensed. I feel it should cost less than it does.

Currently our cities don't have a tracking system but tags for return of pet. There isn't a compliance component from licensing for further vaccinations. There is only a fee to city that seems important.

I paid for my dog license thru the city and her rabies tag from the vet

I do NOT understand why the county needs to tax my dogs!

Only purchase annual tags - dogs wear tags every day - by end of year tags can be so worn they can no longer be read.

This system is stupid when your dog gets a rabies shot that should be all that's needed not another fee for a license. You get a tag when he or she is vaccinated (not more money for a license) I'll bet this doesn't include the hunters with all their dogs that run on everyone's property!

Why wasn't I just given a license when I adopted him?

Until recently, Hampton never taxed boat owners...yet, always required dog owner to pay a 'license fee' for having a dog. Go figure...it is simply a way of getting more revenue!

The system seems hit or miss. I do it because it was very heavily enforced in my home country, and became a habit. You should make breeders/rescuers do it or give out info. I would rather have a state-wide license in case I move from Arlington to Fairfax or VA Beach.

We give the government enough money.

I have always licensed by dogs (and in some cities, my cats). Not only does it provide a way of reuniting families with their pets; this revenue is needed to help fund county projects (hopefully for the animals). If you can't buy a license, you really don't need a dog, that will ultimately cost you much more than any license.

Owners of unspayed/un neutered dogs should have to pay a much higher fee for the licenses. This hopefully would help to end the backyard breeding.

I fail to see any point, other than making more money, why I need to have my dog/cat licensed for a fee. You can take your fee and suck it.

I think the people like myself that are responsible pet owners and spay/neuter and vaccinate our pets should not be charged a tax on our dogs. Those that do not spay /neuter their pets, and don't vaccinate them should be fined! I also think we should not allow tethering of dogs.

I feel like it is just a way for the city to get more money from citizens. People don't have to license their children, so why do they have to license their animal companions?

Animal Control should receive all money for licenses, fines for failing to follow various animal ordinances like leash laws, failure to get a license, failure to get breeding permit (Richmond) etc. instead of money going into the general fund

Some in this county are always wanting to shut down our shelter to cut costs, but do nothing to send out renewals for licenses. One of the Board of Supervisors had a dog picked up, and screamed and shouted at shelter personnel because a concerned citizen picked up the dog and took it there, and that he had to pay a fine and get a license, which he did not have. If members of the Board of Supervisors don't follow the laws, why would you expect the citizens to? When I lived in No. Va. you would get a notice to renew your dog's license. This county does nothing to collect, unless a dog is picked up by animal warden. This would also help generate revenue, instead of trying to shut down our shelter. It's maddening.

The fee charged for licensing of dogs should go to a fund for the care of dogs NOT to the general fund of the county.

It is unnecessary and another way for politicians to pad their politics.

### **Licensing enforcement**

If the city is going to enforce licensing of dogs - wonderful! But I also feel they should enforce the city park regulations for dogs, if all dogs are licensed it would be easy for park employees to help regulate the leashing of dogs.

It is a law and should be enforced!!

It is not enforced in the City of Va Beach unless you lose your dog then animal control will impose a fine. I'd like to see pet owners be more responsible and not rely on Government to make them follow the law.

Why aren't the residents checked periodically for licenses, shots and safety

Once one initiates the licensing action, the annual renewals are easy to manage and no different than remembering, and planning, one's annual personal property or vehicle taxes/licensing/registration. Unfortunately, many pet owners do not license their pets to avoid the license fee which is not fair to

those of us who do. Increased fines for pet owners keeping unlicensed pets should be enforced; and, veterinarian clinics should be encouraged to report unlicensed pets.

There's no way to ensure that people license their dogs if they never take them to the vet for a rabies vaccine. We need more patrolling of dogs who are just kept in backyards or in impoverished areas without ever have medical attention or real shelters.

Cumberland AC doesn't cite the public for not having their dogs licensed because the judge will just dismiss it upon the person getting the license prior to court. That frustrates the ACOs and wastes their time when they could be caring for the animals.

I always buy my license, but know of many people that do not, what is done about that?

I think licenses should be enforced better

Loudoun co is great at enforcing licensing and their shelter and animals thrive from it. It shows. When i moved to clarke co, they dont enforce the licensing. And their shelter is poor, run-down, based on volunteers and their 1 ACO is a joke. Clarke is poor in their animal sheltering and animal law enforcement. If they licensed better they would benefit!

**Licensing (statewide system/database)**

YES, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly;

YES, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly;

YES, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly;

YES, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly

YES, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly

YES, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly

YES, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly

YES, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly

YES, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly

YES, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly

YES, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly

YES, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly

YES, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly

YES, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly



YES, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly  
Yes, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly  
Yes, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly  
Yes, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly  
Yes, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly  
as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly  
yes, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly  
Yes, as long as it increased the likelihood that a lost dog could be returned to his owner more quickly  
I want dogs to be returned more quickly

YES, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

YES, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

YES, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

YES, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

YES, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

YES, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

YES, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

YES, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

YES, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

YES, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

YES, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

YES, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

YES, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

YES, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

YES, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

YES, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

YES, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

YES, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public



YES, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

I also would not want any statewide database accessible by animal control to be released to the general public.

Question 9) I'm not opposed to a database as long as my name, address, email, phone or any other personal info was used

Imperative that data NOT be made public.

I also don't want the data to be public.

YES, as long as animal control officers found this system useful

YES, as long as animal control officers found this system useful

YES, as long as animal control officers found this system useful;

YES, as long as animal control officers found this system useful

As long as animal control officers found this system useful

I want animal control officers to find it useful,

YES, as long as animal control officers found this system useful

YES, as long as animal control officers found this system useful;

YES, as long as animal control officers found this system useful;

YES, as long as animal control officers found this system useful;

YES, as long as animal control officers found this system useful;

YES, as long as animal control officers found this system useful

YES, as long as animal control officers found this system useful

Yes, as long as animal control officers found this system useful

Yes, as long as animal control officers found this system useful

YES, as long as animal control officers found this system useful;

YES, as long as animal control officers found this system useful;

YES, as long as animal control officers found this system useful

YES, as long as animal control officers found this system useful

Yes, as long as animal control officers found this system useful

Yes, as long as animal control officers found this system useful

Unsure

Isn't the info already in a dbase? Thought that was the entire reason for licensing! Bureaucratic info grab.

I do not want my information released to the general public and I want to ensure that this database would help return dogs to their proper owners quickly.

es, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public.

I would be in favor of having my dogs licensing/microchip information available to animal control officers so long as it is guarded for privacy from the general public

And the data in the statewide data base must not be released to the general public.

If certificate information was to go into a statewide database I feel the system should not be released to the general public.

provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public.

Yes, provided the data in the system could not be released to the general public

No, I do not want any of my info or my dog's info entered into a statewide database unless it can be proven to have benefits without privacy risks

On top of that, who is going to foot the cost for the creation and maintenance of a statewide database of every dog? Are veterinarians going to be required to input data into the proposed statewide database? Half the time their staff can't enter the pet's name correctly into their own computer system. Who would be responsible for errors in the database? Wrong name? Wrong chip number? The owner would not be able to verify data at the time of entry - yet they would be responsible. The same thing would be applicable to Treasurer's offices of municipalities. Both offices are normally understaffed and underpaid. The costs would be passed on to the consumer in increased fees for rabies vaccinations, which would be counter to the goal of increased vaccinations. Increased fees for licenses would be counter to compliance. In the event the proposed database is unavailable or gets hacked or incurs loss of data etc. -- paper or electronic copies of licenses and rabies certificates would still have to be kept in the veterinarian's records and the Treasurer's Offices. Animal Control only operates in their respective locality -- they do not have statewide responsibilities. Animal control only has ONE place to check to see if a dog owner has licensed their pet -- and that is to call the Treasurer's office. Usually that information is in a county database/accounting system or file that is readily accessible regardless of the size of the locality.



Not all dogs are licensed but I do feel that a statewide (or nationwide for people that travel out of state) system that is private and easy for animal control officers to use would be good to assist in lost animal returns.

and have a database accessible to animal control officers and animal shelters.

#10. I'm leery of having my personal information on yet another data base although it would be useful if it increased the likelihood of a lost dog being returned to its owner.

First, creating a statewide database is too difficult to maintain, and would create another taxpayer expense, borne by those which have dogs. Micro-chipping would require that ALL County & City Animal Control keep all their information up to date (most currently do not), and would require that all Humane Organizations, Rescue Groups, etc, be registered in a statewide database. The Commonwealth of Virginia cannot keep up with its' current databases, as evidenced by the pardoned criminals still being in jail for murder, being included in the Governor's "mass" pardon of convicted felons! Currently, when one applies for a kennel license, PROOF of rabies a vaccination is already required to be provided by the applicant for each dog, prior to the issuance of said kennel license. Virginia law currently requires that a Veterinarian forward to each county rabies shots administered to any dog in the specific county of residence. Anything such as a statewide database, required micro-chipping, etc, is only an added TAX to the dog owner!

I am not confident that the proposed database would not be used for purposes other than finding lost dogs and returning them promptly to their owners.

Oppose a Statewide database.

I don't agree with requiring people to have their animals microchipped and tracked in a database.

And state wide databases are too hard to keep track of and are too easy to hack.

I object to putting my dogs in a database.

I have concerns over the security of such a database.

furthermore the state has no business having any kinda of database.

If there were a statewide problem with "homeless dogs" wandering then maybe that system could Be cost justified. But why do we need that?

A statewide database that ACO's are required to check by law from their vehicles after they find a stray dog would seem to be the most efficient and cost effective way to keep dogs out of shelters. Combining the microchip, licensing, and rabies information also makes sense and increases the chance of dogs finding their way home. Owners would be more compliant in having their dogs licensed, rabies vaccinated and microchipped if it was all in one location. One question to ponder: How would this work at spay/neuter clinics that are out of the county that the dogs are owned in?

I'm ok with a statewide animal control database but it needs to be yes to all three middle responses... benefits outweighs costs of implementation, increasing the rate of reuniting pets with owners and securing the info to keep it private.

If the database were created it should not fall under the Freedom of Information Act. This must be a closed database to animal control only. What are you really trying to control?

What would the database be used for? Who would have access to it? Would this: (1) decrease undue police brutality against dogs? (2) alert firemen to animals in homes? (3) be used against the home owner in any way if they should fail to vaccinate or care for the animal? If so to this, what is the standard? If so to any of this - will it be properly promoted and communicated to the public and animal owners? (4) what about strays who are not micro chipped? (5) what about the costs for those who are on a fixed income (elderly)? (6) what animals would this include? (horses, birds, ferrets, turtles, gerbils...) (7) would this be used to track and maintain animal population or control of them in any way?

A statewide system will only add to the cost of dog ownership. I am adamantly opposed. It should remain local.

I think the most efficient way to license dogs would be statewide with the jurisdictions each receiving their portion after cost in a yearly check this encouraging each jurisdiction to continue to get dogs licensed. Also any dog who is spayed or neutered and microchipped should be eligible for a lifetime license registration for the state at say a cost of \$50.00. Due to the fact that spayed and neutered dogs who are chipped have a less likely chance of burdening the shelter system and adding cost, these \$50.00 lifetime fees should go into a fund to allow for rabies, microchip, and spay/neuter services for low income communities. Also as someone who has worked as an ACO for many years the potential for those who own dogs who that are microchipped and licensed decreases the potential of dogs running at large, neglect, and cruelty, as the owner usually understands that their information is attached which typically causes an owner to be more responsible.

I think that there's already too much interference in this area at the state level. The state already requires Vets to actually give the Rabies shot, AND offer up names and addresses, which is ridiculous---it's a shot like any other, either IM or SubQ, which limits less affluent folks to "cheap" rabies clinics or produces an unfair financial burden on them since most private Vets insist on charging both for an office call AND a physical in addition to the charge for the rabies vaccination. This is just the state's attempt to interfere with private citizens and make a quick buck. If this were JUST about making sure that all animals were covered for rabies, I might feel differently. Once again, politicians are meddling in something which they don't fully understand. This proposed system offers too many opportunities for misuse....

Statewide database is stupid. If a dog is tagged, and/or microchipped that is good enough to get him home if lost. Why would you want to make more work when there is already a system in place?

With the amount of loose dogs I see every year, both hunting dogs and escaped pets, a system like this which could accurately determine whether a dog has had a rabies vaccine would go a long way in easing my mind.

Any data about my dog and my ownership should not be released to the general public to protect my privacy. Should I own a rare breed, I would not want to risk having my dog stolen based on information that the general public could obtain.

having the local AC with this information is enough government control for me. does not need to be statewide.

While databases are nice they are also prone to errors ... I would rather the owner be responsible for the pertinent information

not in favor of my dogs being registered in a state data base

Would want access to a statewide database be limited to lost dog recovery and not for policing or other types of activities.

The process is fine as of now. We do not need the state involved with a county process. I guess the next step will be to have the Federal Government involved in the process.

Privacy regulations as stringent as HIPAA need to be enforced, with the assurance that this data cannot and will never be used to further breed specific legislation or prejudice.

However, I do not believe licensing should be expanded to the state level

Building a statewide database and performing mandatory microchipping will ultimately cost the state residence more money, which is not good. The state should be concentrating the efforts on other issues beside local animal control. Let's concentrate on voter registration, and making sure all of our residence are here legally. I oppose a statewide database and any mandatory microchipping.

A statewide database would be helpful for after hours return of lost dogs to owners.

I am wary of a statewide data base due to the problem of leaking private information.

**Licensing with emphasis on maintaining current system, keeping system local**

Let it stay the same, if it is not broke don't fix it!

Leave the system alone, don't reinvent the wheel

what we have is working

Leave dog license at a local level

My vet is in Maryland, so for me the option to purchase my licenses from the Fairfax Co. treasurer needs to remain in place.

Licensing compliance is a County function and must remain so. If licensing is too costly or complex it will hurt rabies compliance.

Dog license should only be handled by the county you live in! Do you ever own anything in this country everything you got they want to tax you on. Leave us alone!!!

I prefer to stick with the county for purchasing our license, our vet fees are high enough I don't need to pay any additional nominal fees to them. If the process can be done (and encouraged) at the vet office without additional fees there may be a higher rate of compliance from owners.

I feel that everything set forth already pretty much covers everything well, no need to make any changes

Dog licensing is a local issue and should continue to remain that way. Records should be created and maintained at the county level.

Leave it be.

The current system seems adequate.

I do not think the system is broke. Why do we need to initiate major changes to the vaccination/county dog license process and potentially a statewide database when we have so many more critical problems that the state needs to address. Plus I don't want to pay any more "taxes" than I already have to pay.

I believe the system is fine as-is. Additionally, I use a 3 year vaccination. This seems to be another way to increase taxes on dog ownership, and could result in the opposite of its intended consequence (less rabies protected dogs and less licensing) if implemented.

Dog licensing and rabies enforcement and control belongs to the local county/city jurisdiction and is not a matter that the state needs to involve itself.

keep the licensing the way it is. Anything else would just bring more government into our lives.

This should be a local issue, not state. Dog issues should remain in the county.

This should be done at the county level only. I have seen little improvement when anything was turned over to a larger government entity.

The system is not broke so there's no need to fix it. Appears this idea is only to create more government jobs, thus creating a larger empire for the agency head that would administer the system. A larger agency equals larger funds to operate.

ALL LICENSING of animals should be done and maintained by each county within the Commonwealth.

all this does is make ownership of dogs more expensive. Leave this issue local and not make it a state controlled item

Current system appears to work fine. Not interested in increased taxes/fees where not warranted. The county by county system does not need to be taken to the state level. Are the animal rights folks pushing this agenda?

Lets let the county take care of all dog licensing. The expense for keeping hunting dogs is enough as it is.

Very happy and comply with the system currently in place. Suggested changes will drive up costs of dog ownership and suspect will result in less compliance for both rabies vaccinations and dog registrations.

This is a local issue. The state should not be involved in minor issues such as this. The state has more important issues to worry about.

Let the counties handle dog tags and rabies certs. We do not need Richmond involved!

I have anywhere from pet dogs to coon dogs, deer dogs, fox dogs and coyote dogs and I get their rabies shot whenever they need them and I pay for my kennel tag every year as well. The county informs you that you need them and when it is due so this should be taken care of from a county level and not state. It seems as if people are trying to get it to where its hard to own a dog when they are actually really good animals and also I have an autistic son and each one of our dogs helps him.

not a state concern

The system we have in place now works fine and seems to be cost effective for dog owners and the local government. Adding one more level of bureaucracy for the dog owner is not necessary or cost effective for the dog owner or the governing body..I have owned house and hunting dogs for 60 years and have never broke the laws or requirements in place,Also I have never lost or had a dog stolen. R.Earl Joyner.C.M.I. 757-870-1111

Leave it alone, people in this country just want live a simple life without more huge government programs that eventually grow administratively and end up costing everyday people more money just to enjoy pet ownership. Don't we pay enough to survive everyday now. This will eventually expand in cost and Why?? Just to get more money when all people want to do is simply enjoy the pleasures of pet ownership.

Leave things how they are and quit messing with issues that do not need to be messed with!!

More governmental regulation and expense is not necessary. The current system works just fine for me.

This is a terrible idea and expense! Leave well enough alone!

The process that is already in place works fine.

Oppose any other charges

Keep it at the local level.

Leave things alone. A reason to get more money then they already get. !!!! Crooks

My feeling is my locality should receive license fees not the state. The state can't keep what they need to straight. ie roads, schools, etc.

Needs to be left as a county issue not regulated by the state

It works fine the way it is..I've has no problems not do I know anyone that has!

I am satisfied with having my Hounds vaccinated and then purchasing my tags through my county's treasurer. This should be kept at the local level.

I don't mind vaccinating and licensing my dog(s) in accordance with existing VA and Fairfax County law.

leave it to the counties. no state involvment!

Dog licensing is a LOCAL issue, not a state issue. Let the localities decide whats best for them and keep the state government out of it.

This brings to mind one of the main tenets of the Declaration of Indendence, "He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance." Virginia is becoming too Soviet. Please, Richmond, go away and leave us alone.

I prefer the current system utilized by Henrico County. My veterinarian sends the rabies renewal to the county and the county sends me a license bill every three (3) years prior to the vaccination expiration date. The county bill requests the current rabies certificate to be forwarded with your payment. For newly owned dogs, there are multiple locations available after hours and weekends for purchasing the county license (with proof of vaccination) that starts the process listed in the previous sentence.

Leave policing and tracking dogs rabies certification to the County.

I think the licensing process is fine the way it is

The licensing of dogs and such ownership records should be kept at the county level. The only result of taking it to the state level would be greater cost for dog owners.

Licensing should be kept at the county level..

Why try to fix something that is not broken.all this will do is keep people from getting there rabies shots.

I strongly disagree with any changes in the current vaccination and licensing process. It just seems it is more unnecessary bureaucracy and microchips would just add more cost to ownership and massive confusion and inconvenience if dog ownership changes hands.

If the system in place works.. leave it alone.. citizens don't want more government control.. all this would do is create more taxes..

Keep laws as they are.

Dog licensing is a local issue. All records should be created and maintained at the county level only. The database will only grow a bureaucracy and increase the cost of dog ownership.

The process is fine the way it is regarding the way the county license is obtained.

I have no problem with the system we have now. Get vet to vacinate dog and then go to county treasurer to buy liscense. System not broken. Why try to change so state government takes over from local government.

Leave things like they are government is involved to much now leave our dogs alone

I am against any changes to the current system. Another example of more government that will cost the tax payers more money!

why are you trying to fix something that isn't broke. dogs should be controlled by the city or county not the state.

Licensing should be done at the local level.

I think this should be handled by the county rather than the state

leave things in southapton co. the way they are!!

I think it is an invasion of privacy to involve the local governments in policing private citizens insofar as animals go, beyond the simple law to require a license. This procedure doesn't need to go any further than that in my opinion.

In southampton, Co the Vet has a clinic and the treasure comes and you can get your tags at the same time. Which works great. Don't change

Dog licensing is a local issue. All records should be created and maintained at the county level only. The database will only grow a bureaucracy and increase the cost of dog ownership.

Dog licensing is a local issue, all records should be created and maintained at the county level ONLY. The database will only grow a bureaucracy and increase the cost of dog ownership.

All dog licensing of dogs should be handled locally and statewide licensing would add additional cost to dog owners. I own several dogs and can't afford any additional cost.

THis is a county issue.

The current process works fine. The county is already notified by the vet when a rabies shot is given. No need to add anymore governmental control to the process.

Present way of licensing works perfectly.

I think things should stay the same as they have always been

Leave the licensing as is It needs to stay local

There is nothing wrong with the way the system is already set up for dogs license now. Leave it alone.

I don't see any problems with the way it is working now. I get my kennel license every January and show my rabies records at that time.

Dogs are personal property of owners who need only to keep records in our localities. ( County or City ). The state has more important issues than wasting money on a state registration and has no business mandating a microchip that can be easily exploited by the state or someone who can hack in and do illegal on unethical deeds. The government has such a wonderful track record of securing data as we all know is FALSE!

Don't want nothing to change leave it the way it is and spend the time and money on real problems

System that is in place in my county seems to be working fine. Sounds like wasted tax dollars

I currently obtain a rabies vaccination prior to obtaining my city license. I do not mind the current local process nor would I mind purchasing a license through my veterinarian.

#### **License purchasing options/procedure**

I have gone to the treasurer's office to get tags only to be told they have not come in yet. Wasted time and trip! Would like easier way to purchase. Don't trust the mail anymore.

The easier you make it to get a county/city license the more likely you are to do it. Richmond City made it easy, Hanover County makes it hard.

Could 2yr licenses be offered?

It's difficult to keep the rabies vaccination and the licensing in sync. Rabies shot may be due in June, license goes by the calendar year. Even with a three year vaccine, you can only get a two year license. Too confusing.

Should be all online.

I feel more people would get their dogs licensed if the process was more simplified.

It doesn't currently make sense to purchase a county tag from one's vet because a county tag here in Highland has to be purchased annually. If you go to the vet and get a three year rabies shot, you have to go back to the vet every year to get the tag. Vets usually charge for services, whereas the county treasurer does not.

Any system that may be implemented to track all this information should also include a reminder function when they are due so it's not perceived as a tool for a witch hunt against "bad owners" but also has a positive, helpful side to it - helping find lost/stolen animals or indoor animals that may have gotten



out without a tag on and don't end up in a shelter possibly destroyed for no reason other than lack of info and owner contact, reminder to owners when it's time to renew etc.

#7. Fairfax County sends me the form making it easy to do

I don't mind getting rabies vaccine first then getting a license separately. But I wish we could purchase the license online. It would make it much more convenient.

I would love to not have to go to my local treasurers office to get my license for my dog, but my vet is in the county and can only provide county licenses. That system could be reworked to make things more efficient.

An online payment system would also be more convenient than a trip to the county.

I find the present system awkward, in that the licenses are annual (or up to 3 years) based on the calendar year. My dogs are vaccinated in mid year so that makes an awkward transition...

Licensing in Augusta County is not well advertised, so I'm sure it is not done enough (not by me, we license).

I think they should all be the same price and a spayed/neutered dog/cats license should be for the life of the rabies vaccine!

I do not appreciate the intimidation by the county government with respect to not purchasing a dog tag. The current system is not consumer friendly.

I think it is important that every dog has some form of permanent ID (microchip/tattoo) and that they are all licensed although I wish it was a lump sum to cover the dogs lifetime.

Rabies vaccination dates do not align with annual licensing. Dog vaccinated in July 2012, but license purchased from veterinarian expired end of 2014 not July 2015. Licensing dates should not be January to December but match rabies vaccination dates now that licensing is required at the time of vaccination.

My county is great about invoicing me yearly for my license renewals. Happy to pay it. What I want? Law enforcement to have access so they never shoot my pets.

I get letters from the Treasurer saying I need to purchase tags for my dogs when they have already been purchased at the SPCA. That is a major waste of my taxpayer money. The county should be able to check the license/tag numbers that have been purchased from the SPCA.

If rabies vaccines are good for multiple years registrations should be good for multiple years also. Families with multiple pets should receive a discount too.

I'd like an online option

I had a difficult time a few years ago purchasing my dog's license a few years ago. My vet does not supply a rabies tag and that's what the treasurers wanted, not a piece of paper. I had to call my vet to

relay the information to them. Something should change. Personally, I would like a rabies tag for him to wear as well. People don't realize that the fact he is licensed means automatically that he has had his rabies shot updated.

It would be nice if the licensing could last as long as the vaccination, and just occur in tandem with the vaccination.

The rate for my tags are \$10 every year. Wouldn't it make more sense to charge \$12 and pro-rate the tag purchase accordingly? Two years ago I was forced to buy a tag and pay \$10 for less than 30 days.

Like the dmV does for paying online, a discount for buying tags at the vet's office would be great!

There should definitely be an easier way to do all of this. Having to do it in person Or by mail with a check is super inconvenient. Also, emailed notices when it's going to expire and more transferable information between vet and state (so my vet can remind me when it'll expire)

You should be able to license your dog online. The fact you must write a check is outdated. Please create a website for this.

Paying extra online isn't great

make it easy for people to comply and revenue will increase for licensing. let vets enter the vaccination to a secure online database and allow owners to use online services to pay and register their dogs. driving to the treasurer's office or animal control is arcane and deters people who want to comply. also limits revenue

Why would I want to pay an extra fee for my vet to issue a license when it is very easy to go online and pay thru the treasurer's office with no processing fee? You are asking for the vet's to take on extra work and they will definitely charge for it.

I currently get my dog license at the county SPCA. I would like to continue to do this.

I feel that as long as a person has had their dogs vaccinated and it is kept on file at a vet office and there is also proof of vaccination at their residence/on their person, dogs should not have to be registered in addition to being vaccinated. However, since this is a requirement, it should at least be done all in one fee/process so that it is easier and more efficient.

Purchasing a license from the Treasurer is not a problem. I would prefer that I could do it by mail.

I think anything that will make getting a rabies vaccine and city license easier, the more people will comply. It can also be very difficult for people who work during the week to make it to the local licensing office making them less inclined to do so if it means taking time off of work or going on a day off.

I don't think licensing should cost any money if you responsibly spay and neuter your pet and pay for your own microchip

I wish we could license them online. I always forget to send the paper back.

The process is hard to understand, do you have to wait until November-January as the period to get the license? What if you adopt a puppy/dog other months? Do you just go without one until November? Is that okay? Confused by the instructions as a new dog owner!

I have received notices from the county even though my dog already has a license and it is not even close to expiring. This makes me think that somewhere along the way, the records are not super accurate. Maybe there is a better way to keep track? Thanks!

My county does not offer an online option for purchasing dog tags. Should be able to type in rabies tag info and pay online instead of printing a paper app for each dog, photocopying rabies certificate and mailing it in with a check or money order. Come into the 21st century!

I feel that if we get a 3 year rabies,vaccine then we should be able to purchase a,3 year dog license at a reduced amount as opposed to continually having to purchase one every year. This would encourage the 3 year rabies shot over the one year.

Work schedule makes it difficult to obtain county license, and they will not accept a photocopy of the Rabies certificate to issue one by mail

It should be made clear that a vet administering the rabies shot located in one county should be required to make sure a pet owner in a neighboring county is obtaining the license from the appropriate authority.

I adopt my dogs from government and nonprofit shelters. Rabies shot and license obtained there at time of adoption would save time and guarantee that these things get done. Some people just don't do it. ID chip at the same time would be a bonus for everyone: likely reduce the shelter population of strays.

I think the county/city should give out the license after the documentation of the rabies shot and the microchip.

It should be easier to get a license

It would be much more convenient if licensing could be done online or through the mail.

Going into the licensing facility and bringing proof of rabies vaccination is a hassle, which is why my 3 are still unlicensed. Making this easier would be welcomed.

If licenses will be issued by vets they need to be able to ammend information in the system. The city/shelter got one of my dog's microchip number wrong and it was an ordeal to have it corrected.

I am impressed, Richmond segregates its fees only for Animal Care & Control. The cost is \$10, pretty reasonable and that made the licensing process more positive for me.

I would greatly appreciate a system of licensing that did not require the 2nd step of going to the treasurer's office, I often forget to do this, I would like to be able to do it at the vet's office or online.

Keep it simple... 1 stop vaccine & licensing is a terrific idea!

Why not put animal pet licenses on the personal property tax statements that localities prepare?

Forcing dog owners to purchase dog [tax] licenses through the vet is an equally moronic idea.

It would be much easier to be able to renew the licence at the vet or online. Having to physically mail it is cumbersome. Also, it would be great for the county to explore other forms of tags than the metal ones we receive. It's a waste of metal and shipping, and we daily change what our dogs wear for walks and so usually they end up not wearing the tags.

The thing I find most onerous is having to produce the rabies certificate to the county. They've already been that the vaccination has occurred, why do I have to produce the copy? It would be much easier if I could just pay the county online and have them mail me the tag/license.

8A. The easier you can make it to purchase a license the better.

I think it is too hard and difficult to license ownership of dogs. If this was easier and cheaper many people would actually license their dog.

Just needs to be done more conveniently

It is very difficult to register my dog for a license because there is no way for me to do it online...and I can't remember the last time I bought a stamp...or where I could but one these days.

Anything that could be done to increase the places where a license can be obtained would be appreciated.

I am relatively new to the state and purchased my license in person last year. I would like to purchase it by mail or on line for all future licenses. In NY where I was from, the state data base was used and county sent bills for renewals. Very convenient. Parking in Leesburg and long lines is not convenient.

Receiving a reminder from the county when the license is due would also be helpful.

Rabies vaccines should be the three-year version, not single year. Counties and cities that require licensing should provide renewal letters so that the renewal can be done by mail or on a website. For counties that find themselves strapped for cash to purchase such software, they should look into their high school for students with "skillz" who could probably knock out such an application in a few days.

I've always been frustrated with Roanoke City's registration process. They send you a notice in the mail, but they do not include any payment instructions, such as a return envelope, any website where you could pay, or even a sentence telling you where to mail your payment or who to make a check out to. I'm sure this lack of information on how to pay is no doubt a big factor for many people not registering their dogs. I'm sure many people think, "Ok, you send me a letter telling me I need to register my dog and make a payment...but there are absolutely no instructions at all on how to make the payment. What do I do??? Forget about it!"

It would be nice to have a two year or a lifetime option.

Please allow me to purchase license for 2 years or get rid of paying license all together

I wish we were sent some sort of post card reminder in December letting us know to renew our dog license. I forget every year to do it

I have gotten my city tags from hardware stores also. Coming into the city treasurer office is hard to do. as a person that moves a lot - would be nice to have the licensing of dog information even provided at the dmV - not just there but sometimes hard to find what policies are in place when it comes to pets, why not get the info when your changing over your license

Please keep the fee as low as possible and make it convenient to obtain a license.

It is inconvenient to go to the treasure for license, however, for \$4 I'll deal with it.

I prefer the current system utilized by Henrico County. My veterinarian sends the rabies renewal to the county and the county sends me a license bill every three (3) years prior to the vaccination expiration date. The county bill requests the current rabies certificate to be forwarded with your payment. For newly owned dogs, there are multiple locations available after hours and weekends for purchasing the county license (with proof of vaccination) that starts the process listed in the previous sentence.

It would be better to get dog license through, Animal Control, your vet or PETA. It would be more convenient.

Secondly, I have received bills to pay for my license and I have relied on that system. I never received a bill and ended up with a police summons and a pretty hefty late fee. That annoyed me!

Send out notices for renewal.

I go get the license when I go to pay my taxes so it's a one stop shop. I'd prefer to keep it separate from the vets office

Offer a life time license as an option.

Once the rabies vac is given I'd like to be able to go online and get a county/city tag.

I feel that the license should be valid for more than 1 year. It is the owner's responsibility to notify that they may be relocating and to obtain new licenses for that city.

Would city licensing be for 3 years - the same as for rabies vaccination? Or would the license be on a yearly basis as is with the city at the present time?

Need to be better system for renewal. Don't have a problem with licensing requirement or rabies requirement but want it to be easier and able to be done online

With modern technology it makes sense to streamline the process while providing better data to local animal control officers. Our county makes it fairly convenient, but eliminating a processing step with the Treasurer's Office while ensuring dogs have a greater chance of being returned home would be ideal.

I had a small hiccup with the system when I changed my maiden name. Despite registering Epona (sp?) with my vet, I had received a notice/warning about her not being registered. A call to the city corrected this, but it would be nice if the system tied to the dog rather than the owner to avoid this.

System is out of date needs to have a faster update to city (why go to Texas?) should not go to Texas should have it set up in Virginia

It is only made hard by the requirement to drive to Warrenton to get it, an easy online system with mailed and/or emailed reminders would make it easy. Or a lifetime registration!

### **Licensing education**

More information on county/city licensing policies readily available; via libraries, local treasurer offices, pet stores, vet offices, etc.

In answering being aware that dogs had to be licensed. I did not at first till I got a letter from city stating such.

I don't think dogs should have to be licensed because I've never been told a good reason for it.

Information on these procedures should be communicated better. When I first moved into the area, I had no idea what the rules were until I got a threatening letter about paying to register my dogs. If you make the information available, people will be more compliant. Also, I think we shouldn't have to pay to register a dog with the county. We pay enough taxes here and I'm not even sure what the fee goes to pay. COMMUNICATION!!

My county website gives no reason for licenses -- might help with compliance rate if owners knew what the fees went to.

Veterinarian offices should display posters indicating the requirement to obtain a county/city license to increase awareness.

All of this is news to me. Years ago could afford a vet, and he never mentioned this. Not enough info yet to make a determination.

Honestly I don't understand what's the value of getting the license if I already have all the required vaccination. I buy it because I have to. But if I understand what's in it for me, this may improve compliance.

I would really like to know how the county uses the funds from licensing? If it is to maintain a county no-kill shelter, then I feel the fees are appropriate.

Not 100% sure why we need to license our pets.

I have found it difficult to obtain a license online for my dog. What is the purpose of the license and how are the fees used?

I know a lot of people don't like this rule so if people knew the importance of it and it was enforced more then I think people would understand more.

Some people are not aware (so they say) that their pet is required to be licensed in their city/town

Education is key. I know that rabies vaccinations and city licenses are required but there are so many people that do not. There has to be a way to relay this information. Signs / pamphlets at the City parks / dog parks, vet's offices, etc.

I don't think that a city/county dog license is useful or necessary. It feels more like a way to get more money out of the residents. The licenses on my animals have never once done anything for me, yet they cost me money. If those licenses were being used to help people or refunded when the animal died and were easier to obtain, I might think differently.

I am an animal advocate so I knew about getting my dog licensed. A lot of individuals are not aware of this even when they do have them vaccinated. It would be nice if this was broadcast more to the general public.

I have never lost an animal. I don't see how licensing and paying a fee to the city or county helps me. Facebook always seems to be the way dogs find their homes anyway

I get the city license for my dog but wonder if it's really necessary or is it just another way this city gets money from the residents. I don't take him to dog parks. I know there's a lot of ppl out there they don't bother to purchase the city licence. I don't even keep his tag in him. He has a name tag and microchip.

What is the purpose of licensing my dog? He is microchipped so in the event he ever runs away and is turned in, the local SPCA could easily ID him and let me know.

A, having recently relocated here from another state I did not realize an actual license was required for my dogs. What is the purpose for licensing dogs? Just another way to generate revenue? B, I have mixed feelings on question number 6. When you involve the government in my efforts to protect my pet - I think the government will probably cause problems. Not to mention once again the government is collecting more information that I feel they are entitled. too. Unless number question number 9 is the reason and some how I feel it probably isn't.

I don't understand why we pay for dog licenses. It's extra \$ for the county and a rip off for us. One time purchase would be ok.

I hate paying for a county/city license. What does this money do?

There is no incentive to license my dog. What is the advantage of doing this for me? What is the disadvantage? when it completely doesn't matter if I do something or not, I tend not to do it.

I see no real purpose to license dogs except for another tax.

Licensing of dogs just seems like a way to get money from dog owners. I don't think it serves any purpose.

What are the fees for?? Certainly not enforcing the requirements of responsible dog care!!!!

I had to find out ON MY OWN that I needed to purchase a license. It was hard. I would prefer the veterinarian to send it to the county automatically.

I have concerns about the money collected to register dogs. How many other animals are required to be registered/licensed? If it is just for dogs, why shouldn't other household "pet" owners pay to have their pets? Where does the collected money go? Is it to support the administration of dog registrations?

I always register mine just to avoid legal trouble, but I have yet to see what purpose it serves other than to collect another tax from me.

I was shocked to learn that a dog had to be licensed within the country. No one ever told us and when the Vet sent in the information that we had our new dog vaccinated we received a surprising letter from the country saying we owed them money. The dog found us and was badly injured so took her to the Vet for care. After searching for her owner to no avail we decided to keep her. Having never owned a dog while living in VA we had no idea about the fees. I do think it is a good idea to have the have the tags registered with the country/city so they can find the rightful owner.

**Licensing-veterinarian's role**

YES and I would be willing to pay a nominal fee for this convenience

YES and I would be willing to pay a nominal fee for this convenience

YES and I would be willing to pay a nominal fee for this convenience

YES and I would be willing to pay a nominal fee for this convenience

YES and I would be willing to pay a nominal fee for this convenience

YES and I would be willing to pay a nominal fee for this convenience

YES and I would be willing to pay a nominal fee for this convenience

YES, and I would be willing to pay a nominal fee for this convenience

YES and I would be willing to pay a nominal fee for this convenience

YES and I would be willing to pay a nominal fee for this convenience

YES and I would be willing to pay a nominal fee for this convenience



YES and I would be willing to pay a nominal fee for this convenience

YES and I would be willing to pay a nominal fee for this convenience

YES and I would be willing to pay a nominal fee for this convenience

YES and I would be willing to pay a nominal fee for this convenience

NO, I do not mind purchasing my county/city license elsewhere

NO, I do not mind purchasing my county/city license elsewhere

NO, I do not mind purchasing my county/city license elsewhere

I already purchase my county/city license through my veterinarian

I already purchase my county/city license through my veterinarian

I already purchase my county/city license through my veterinarian

local SPCA instead of veterinarian

If the "nominal fee" is on the order of \$1, then yes, I'd be willing to pay an extra dollar for the convenience of paying for the license at the same time as the rabies shot or annual checkup.

Don't really care

As long as it doesn't cost more

Definitely a dog license through your veterinarian would be easier

It would be great if dogs could get county licenses at the vet

I support getting your dog license from your vet after a rabies shot rather than a rabies tag; Florida uses this system and works very well. I think owners should pay the cost of the licensing fee but not an extra charge to the vet

Being a vet the last thing I need is to sell licenses. I already have to report the rabies to the county treasurer each month. What about clients who live in the next county, do I have to sell for both counties? Come on, have county do it or else let us vets get the money!

It would be a lot easier to do it at the vet when they give the shot.

If the forms for licensing my dogs could be filled out at my veterinarians and paid for, it would definitely reduce the chance that I would forget to get it done. With the amount of paper that comes into our house every day, forms can easily be misplaced. This is a great idea!

#8. Let Veterinarians be just that. They are not city/county clerks.

It is a great idea and I support it. We always get a county license but how convenient to be able to get it through the vet even if it costs a little more.

The vets office should provide the license at the time of the rabies vaccination.

It would be infinitely easier to get the license through my vet.

If I could do it at my vet that would be excellent!

#8. My vet and staff are busy caring for animals. They don't need more paperwork to do.

I'm a Veterinary Assistant in the county and I feel the county should just keep handling the license like they have been. It's not any veterinary clinics job to do their job for them

If veterinarians had increased responsibility in this process, it would only add to their workload, which would translate to increased costs to the dog owner.

It would REALLY streamline process by being able to purchase dog license @ vet.

I've lived in other states where the vet always gave me the tag when I got the dog vaccinated. Having to do it as a separate transaction is a pain.

I like the idea to get rabies and license from your vet, or free agencies that give free shots to animals.

Certainly, it would be convenient to obtain such license from vet offices; in my opinion many more dogs and cats would have a license should that be the case.

It's currently very inconvenient to get a license in the City of Richmond. The most optimal place to get one would be my veterinarian.

Current process is not too inconvenient at all but coordinating it with rabies vaccination would be great!

People purchasing animals from private breeders are often unaware of licensing for there pet. So when they go to the vet to get there rabies vaccination it would be easier to just have the owner do it in house.

I work at a vet clinic and from my perspective, it would be nice if our city offered the capability to upload the reports online rather than doing it the old fashion mail in way still.

I think the veterinarian should be able to license the dog because the extra steps and process seems antiquated and cumbersome. I would pay a filing fee to be able to do this.

I think a database between vets and the county is a great idea. I get all the vaccinations so it would benefit us if our dogs went missing that the county would know they are vaccinated (safe) and who to call right away.

I wouldn't want the license purchase to be controlled by veterinarians unless cost could be controlled.

Having vets issue licenses might increase the likelihood that all animals would then be licensed. Any additional cost to have vets do it could increase the number of animals NOT getting vaccinated. Vets have enough responsibilities for one. Secondly, having to wait in line for animals to be seen by the vet just to get a license seems to be a large waste of my time. I feel the system would be very inefficient.

Vet already has too much work without adding more!

Buying the license from the vet would be great. When I volunteered at the SPCA I just bought it there. But now I have to drive 45 minutes round trip just for the license.

In my county, vets automatically notify local government licensing dept.

Lastly, don't require the poor vets to be more involved in the counties' moneymaking schemes: they went to vet school to help animals, not to become tax collectors.

I find it annoying that the city licensing is performed by an out of state company. I have 3 dogs and they are done separately. A vet could perform this task for all three at once.

I don't think the vets need any more paperwork to do.

We microchip dogs at eight weeks of age. Rabies shot don't begin until 16 weeks of age. Veterinarians are better equipped to monitor rabies vaccines but often send the rabies notification to the incorrect jurisdiction So an automatic license would be great to have when vaccination is done.

I am the office manager for a veterinary hospital and in our situation I feel licensing your pet through our facility would create numerous problems for us. To be honest, I doubt seriously if each hospital could decide for themselves. All of us will be forced to do whatever the powers decide!

I go to a different vet than the county I live in so I don't think that would work to go to my vet. How would they keep track of different counties and why should they have to? Don't see a point in it.

I believe that the licence and rabies vaccination process should be streamlined into one function and handled at the vet's office. If this is done, then every dog would have a vaccination once a year which I believe is preferred to once every other year. Most countries outside of the US now require yearly vaccination

You should ask the vets about whether they want to sell licenses or not. I think they have enough to do without doing clerk work for the county.

Trying to put more responsibility on veterinarians is not a good idea. Their job is to treat animals, not to help the county/state with pet registration.

I am a former resident of New Jersey. When we had our dogs rabies vaccinated, it came with the license registration. Everything was processed through the vet.

if licenses are going to be required the process needs to be streamlined! Fee for license should be built into rabies vaccine and paid for at vet.

I would like to see it connected with rabies shot. Just would be more convenient.

It would make this so much easier thru the vet and this way it won't be forgotten. I really hope the city of manassas starts doing it that way.

I WOULD BE WILLING TO PAY FOR THE LICENSE AND RABIES SHOT AT THE SAME TIME AS LONG AS IT DOES NOT COST ME MORE MONEY.

I've gone through the county Treasury office for licenses before but now I'm required to go to local police office to purchase licenses. I thought once i purchased them it was in the system but it wasn't and confusion about my purchase was for me to prove I did so . In which I did . So getting , both rabies and licenses or chips from local vets is a more sufficient means of properly dealt with.

Vets should not be required to sell dog tags or chip

It should be a 1 time process tied to the rabies vaccination.

So glad this is being considered have never understood why licensing isn't available through vet

It's been my experience that the county system is ineffective (needed to submit my rabies cert multiple times). I fully support having the license available for purchase at my veterinarian.

I think all vets in the Hampton roads area should be able to give licenses for every city/county. I live in Norfolk and my vet is in Chesapeake

It is a hassle to have to have rabies info to send in to city to get license. Much prefer to handle through vet

"Would you prefer to purchase your county/city license through your veterinarian as opposed to your county/city treasurer?" - do not feel necessary, they are busy enough

I understand why you have to have a license, however I've had my dogs for a year now and have never gotten out of work in time to get them. So they aren't registered. It would be wonderful if the vets could do this.

It would be advantageous to be able to obtain my license at my veterinarian's office and receive a tag at that time just as I do when obtaining the rabies. That way I complete all necessary obligations and am less likely to have the licensing process slip my mind.

Previous vets were able to provide license at office visit - it was a nice convenience

I WOULD SUPPORT GETTING FROM VET IF THE VET WERE NOT ALLOWED TO PRICE GOUGE LIKE THEY DO EVERYTHING ELSE. IF ITS A STADARD FIXED RATE FOR ALL VETS SET BY TREASUEAR THEN YES I'LL SUPPORT IT.

It would be easier to have the license issued with the rabies tag. County would collect for all dogs, as many do not obtain a license from the county.

by allowing/requiring tags/licenses to be obtained from the vet at the time of rabies vaccinations is a no brainer.

It would be great to pay the fee to the vet upon getting the rabies vaccination who would then forward that money to the county so they'd know it was done

License should come from vets after rabies shots are administered

The City or County should pay vets to collect dog tax

It is super convenient to have the license taken care of when I bring my dog in for his annual shots.

If we can get all the needed information and items through our veterinarian, it will make the entire process so much easier for dog owners.

Although my county treasurer office is close to where I live, my veterinarian office is much closer. The convenience to purchase the county license there would be nice. I would still like a tag since it would be easier to trace by telephone instead of having to take the dog somewhere to be scanned.

### **Microchip implants**

I prefer a microchip as tags can be lost, but animal control said the chip can't always be detected.

responded don't know to support of requiring microchipping

Microchip would be helpful with all of the hunting dogs that hunters discard after the season. There should be some sort of connection between a hunting license and a hunter, so that these dogs wouldn't be discarded. Make the hunter accountable.

Hunting dog dumping and theft is a serious issue and mandatory microchipping would help alleviate both.

Microchips are not safe.

I oppose any microchip requirements

No mandatory microchips, leave them optional. Thanks

Hunting dogs usually have a kennel license that covers up to 25 dogs micro chips for 10 plus dogs gets expensive

I do not believe licensing should be expanded to involve microchipping.

A requirement for micro-chips would create a night mare for law enforcement and animal control officers. As dogs are sold, given away, inherited, ect, with out the chip number being passed on with the animal our court system could be over taxed. We could need many people to monitor the proposed requirement costing us all more money.

I don't want a microchip in my pet. Thank you

Also, mandatory microchipping is an invasive demand for both the animal and the owner.

As a dog owner I see no need for my hounds to be microchipped

Microchipping will make identifying lost or stolen pets easier. I support it for all dogs and cats.

Many of the facilities cannot even locate the "micro-chip" on animals that have been done. Most animal control facilities are not properly trained to properly search an animal for its' "chip"! These "chips" WILL move around under the dogs skin, and can be difficult to locate, especially without proper training and experience!

I think we should focus on the research that would allow titre in lieu of vaccination for rabies. We require vaccination too often.

While I agree with microchipping those systems are often not kept updated.

The choice of Microchipped dog it may help with lost and founds, but as an extra cost for dog owners especially elderly. It's another bill.

Oppose any mandatory requirement to micro-chip all dogs.

I support all dogs to be microchipped if its affordable for talks on limited income

if the dog is micro-chipped, I would like to see the requirement to pay a city or county licensing fee annually removed. Dogs could be required to be licensed (and the chip updated whenever the animal is vaccinated for rabies. This would apply to individual dog owners but I would not change the current system for kennel owners as I believe it would be too burdensome to manage on both the kennel owners and the animal control officers.

The microchipping of pets has NOTHING to do with the license. The license is only issued annually after presentation of the rabies certificate to the issuing office (Treasurer/veterinarian etc.). The rabies certificate expires after 3 years or 1 year depending on the age of the pet. How would a microchip serve as a license? Or a permanent license? Rabies certificates expire. Pets can be rehomed or sold out of a locality or a state. The microchipping requirement would do nothing to add value. The cost of a microchip at a vet's office is \$40 to \$50 and this is would be an added burden to the animal owners of Virginia. The scope of the HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 160 states: RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Virginia Department of Health be requested to study Virginia's procedures for licensing dogs and cats. In conducting its study, the VDH shall review Virginia's companion animal licensing procedures and assess the feasibility of ESTABLISHING A STATEWIDE SYSTEM FOR RECORDING RABIES VACCINATIONS AND LICENSING THAT MAY INCLUDE A STATEWIDE DATABASE OF LICENSED COMPANION ANIMALS that can be remotely accessed by animal control officers in the field. The Department shall be assisted in its work by a panel of stakeholders chosen by the Commissioner of Health. The panel of stakeholder shall include representatives of local

government, the Virginia Animal Control Association, and the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association and citizens experienced in animal welfare issues. Where does it say in the House Joint Resolution No. 160 above "to assess the feasibility of the statewide mandatory microchipping of pets???" The feasibility study has already been over-scoped.

As much as I love the microchip for dogs I am not in favor for it to be mandatory.

Also, there have already been instances in other states where microchips were removed so that the dogs could be resold through a "rescue" organization.

Regarding #6, I disagree with a second microchip being placed in my dogs. If you move to another county/city/state, then will the current microchip be updateable? Or would another be required? If someone has move to another state, then how would that State's laws/requirement affect the return of the dog to the owner?

Microchips are only as good as if someone scans for it. A county license is seen and able to get the pet home quicker.

I think we need tags as a visible way to tell the dog has a home and reunite them with owner, but it would be nice for them to have a chip.

I have one family pet microchipped

This is a poor county. Microchips are expensive and many families can't afford them. I don't think this will work in tis county

I would be concerned about microchip costs plus what if I move

You are aware that some dogs have had cancer around the chip area? This is not 1984.

Microchips are not standardized enough to be required and do not always read on all readers. Too many competing vendors. We also do not need state beurocracy intervening into this as veterinarians are not required for rabies shots.

My dog has a tattoo instead of microchip.

If we have to microchip all dogs than it will be almost impossible to afford dogs that is just going to far.

Puppy owner-micro-chipping will be done once the puppy is 6 months old.

As an animal control officer for another city....I find it very helpful when I look up a dogs owner info to return the dog when the dog is wearing a license. I think it would be great if microchips are tied in with the license as people do not register or update their chips.

I am wary about the microchip there because there is no national standard. Seems and ad-hoc system of private companion.

Replace city license with microchip and repeat rabies vaccination to Animal Control and City Treasury

Replace city license with Microchipping

Keeping up to date on vaccinations I can agree and understand with, but I don't agree with requiring people to have their animals microchipped and tracked in a database.

If you have a microchip license shouldn't have to be added.

In response to question 5, I would NOT support requiring the chip since he is already chipped, but I would support having the option for newly chipped dogs

I have 4 dogs, each microchipped and tattooed!

I would support a microchip as an option to serve as a license or tag but not as the only choice

I do not want my dog micro-chipped. Would you micro-chip your children? This seems to be what we are going towards.

It should be mandatory that a dog is microchipped.

Please use my dogs microchips instead of actual metal rabies tags.

The tags are only good if worn. My dogs do not wear their tags because they are small and we have a fenced yard and the collars irritate the. So....yes! Having a chip in lieu of tags makes me feel better about their safety and no longer needing to worry about finding their tag when we go out.

5 Microchips are not free and if that is the only procedure the vet is doing (i.e. Anesthesia) chips could be more expensive. 8 won't cover every one, unfortunately some poor ppl don't take dogs to vets

I am concerned that if microchips are required, some people could not afford it and would not take their dog to the vet to avoid it.

I am unsure about microchip for rabies tag - not enough information given -

Microchip should be mandatory for all dogs and cats

Microchipping includes a small risk of very serious (sometimes lethal) complications at the chip site. Requiring this of all dogs is not right (we have actually not made moves to certain cities to avoid such laws). My family has taken a cost/benefit assessment for the health of our dog and decided the risk of a dog who is always on leash with us and wearing tags when outside the home getting lost is so low that it does not justify the risk of microchipping. Perhaps providing microchip information during the licensing process would be helpful. But I believe each family should make that informed decision based on their circumstances.

Having your dog microchipped should be a personal decision. A dog tag is a quick way to identify if a dog is licensed and has a current rabies vaccination.



I think all responsible dog owners should have their dogs both vaccinated and microchipped. I think offering to have the license available at the vet is a fantastic idea. My Dog means the world to me, and I really appreciate the opportunity to give my opinion on this survey. Thank you for doing this.

I feel that having dogs microchipped would help in encouraging more responsible dog ownership

I oppose a statewide database and any mandatory microchipping

While I am in favor of microchipping, I don't think it should be a mandatory replacement for licensing because some pet owners may not be able to afford it. If you force them to do something they cannot afford, some owners will find a way around the system and thus, never get their pets properly licensed.

I think microchipping is a great idea for all dogs, but it would be important that a low-cost option is available to people.

I would like to see both a tag license and a microchip. Many times tag licenses on collars are not being worn by the dog when it is most necessary to find their owner. That is why a microchip is necessary, too.

I am not opposed to chipping all dogs but the cost should be nominal and the system should compatible with existing systems.

Microchip for dogs should be free or very low cost

I, for one, would be adamantly opposed to the government forcing me to microchip my pets. The concept itself is creepy and is a significant violation of people's privacy and right to property. Many pet owners are opposed to microchipping in general and would be offended by this big brother approach to ensuring tax compliance.

I have still gotten the county license, but there is a time delay between vaccination and buying the license.

I have trouble keeping up with the rabies tag so would love it to be on microchip. My senior dogs aren't microchipped because it wasn't "universal" as it is now.

all dogs and cats should be micro-chipped .

I have an old fashioned tattoo for id on my dogs... Micro chipping is new for me, I believe it needs to be very affordable to be accessible for the elderly and those on a fixed income:) I believe this system will not work properly if the micro chipping costs over \$25 a dog for the owner to put into place:)

My responses might be different if I knew more about microchipping etc. E.g. if my dog is chipped and I move out of state, was the chipping for nothing?

I don't know enough about microchips for animals to answer numbers 5 & 6.

How much would the microchipping cost would be a major issue for me.

I am against micro chipping all dogs. Some people could not afford this.

I would agree with having dogs' license and vaccination information, and even other relevant health information, linked to their microchip number for those people who choose to have their dog(s) microchipped. However, I don't believe residents should be \*required\* to have an invasive, body-altering procedure performed on their dog if they do not want to. They should have the option of producing a license tag or form and paper proof of vaccination when needed.

I like the idea of requiring an update of the microchip information rather than licensing, which can be a convoluted process

I think individuals should decide if they want their dogs chipped or not. The cost is already an extra expense. This should not be forced.

I think these guys that want to chip every dog is stupid just another way for the government to get more of dog owners money if I wanted to chip my dog I would do it I should not half to I already spend to much on my dog now I dnt need another expence!!!!

The most affordable and easiest microchip I found to deal with is AVID <https://www.avidid.com/>

Survey did not deal with cost of microchip and maintenance of information. If the question had put the cost in line with current cost and whether that cost would increase YoY for data entry you would have more meaningful results. While I support microchips I would not want a cost that would be a barrier to a pet's adoption. Without cost reasonableness, your survey is flawed.

I think having a mandatory policy to micro chip dogs would be a great idea to help re-unit lost dogs with their owners it could also help reduce the number of abandoned dogs. I have neighbors who have simply taken a dog out and dumped it somewhere because they no longer want it. Mandatory micro chipping could help some but there will always those people who never take their dog to a vet and therefore would never be forced to register the dog with anyone. Again I have neighbors who own multiple dogs not one of them has seen a vet or has a county license.

I really like the idea of a microchip serving as a dog license.

I only thing that a microchip serving as your county/city license instead of the county/city tag is useful if the owner pays to keep their animals information up to date. I know many people that have a microchipped dog but will not pay the fees to change their address.

Microchipping is expensive, and most people aren't taking strays to get scanned.

I think microchipping would help with the end of deer season dumping at the end of season. It would help deter theft of dogs as well

While my dog is microchipped, I do not think it should be mandatory. Dogs are expensive enough as it is, and this would be a hardship for many of low income.

Microchipping is great

Requiring micro chipping is a terrible idea. I WILL NOT microchip my animals.

Every dog should be chipped and afforded free rabies vaccine. Perfectly willing to pay a surcharge/fee for this affordability to those who are unable to pay for the vaccine!

I am a veterinarian and a breeder. I microchip all puppies. But, chip migrate and some migrate out of the dog. Some scanners do not read certain chips. Requiring a chip will not increase rabies vaccination compliance. Also, despite chipping all pups and including my name as backup, too many "rescues" who find a lost dog, ignore the chip. They do not want to return the dog if it is one that they can easily sell (called adoption, but they might charge \$600). Retail rescue is a growing trend. We need laws to require every private rescue/shelter to attempt all means to locate and return a lost pet to its owners or the breeder listed on the chip.

The only reservation I have about tying dog licenses to microchips is I know my friends who are into Natural Rearing would object. Myself, I'm okay with microchipping, but they are not.

If your dog was microchipped as its county license, how would it be renewed? Would this be a onetime lifetime license fee? Certainly you would not want to be microchipping annually! Also, I would not want the data collected to be available to the general public. It would be a way for thieves to locate particularly sought-after dogs to target for theft.

Mandatory microchipping would be acceptable if the tag renewal was waived for the life of the dog.

With the dog chip being used to license....we are fine with it but chipping is a lot more expensive than a \$10 dog license. Those that can't afford it might opt to not get their dogs licensed if it is too expensive which would be bad.

Although a universal microchip is best I think that most still identify a dog being a pet and not a stray is evident when the dog has a collar with identifying information and tags. However, this perception can change over time with publicized information and positive communication by vets and animal control and city/county jurisdiction.

The micro chipping of all dogs is ludicrous!!!!!!

I oppose microchipping and databases. Thank you

Costs doing a micro chip and dog license thru it need to be reasonably priced or this method will fail and possibly discourage owners from vaccinating. It also needs to be optional as some may not be able to afford everything at once. Or with the option to come back at a later date to micro chip and license if cost is an issue.

No the owners of dogs shouldn't be required to micro chip all dogs! This is a hobby for most hunters and to increase the taxes or make it a state issue is wrong!!!

Microchips are very expensive but a good idea. After spending hundreds of dollars to get the dog back onto her feet we decided not to microchip her but she does wear both tags on her collar at all times.

I definitely believe that requiring a microchip is ridiculous, because most vets use standard size, which is quite painful for smaller dogs.

I think micro-chipping is very important, but hate that we use such large gauge needles as are required to microchip an animal without any kind of numbing agent/sedation or pain mitigation. It is benign when animals are micro-chipped at the time of spay/neuter as they are anesthetized, but I hate that so many adult dogs have this done to them later in life, if not done at the time of spay/neuter, without the guise of anesthesia.

If it would help increase the percentage of lost pets returned to their families, I strongly favor microchipping as a method of licensing pets. Even when we travel out of our town, county, and VA, we would all have better likelihood of getting our micro-chipped fur babies re-united if they were to get lost during a vacation. I'd also like not having to have the noise of a license tag jingling against our ID tag. Just an ID tag on our pup would be great

I refuse to microchip my dogs. They wear rabies tags and a county tag. Too many problems with microchips moving and too many brands and types of microchips. Raising the cost to include microchipping isn't going to encourage dog owners in rural areas to get rabies shots for their dogs

I am a veterinarian and a breeder. I microchip all puppies. But, chip migrate and some migrate out of the dog. Some scanners do not read certain chips. Requiring a chip will not increase rabies vaccination compliance. Also, despite chipping all pups and including my name as backup, too many "rescues" who find a lost dog, ignore the chip. They do not want to return the dog if it is one that they can easily sell (called adoption, but they might charge \$600). Retail rescue is a growing trend. We need laws to require every private rescue/shelter to attempt all means to locate and return a lost pet to its owners or the breeder listed on the chip.

We have 5 dogs...all 5 rescued...the 4 youngest are microchipped. The oldest is a small blind Italian Greyhound & I will not microchip him, mostly because of his health & he isn't going anyway due to being blind. I'm an avid rescuer & also a vet tech...requiring microchipping is one thing but some of the registration companies are expensive. Without registration...the microchip loses its usefulness & folks don't always update their info. Also some of these little delicate breeds should be allowed to wait until they are spayed/neutered...trust me...the needles are sharp...but big!!

Too many DIFFERENT types of microchips exist already today. While clearly the Commonwealth COULD specify a single type/brand, as many dogs are ALREADY microchipped, the different types would make the scanners COST PROHIBITIVE, subject to field error and/or might necessitate DOUBLE CHIPPING a dog. THAT is unacceptable. As such, the use of the EXISTING TAG SYSTEM (while linking any chip present) would be our comfort/recommendation.

You should consider a transition plan for animals that are old and not microchipped. I am concerned that people on limited income will give up their older dogs instead of paying up to \$60.00 to have their dog micro-chipped. Please head off potential tragedies like this with a new process.

I don't want my dog to have two micro chips. One I already had implanted and then the proposed county tag. If we move, my dog would get yet another chip. Rather have metal tags.

I purchase my own microchips and my vet comes to my home and implants them. I do not want to be required to get my dog chipped at a vet or use a specific company like HomeAgain or Avid. If the system could handle any microchip number regardless of the company and it will get more lost dogs home faster I think it is okay. I also think tattoos should be available in lieu of a chip. Some people prefer to not implant chips for health concerns. They should be given alternate options.

Microchips are a great idea, but why should ACOs need a database when the chip is already registered and available from a quick call to the microchip company? It sounds like redundant work that does not need to be done by the county.

Microchips are great as long as they are registered with a recovery organization and owner I found up to date. They don't necessarily indicate or help with spay neuter or health issues for special needs pets.

How are you going to police that every dog, cat or any other companion animal has a chip? Not everyone wants to pay for this expense.

If the state of VA is thinking about doing this, then all city, county & state agencies, animal rescue - no matter how large or small & veterinarians must purchase the chip scanner & USE IT!!!!

This is just an example of too much government regulation in our lives. Those dog owners who are not going to vaccinate still will not do so. Those of us who do vaccinate are going to get dog licenses anyway. This will increase the cost of rabies vaccinations, increase the cost of microchipping. Most vets do not have microchip readers. Further, microchips can and do migrate out of a dog. In addition, some show breeders who show dogs internationally use ISO chips which require a universal microchip reader to read. Few animal shelters/pounds have these readers. I also have many of my rabies vaccinations done out of state at dog shows when a dog is due and the cost is so much lower. I also co-own with several individuals who do not live in Virginia and so those dogs' rabies vaccinations would not be entered into any database in Virginia. Further, some dogs have had horrible tissue reactions to microchips. In short, requiring everyone to microchip their dogs and enter them into a database required unnecessary microchipping, unnecessary expense, will not increase compliance with mandatory rabies vaccinations or county licensing and will not be of any value to those dogs coming from other states and vaccinated in other states. And it is no one's business which dogs and the number of dogs I have vaccinated.

As for required microchipping, the more involved and expensive it is for you to get your dog(s) licensed, the less likely you will do it.

All of my pets are microchipped. However, several of their chips have migrated and when scanned at the vet, I have had vets who cannot find them, so I am not confident the microchip is worth it. Furthermore, there are vets in the area with scanners who do not read the microchips I have (AKC ISO chips - pretty standard). It would concern me if this was the ONLY way to identify a dog because I feel it can fail just as often as a physical tag. And, would there be a fine if your dog wasn't chipped? What if the person

scanning just couldn't find it, but then I can show you if you scan under their left shoulder, in just the right spot, there it is (which again, is not useful at all). It's a nice idea, but I have no confidence that despite my dogs being microchipped that it would ever help them being returned to me or proving they were mine any more so than a tag. If you just want to use it as an identifying number versus a license number, then perhaps that would work. Until a dog gets re-chipped because the first one stops working or migrates out. Then, what will your system be for updating the microchip number and proving that is the same dog?

I value micro-chipping as a means of identification for my dogs (who are my partners in AKC dog sports), as I did tattooing before microchip technology was available, but I think that requiring micro-chipping of all dogs is overstepping the county's bounds and is an expense that not every dog owner can afford.

I'm concerned mandating chipping. Chipping them would lead people to drastic measures instead of surrendering animals, they may feel concerned they will be tracked or retaliated against. I am against the surrender of pets for many reasons but believe there are some outstanding circumstances. There is already stigma attached and it should be. adopting a pet is not a decision that should be entered into lightly, the chipping could make me people more responsible it could also be more cruel than surrender if someone feels they will be targeted because their info is on a surrendered pets chip.

Microchips are nice, but to many variations. Universal scanners sometimes work but not always. Programs like Finding Rover using photo of dogs and cats would be much faster and public could identify owners more easily.

I strongly believe that microchipping reduces the strain on animal shelters and helps people find their missing pets. I would like microchipping to be required by law, as it is in Scotland, UK.

If a microchip is used instead of city license tag, finders of a dog may be less likely to take a stray dog to vet to see if it is microchipped than call city/county if dog has a physical tag.

Although there are some good ideas here regarding microchips, they don't always work, shelters/animal control may not check all microchip. databases, etc. What happens if that is what we use to license but if my dog got lost, the microchip can't be found or doesn't work? Having had 2 chips stop working or migrate inside the dog, this is a concern to me. With that said, I would like idea of using them as a license vs a tag. My dogs do not wear tags for their physical safety but that leaves me open to problems if they got loose.

Both my dog and 2 cats are microchipped. However I have discovered that there are at least 2 chipping systems and they do not always read each other's chips. The cats were chipped in Florida. When we go to Virginia, my vets reader could not read them. They had a more "international" rather than "national" chip. The system needs to be standardized

I do believe that all dogs should be micro-chipped, but the cost is not affordable for all. One reason I believe all should be micro-chipped is to relocate lost dogs with their owners.

The reason I don't support removing the physical license tag is that if a pet is found...it is easier to call the county with the tag number than taking it to a vet to scan for a microchip.

If micro-chipping becomes required - I will no longer license my dog. The government will have crossed the line at that point.

Also, I would support licensing done through the microchip and vet, but if the dog already has a microchip (as mine does), I would want the one already in him used, and not have to inject another.

As a citizen who has helped several dogs find their way home again, the microchipping is a major help. I'd like to see the license fee waived if an owner can show proof the pet has a microchip.

I don't have a county license for my dog as it seems to me to be just a "tax" for owning a dog. However, if the tag was instead a microchip, then I would do it.

As for microchipping--I am not a fan of it as it has caused several health problems in dogs and it costs money to keep them up every year--so I don't see a cost savings in the microchipping. Probably cheaper to buy a dog tag every 3 years.

I would love for my dogs chip to carry the rabies vaccination information instead of the noisy metal tag.

I think having dogs microchipped would be a good idea. It would be so much easier for ACOs to find out where the dogs belonged, or a vet or shelter having a chip reader. It would cut down how many animals don't get back with their owners

Dog licensing does not lead to higher return to owner rates. Require a microchip!!!

I don't feel owners should have to microchip if they don't want to I am for it myself but someone else might not be and this is suppose to be AMERICA!!!! FREEDOM OF CHOICE!!!!!!! And it seems and feels like we as Americans are losing that right and many others. If you a good and responsible pet parent you will want to microchip your pet, but it needs to be every owners decision.

This would only be useful if there was 1 microchip company being used & the information was kept up dated. All animal control officers would need to carry chip readers. The cost of the chip being implanted would need to be affordable for all. As for buying the license at the vet some dog owners may not have a regular vet & go to rabie shot clinics so would still need the option to buy from city. I am just thinking of the needs of all citizens.

I don't feel that microchips should take place of dog tags altogether. I feel microchips should be an owners option due to the small risk the have.

Microchips are great, however, most people do not keep the information up to date. Many chip companies charge yearly fees and that is prohibitive to a lot of people, so even if a dog is chipped, it does not mean that the guardian will continue to pay for registration. I don't think making chips mandatory is the answer.

My elder dog was microchipped, and the chip can no longer be found in his body. What would happen as far as licensing if the chip was defective?

Microchips need to be more affordable to the public

I answered YES to the microchip questions in 5 & 6, but I am "iffy" on the requirement. Thanks.

#5. Requiring that is like Congress mandating something without providing the funds for it. Just not right.

NO MANDATORY MICROCHIPING EITHER.

As for microchipping, I would not support it if it means getting a new microchip every year. If you link the existing microchip to the vaccine, that I would support.

I answered yes to number 5, but I honestly don't have enough knowledge/info to answer. I don't fully understand the costs, benefits, processes involved, etc.

i would support mandatory microchipping if the cost could be prorated by income level.

Requiring all dogs to be microchipped would be a burden on many people who could not afford the costs and, I believe, would set them up for being fined.

Whatever is most convenient for dog owners and least expensive should be done. Using a microchip instead of a tag would be a one time cost instead of \$10 every year. I don't recall what I paid for the microchip when my dog was neutered but know that some people wouldn't want to pay the up front cost. Perhaps it's offered as an option - chip or tag, with the chip offering extra benefits and a one time deal.

I agree and disagree with ALL dogs should be microchipped. I agree since it would help lost dogs return home to their owners safely I disagree with the reasoning of Older Dogs having to be put through this. I believe they should set a law stating any dog under the age of 1 is REQUIRED to be microchipped.

While I do microchip my dogs, and honestly think that everyone benefits when we can reunite a dog with its owner--I don't support requiring it universally because of the added cost burden on the owner. We're already requiring licensing and rabies shots. I think the state needs to consider the cost burden on the owners because some owners don't have the resources to pay for increasing levels of government requirements--notwithstanding the benefits of those requirements.

I don't advocate requiring all dogs/cats be chipped - it should be a preference and what if the chip doesn't work, but if you could use the chip to track rabies vaccines I think it would provide a level of convenience and I don't have to listen to the dog tag jingle all the time. Plus for animals who are being rehomed it would allow for the opportunity to know the vaccine history and reduce over vaccination a huge cause of cancer in domestic pets. I see a vet in another city than where I live, how could he provide licensing for my city??



Not opposed to license being on the microchip, but what if the owner moved, how would it be updated?

I would support the microchip if all had appropriate equipment to read. I would of course want to use current microchip as well.

The reason that I don't support replacing the license with a microchip is that it seems like often the chip don't show up when a scan is done. And not everyone can scan for the chip, while the rabies tag and license are obvious (though they can be lost too.) Both of my dogs are chipped, but several times when scanned one of them doesn't have the chip show up. The other one seems to always show up.

Unlike the idea of a choice - I chop my all my pets but I would not force folks plus the county will add some new tax or fee so of course they will assess a penalty for not chipping either way we're gonna get screwed

I answered #5 (No) because there are some people that can not afford the extra expense. I think this would further deter people from taking their pets to vets for care/vaccinations.

Question 5- I would support using the microchip as the license as an option, but not as the only option. People should not be forced to microchip their dogs.

I do not want to incur the additional cost of microchipping my dog and am opposed to something that would make it mandatory.

I might be in favor of a microchip replacing the county license, but I Would want more information about how that would be carried out and enforced



- [available at http://www.joe.org/joe/2008june/rb3.phpCT](http://www.joe.org/joe/2008june/rb3.phpCT)

Current Issue  
Back Issues  
Search  
Subscribe

June 2008 // Volume 46 // Number 3 // Research in Brief // 3RIB3

## Response Rates to Expect from Web-Based Surveys and What to Do About It

### Abstract

This article reports research that calculated the response rates of 84 Web-based surveys deployed over 33 months. Response rate varied by survey type: (1) Meeting/Conference Evaluations - 57%; (2) Needs Assessments - 40%; (3) Output/Impact Evaluations - 52%; (4) Ballots - 62%. Having a high survey response rate is critical. When resources permit, reduce non-response error. Considering cost versus benefit, a less than optimum (85%) response rate for needs assessments/conference evaluations may not be critical. A breadth and depth of respondent reactions will provide much information for program development. Dealing with non-response error for program/impact will generate the most value.

---

### Thomas M. Archer

Leader, Program Development and Evaluation  
Ohio State University Extension  
Columbus, Ohio  
[archer.3@osu.edu](mailto:archer.3@osu.edu)

## Introduction

Since the beginning of this decade there has been an explosion of use of Web-based survey technology. Advantages of time, cost, and data entry are cited as the most appealing features of Web-based surveys (Wright, 2005). However, one question that is often asked is, "What should I expect in terms of a response rate for my Web-based survey?"

Please note that response rate expectation and acceptability of a particular response rate are not the same. This article does not directly deal with non-response error as detailed in a *Journal of Extension* article (Miller & Smith, 1983). That article highlighted several ways to deal with non-response error, most of which determined the likelihood that non-respondents differ from respondents. The person who administers a questionnaire through Web-based survey technology must determine if there are resources to deal with potential non-response error. If such resources exist, then those resources should be utilized to obtain the highest possible response rate. If not, then that person should report only what the respondents contributed and not generalize to all those surveyed.

The best way to deal with non-response error is to increase the response rate through the questionnaire design and deployment processes. There are several reported reasons why potential respondents fail to complete a Web-based survey. These include questions arranged in tables, graphically complex designs, pull-down menus, unclear instructions, and the absence of navigation aids (Bosnjak & Tuten, 2001).

Some factors that have been found to increase response rates include personalized email invitations, follow-up reminders, pre-notification of the intent to survey, and simpler formats (Cook, 2000; Solomon, 2001). Other factors that increase response rates include: incentives, authentic sponsorship, and multi-modal approaches (Johnson, 2005). There are some factors that may influence response rate for which no formal studies have been identified. These include the age of potential respondents, population to which the survey is administered, and the purpose of the survey.

Most research on response rates for Web-based surveys has focused on manipulating either deployment or questionnaire variables in single survey situations. That is, in a given survey deployment, potential respondents are assigned to the various treatment groups.

There are many deployment and questionnaire variables that should be studied. These include:

1. Total number of potential respondents (email invitations deployed);
2. Number of email addresses bounced;

3. Number of people opting out;
4. Year launched;
5. Month launched;
6. Date of month launched;
7. Number of reminders;
8. Number of days left open;
9. Days between launch and reminder;
10. Days between reminders;
11. Length of subject line;
12. Length of invitation;
13. Readability Level of Invitation;
14. Total number of questions;
15. Number of fixed response questions;
16. Number of open-ended response questions;
17. Number of one line open-ended questions;
18. Number of Y/ N questions;
19. Number of demographic questions;
20. Number of headings;
21. Length of rating scales in rating questions; and
22. Readability level of survey.

When the above listing of variables was reviewed through a regression analysis in a study of Zoomerang archived data (Archer, 2007), it was determined that the two variables, (1) Log of the Number of Potential Respondents and (2) Number of Days Left Open, generated the highest  $R^2$ . These two variables could be used to explain 41.4% of

the variability in the response rate. No other variable or combination of variables in the list above contributed more explanation.

One of the variables that has not been studied, but intuitively could influence response rate the most, is the purpose for which a questionnaire is deployed. For the study reported here, four different purposes of Web-based surveys were identified: (1) Meeting, Workshop, or Conference Evaluations; (2) Needs Assessments; (3) Impact Evaluations; and (4) Ballots.

## **Method**

For a prior study, over a 2-year and 9-month period, the Ohio State University Extension Program Development and Evaluation Unit deployed 99 Web-based surveys (Archer, 2007). Questionnaires were sent to a variety of audiences associated with Extension. The current study is a retrospective investigation into the relationship of response rates and the intended purpose of Web-based surveys. The study used the same survey data as the previous study. These data are archived in Zoomerang, the platform through which these surveys were managed.

For each of the surveys deployed, a list of email addresses was supplied by the Extension professional requesting the survey. Each Extension professional also indicated that the best means of contacting potential respondents was through an email invitation. The surveys were administered to a variety of local, multi-county, statewide, and nationwide Extension audiences. All invitees were adults. All of these Web-based surveys included an individual email invitation to potential respondents. All surveys were deployed through Zoomerang, using the same template, background color, and Extension logo.

Each of these surveys was assigned to one of four categories: (1) Meeting, Workshop or Conference Evaluations; (2) Needs Assessments; (3) Impact Evaluations; and (4) Ballots. Surveys were categorized by reviewing the stated purpose of each of the studied surveys and having two evaluation professionals independently categorize each survey. When assignment to categories differed between the evaluators, the two evaluation professionals discussed the survey in question and reached a category agreement.

Because the number of reminders is highly correlated with the number of days that a survey is left open (Archer, 2007), only surveys that included two reminders were selected to be further studied. Eighty-four of the 99 surveys included two reminders and were included in the following analysis. In other words, making the number of reminders constant for all surveys in the current study eliminated the influence of the number of reminders on the response rate.

Response rate percentage was calculated by taking the total number of completed questionnaires divided by total email invitations originally deployed, multiplied by 100. Data to calculate response rates were archived in the Web survey program database. An Excel spreadsheet was developed for data entry, and the data extracted for each of the surveys. The data were then placed in the appropriate cells in the spreadsheet. The Excel data was imported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for data analysis.

## Findings

For each of the four survey types relating to the purpose of the survey, the counts and calculations were completed to include the Number of Surveys, Mean Response Rate for each type of survey, the Mean Days that each type of survey was left open, and the Number of Potential Survey Respondents. The mean response rate is the average of the response rates for all surveys within each grouping of deployed surveys. See Table 1.

There were 26 Meeting, Workshop or Conference Evaluations, left open for an average of 13.8 days to an average of 167 potential respondents with a mean response rate of 57%. There were also 40 Needs Assessments, left open for an average of 14.2 days to an average of 531 potential respondents with a mean response rate of 39.7%. There were 14 Impact Evaluations, left open for an average of 14.9 days to an average of 161 potential respondents with a mean response rate of 51.4%. Only 4 Ballots were included, left open for an average of 16.2 days to an average of 143 potential respondents resulting in a mean response rate of 62.2%.

<b>Purpose of Web-Based Survey</b>	<b>Number of Surveys</b>	<b>Mean Response Rate</b>	<b>Mean Days Left Open</b>	<b>Mean of Email Invitations Originally Deployed</b>
Meeting, Workshop or Conference Evaluation	26	57.0%	13.8	167
Needs Assessment	40	39.7%	14.2	531
Impact Evaluation	14	51.4%	14.9	161

Ballot	4	62.2%	16.2	143
Overall	84	48.3%		

## Discussion

From the study of 84 Zoomerang surveys reported here, the mean response rate for Web-based surveys was highest for post-conference questionnaires. Although no references could be found that specifically studied response rates to post-conference questionnaires, it is anticipated that the observed mean response rate from the study (57%) would be consistent with paper-pencil questionnaires collected at the end of a conference and maybe even higher than a mailed questionnaire following a meeting or conference.

The lowest response rates found in this study were from needs assessment types of questionnaires. This may have been because of the very nature of a needs assessment. First, perhaps not all of the right people were identified to respond, and therefore many of the potential respondents felt that the survey was not relevant to them. Then there were no doubt other potential respondents who were not comfortable with responding or who did not know how to respond, to questions relating to their needs.

Lindner, Murphy, and Briers (2001) indicated that steps must be taken to account for possible non-response error whenever a response rate is less than 85%. Such a high response rate is possible, but not likely.

The resources necessary to complete follow-up contacts to Web-based survey non-respondents would be similar to the expense of traditional mail surveys. Costs to raise response rates from the achieved response rates (39.7% to 62.2%) to the optimum 85% would be significant in terms of both time and money.

But it is not always necessary to have an 85%+ response rate to obtain valuable information. For example, with end-of-meeting surveys and needs assessments, non-response may not be as critical. If the primary goals of these types of surveys are to gain suggestions for direction and improvement or obtain a measure of quality, then the responses are just as meaningful when a breadth and range of response is obtained, even with lower response rates.

Although it would be desirable to apply findings in any survey effort to the entire potential respondent pool, having responses from 40% or less of the potential respondents is still a great deal of information. The effort and costs (cash expenses and time) to increase the response rate to 85%, if even possible, would not justify the additional information that might be obtained in terms of determining priorities or

measurement of quality. Program improvement and program development could still be well-served without an overwhelming response rate.

Impact surveys would provide the most return for implementing procedures to compare non-respondents to respondents in order to eliminate non-response error. If one could prove, for example, that the economic gain from a given Extension program was applicable to *all* the program participants, rather than just the 52% who responded to the impact questionnaire, it would be a much more powerful and useful finding. Those techniques to compare respondents to non-respondents would be more worthwhile for such impact surveys.

## Conclusions

For Extension, in-house, Web-based surveys, expect response rates by survey type:

1. Meeting or Conference Evaluations - 57%;
2. Needs Assessments - 40%;
3. Output or Impact Evaluations - 51%; and
4. Ballots - 62%.

When resources permit, implement activities to reduce or eliminate non-response error. The best methods are to utilize procedures in the original survey deployment that will ensure higher responses. Other procedures include comparing known characteristics of respondents with non-respondents, comparing late to early respondents, or random sample a portion of the non-respondents and follow-up with a telephone or personal interview.

Considering cost versus benefit, a less than optimum (<85%) response rate for needs assessments or conference evaluations may not be critical. A breadth and depth of respondent reactions and suggestions will provide much information for program development, much more than no information at all.

Finally, dealing with non-response error for program impact will generate the most value for the extra effort.



## References

- Archer, T. M. (2007). Characteristics associated with increasing the response rates of Web-based surveys. *Practical Assessment Research & Evaluation*, 12(12). Retrieved June 12, 2008 from: <http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=12&n=12>
- Bosnjak, M. M., & Tuten, T. L. (2001). Classifying response behaviors in Web-based surveys. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 6(3). Retrieved June 12, 2008 from: <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol6/issue3/boznjak.html>
- Cook, C. (2000). A meta-analysis of response rates in Web- or Internet-based surveys. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 60(6), 821-836
- Johnson, D. (2005). Addressing the growing problem of survey non-response, Powerpoint presentation at the Survey Research Center Colloquium in October of 2005 at Penn State University, University Park, PA. Retrieved June 12, 2008 from: <http://www.ssri.psu.edu/survey/Nonresponse1.ppt>
- Lindner, J. R., Murphy, T. H., & Briers, G. E. (2001). Handling non-response in social science research. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 42(4), 43-53.
- Miller, L. E., & Smith, K. L. (1983). Handling non-response issues. *Journal of Extension* [On-line], 21(5). Available at: <http://www.joe.org/joe/1983september/83-5-a7.pdf>
- Solomon, D. J. (2001). Conducting Web-based surveys. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 7(19.) Retrieved June 12, 2008 from: <http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=7&n=19>
- Wright, K. B. (2005). Researching Internet-based populations: Advantages and disadvantages of online survey research, online questionnaire authoring software packages, and Web survey services. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 10(3), article 11. Retrieved June 12, 2008 from: <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol10/issue3/wright.html>

*Copyright* © by Extension Journal, Inc. ISSN 1077-5315. Articles appearing in the Journal become the property of the Journal. Single copies of articles may be reproduced in electronic or print form for use in educational or training activities. Inclusion of articles in other publications, electronic sources, or systematic large-scale distribution may be done only with prior electronic or written permission of the *Journal Editorial Office*, [joe-ed@joe.org](mailto:joe-ed@joe.org).

If you have difficulties viewing or printing this page, please contact [JOE Technical Support](#)





Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

## Computers in Human Behavior

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/comphumbeh](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/comphumbeh)

## Factors affecting response rates of the web survey: A systematic review

Weimiao Fan, Zheng Yan \*

Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology, School of Education, State University of New York at Albany, Albany, NY 12222, USA

## ARTICLE INFO

## Article history:

Available online 24 November 2009

## Keywords:

Web survey  
 Response rate  
 Survey design  
 Survey delivery  
 Survey completion  
 Survey return

## ABSTRACT

The lower response rate in web surveys has been a major concern for survey researchers. The literature has sought to identify a wide variety of factors that affect response rates in web surveys. In this article, we developed a conceptual model of the web survey process and use the model to systematically review a wide variety of factors influencing the response rate in the stage of survey development, survey delivery, survey completion, and survey return. Practical suggestion and future research directions on how to increase the response rate are discussed.

© 2009 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

Survey researchers have been using various modes and methods, such as mail, telephone, and e-mail, to collect data. In the past decade, web surveys as a new mode of conducting surveys via websites have gained significant popularity (Couper, 2000; Couper, Traugott, & Lamias, 2001). Compared with traditional modes of surveys, web surveys have several advantages, including shorter transmitting time, lower delivery cost, more design options, and less data entry time. However, web surveys often face specific challenges, such as losing participants who do not Internet access, and having low response rates that could lead to biased results (Couper, 2000; Fricker & Schonlau, 2002; Groves, 1989).

Among various web survey challenges, low response rates become a major concern in threatening the quality of the web survey (Couper, 2000; Crawford, Couper, & Lamias, 2001; Dommeyer & Moriarty, 2000). The response rate is generally defined as the number of completed units divided by the number of eligible units in the sample, according to American Association for Public Opinion Research. It is the most widely used and commonly computed statistic to indicate the quality of surveys. Based on a recent meta-analysis (Manfreda, Bosnjak, Berzelak, Haas, & Vehovar, 2008) of 45 studies examining differences in the response rate between web surveys and other survey modes, it is estimated that the response rate in the web survey on average is approximately 11% lower than that of other survey modes.

To locate the research literature on contributing factors to response rates of web surveys, we have used multiple strategies, including computer-based search of major databases, manual

search of references included in the identified literature, and direct consultation with web survey experts for their published and unpublished works. Specifically, several major electronic databases were searched, including Academic Search Premier, ERIC, PsycINFO, and MEDLINE. The initial database search was based on combination of the three groups of key words: (a) web, www, Internet, web based, online; (b) questionnaire, survey, data collection; and (c) response rate, return rate. We also examined [www.websm.org](http://www.websm.org), the largest web site focusing on the web survey methodology. The combination of the various search strategies yielded over 300 studies that examined contributing factors of response rates in web surveys.

While the web survey literature is extensive (e.g., Couper, 2000; Couper, Tourangeau, Conrad, & Crawford, 2004; Dillman, 2000, 2007; Manfreda et al., 2008), however, there exist no theoretical models of the psychological process of web surveys. To best review the extensive research literature, we have decided to develop and use a model of the web survey process as conceptual framework. This is because that, although there exist at least seven published reviews examining a wide variety of factors influencing response rates in either mail surveys (Edwards et al., 2002; Fox, Crask, & Kim, 1988; Heberlein & Baumgartner, 1978; Singer, 1978; Yu & Cooper, 1983) or in web surveys (Cook, Heath, & Thompson, 2000; Sheehan, 2001), the theoretical or practical relationship among the various factors in these reviews is not immediately clear (e.g., sequentially reviewing the contributing factors of sampling methods, target population characteristics, methods of contact, questionnaire length, monetary incentives, non-monetary incentives, response facilitators, and appeals). A review without a clear framework to effectively reveal the relationship among the contributing factors might result in at least two problems. First, readers might not be able to develop a systematic knowledge of where various contributing factors are located

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 518 442 5060; fax: +1 518 442 4953.  
 E-mail address: [zyan@uamail.albany.edu](mailto:zyan@uamail.albany.edu) (Z. Yan).

in the entire survey process. Second, readers might not be able to have a systematic knowledge of how to increase the response rates during the actual process of conducting web surveys.

In a survey, researchers use various data collect tools such as paper, telephone, e-mail, WWW, or mobile phone to collect data from certain groups of people. Thus, the process of a survey generally involves three key elements, survey researchers (surveyors), the survey participants (surveyees), and survey tools, (or called survey modes, e.g., mail, telephone, and WWW). With the three key elements, the process of a web survey can be conceptualized in Fig. 1.

As shown in Fig. 1, the process of a web survey includes four basic steps. The first step is *web survey development*. It concerns the process in which surveyors design and develop a web survey and upload it to the survey website, similar to the process of developing a mail survey and printing out the needed hard copies ready for use. The second step is *web survey delivery*. It concerns the process in which surveyors develop a sampling method, contact potential participants, and deliver the web survey to the hands of each of surveyees, like the process of mailing and distributing the mail survey to each of potential respondents. The third step is *web survey completion*. It concerns the process in which web surveyees receive the survey announcement, log into the survey website, complete and submit the survey, and log out from the website, like the process of finishing a mail survey. The fourth step is *web survey return*. It concerns the process in which surveyors download the collected web survey data from the website to research computers in certain formats for data analysis, relatively similar to the process of handling in the completed mail surveys.

In the text that follows, we use the model presented above as the conceptual framework to review a wide variety of factors that influence the response rate of a web survey in the four basic steps of the web survey process (i.e., development, delivery, completion, and return). We conclude the paper with a list of suggestions for increasing the response rate of web survey and a summary of future research directions.

## 2. Factors affecting response rates in survey development

There is an extensive literature on design and development web surveys, primarily focusing on two major factors influencing the response rate, content of web questionnaires and presentation of web questionnaires.

### 2.1. Content of web questionnaires

The existing survey literature indicates that the response rate is closely related to who the sponsors are, what the topic is, and how long the survey takes to complete.

First, the official sponsorship of a survey is found to affect response rates both in mail surveys and web surveys by setting up a board social context for surveys. Generally, surveys sponsored by academic and governmental agencies have higher response

rates than those sponsored by commercial ones (Fox et al., 1988; Goyder, 1982; Heberlein & Baumgartner, 1978; Manfreda et al., 2008; Walston, Lissitz, & Rudner, 2006). Galesic and Tourangeau (2007) found that sponsorship significantly influenced how respondents perceived and answered similar questions about sexual harassment by a neutral research institution and a feminist organization.

Second, the topic of a survey influences responses rates (Groves, Cialdini, & Couper, 1992). When the topic is with high salience (i.e., the topic is of high interests to some surveyees), potential respondents are more likely to respond to the survey (Dillman, 2007, p. 155). According to several meta-analyses, the salience of a topic is one of the most important factors that influence response rates in both mail and web surveys (Cook et al., 2000; Edwards et al., 2002; Sheehan, 2001; Yammarino, Skinner, & Childers, 1991). In addition, whether survey topics are sensitive or non-sensitive or concern attitude or fact is likely to affect response rates in web surveys (Cook et al., 2000; Edwards et al., 2002).

Third, the length of a survey generally are found to have a negative linear relation with response rates in both mail and web surveys, although the effect sizes in various studies range from strong to very weak (Cook et al., 2000; Edwards et al., 2002; Heberlein & Baumgartner, 1978; Singer, 1978; Walston et al., 2006; Yammarino et al., 1991). The variation in the estimated effect sizes is partially due to various measures used in reporting the survey length, including the number of questions, the number of pages, the number of screens, and the time of completing a survey (Cook et al., 2000). Based on the two studies conducted among college students, thirteen minutes or less of the completion time is considered as the idea length to obtain a good response rate (Asiu, Antons, & Fultz, 1998; Handwerk, Carson, & Blackwell, 2000).

### 2.2. The presentation of web questionnaires

The existing literature has focused on the three issues of how to present web surveys, question writing, question ordering, and visual display of the web questionnaire. Couper (2000), a leading web survey researcher, indicates that the factor of web survey presentations directly affects the measurement error (e.g., a survey question with poor wording will lead a respondent to misunderstand the question and give an inaccurate answer). Similarly, how a survey is presented on the website can directly or indirectly affect the response rate. For instance, a survey question with technical flaw might directly cause respondents to drop off from the web survey process, and a survey question with poor wording will reduce the motivation of respondents and make them discontinue the survey.

First, regarding the question wording, basic principles (e.g., keeping questions simple, avoiding biased and vague questions) for writing questions in mail surveys are applicable for web surveys (Dillman & Smyth, 2007; Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000). Dillman and Smyth (2007) pointed out, however, that careful changes should be made when adopting, for example, telephone surveys questions in an oral form for web ones in a

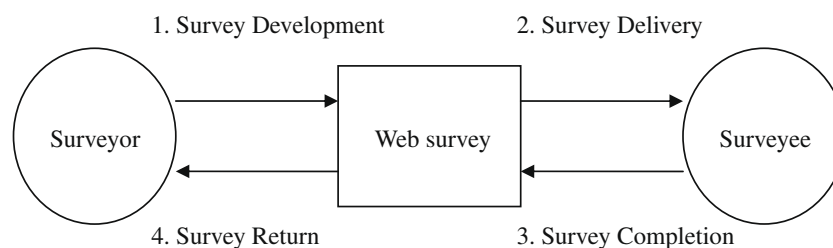


Fig. 1. The web survey process.

written form (e.g., telephone survey questions have to be easy to hear and web survey questions have to be easy to see) or adopting mail survey in paper–pencil form for online forms (e.g., it is easy to use a pen to circle an answer in a mail survey manually but not so using a computer in a web survey electronically).

Second, regarding the question ordering, substantial ordering effects has found in traditional surveys while the preceding questions can affect how potential respondents consider and evaluate the latter questions (Couper, Conrad, & Tourangeau, 2007; Mason, Carlson, & Tourangeau, 1994; Tourangeau, Couper, & Conrad, 2004; Tourangeau & Rasinski, 1988; Tourangeau, Rasinski, & Norman, 1991; Tourangeau, Rasinski, Norman, & Roy, 1989). Since web surveys have more flexibility in the order and layout of questions than that of mail surveys, the ordering effect could be more unique and substantial, although little literature is available to reveal the effect empirically. In particular, as one of the technical features of web surveys, many web survey software programs feature randomizations of both questions and response options. While the randomization of responses was found to be able to improve validity of data in the computer-assisted interviewing (Lensvelt-Mulders, Hox, der Heijden, & Maas, 2005), the ordering effect with the randomization feature used in web surveys needs to be empirically estimated to guide web survey design.

Third, regarding the question display, a wide variety of technical issues have been examined in the extensive literature in survey methodology (Crawford, McCabe, & Pope, 2005; Crawford et al., 2001; Dillman, Tortora, & Bowker, 1998) as well as in the literature in vision sciences (Dillman, Gertseva, & Mahon-Haft, 2005), human–computer interaction (Couper & Hansen, 2002), and web site usability (Nielsen, 2000). There is a long list of technical issues involved in the display design of web surveys, including how to choose screen-by-screen or scrolling survey layouts, how to design text formats for questions and instructions, how to use backgrounds, logos, graphics, progress indicators, and navigational instructions, how to choose radio buttons, check boxes, drop-down boxes, and the full list boxes.

For instance, considerable literature have discussed screen-by-screen and scrolling questionnaires as two types of questionnaire layouts (Couper et al., 2001; Peytchev, Couper, McCabe, & Crawford, 2006; Tourangeau et al., 2004). Scrolling designs display all questions within one single web page and respondents need to scroll from the head to the bottom of that single webpage to view the whole questionnaire and give answers. Dillman (2007) suggests the scrolling design (a) requires less computer time and computer resources to contact with the web server because it only requires one single submission of the final responses and (b) provides richer context for respondents to respond because all questions are on one page. In contrast, screen-by-screen designs put one or several questions within one screen and respondents press the button of “next page” in order to proceed. Peytchev et al. (2006) pointed out that the advantages of this design include (a) allowing respondents to skip questions that are not applicable to them and (b) reminding respondents to give consistent responses in the correct format and range.

### 3. Factors affecting response rates in survey delivery

After the web survey is uploaded to and operated on the survey website successfully, the next phase of the web survey is to deliver the survey to the hands of potential respondents. Five major issues have been discussed in the existing literature: sampling methods (who should be surveyed), contact delivery modes (how web surveys should be informed), invitation designs (how respondents should be invited), the use of pre-notification and reminders (how various notification and reminders should be used), and the use of incentives (how effective incentives should be considered).

#### 3.1. Sampling methods

In contrast to mail surveys, sampling in the web survey face at least two unique challenges related to coverage error and sampling error (Couper, 2000). On the one hand, due to the coverage error, not everyone can access to WWW, resulting in a biased population. On the other hand, due to the sampling error, everyone who can access to WWW does not necessarily have an equal chance to participate in the survey (e.g., no online access during trips or Internet service is down), resulting in a biased sample. A small number of studies started to show that different sampling methods lead to different response rates. For instance, Manfreda and his colleagues (2008) found that samples consisting of panel members yield higher response rates in web surveys than samples with respondents recruited just for one single study.

Couper (2000) classified web surveys into two types, non-probability surveys and probability surveys. Non-probability web surveys, include self-selected polls and volunteer opt-in panels, do not have known or equal probabilities of selecting members of the target population. Thus, its results cannot be generalized to the general population. In contrast, probability web surveys use random selection to select a sample and are with greater generalizabilities. Examples are list-based sample (e.g., students' e-mail address list) and pre-recruited panels (e.g., Internet users are recruited into panels by random digit dialing). However, research is needed to empirically examine whether or how non-probability surveys or probability surveys is related to the response rate.

#### 3.2. Contact delivery modes

Contacts are messages that are sent to respondents for the purpose of informing respondents the upcoming arrival of a survey or reminding respondents to complete the survey. There are different types of contacts in web surveys, such as pre-notification (contacts sending out before surveys), e-mail invitations (contacts containing a hyperlink to survey websites), and e-mail reminders (Porter, 2004). The way of contacting with potential respondents is important and unique because if potential respondents do not receive the initial contact, or cannot receive necessary information from the initial contact, the response process is terminated automatically.

The existing literature indicates that contacts in web surveys are most often delivered via e-mails, while researchers use alternative delivery modes (e.g., mails, telephones, and short messaging services) for contacting. Although the e-mail contact has low delivery cost and fast delivery time, it faces two challenges that contribute to the decrease of response rates, that is, the relatively low Internet coverage and the increasing use of spamming filters.

While the Internet coverage is expanding at a dramatic speed, it is still lower than the telephone coverage or the postal-mail address coverage. More importantly, the Internet user population is more likely to be the richer, well educated, younger, European and Asian Americans, compared with people without Internet accesses (Fricker, Galesic, Tourangeau, & Yan, 2005; National Telecommunications and Information Administration, 2004).

Besides the coverage issue, the e-mail contact is increasingly limited by the wide use of spam-blocking tools (Couper, 2000; Couper, Kapteyn, Schonlau, & Winter, 2007). With the fast growth of unsolicited e-mails, more robust even aggressive spam-blocking tools are used. The e-mail contacts sent to potential respondents are often treated as spam and blocked. Often times, the more popular the software product becomes, the more likely the e-mails sent out by this software product are caught and blocked by spam filters.

As an alternative of e-mail contacts, contacts can be sent out by other methods such as mails. When a single survey combines different modes to complete it, such as combining both web and mail

modes, it is called a mixed mode survey. Mixed mode surveys, in theory, combine the strengths of each mode of surveys, so that the optimal balance among cost, total survey errors, and survey ethics and privacy is achieved (de Leeuw, 2005; Dillman & Tarnai, 1988). The combination of different modes can happen in different steps of surveys, for example, potential respondents are contacted by mails and they complete the survey via Internet (Porter & Whitcomb, 2007). It can also combine a survey project in different stages, for example, non-respondents of a web survey are sent with a hard copy of questionnaire (McCabe, Couper, Cranford, & Boyd, 2006). Studies have been conducted to integrate more technologies into mixed mode surveys, such as WAP (Wireless Area Protocol), SMS (Short Message Service), CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing), and CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interviewing) (de Leeuw, Dillman, & Hox, 2006). For example, Bosnjak and his colleagues found that SMS pre-notifications yields better response rate than e-mail pre-notifications, while e-mail invitations outperformed the SMS invitations; and the combination of SMS pre-notification and e-mail invitation yields the highest response rate (Bosnjak, Neubarth, Couper, Bandilla, & Kaczmire, 2008). But contrast to the great scholarly interest in mixed mode surveys, the effects of mixed mode surveys on response rates are not clear. Some studies show the mixed mode survey improve response rates, (e.g., Quigley, Riemer, Cruzen, & Rosen, 2000), while others not, (e.g., Dillman, Clark, & West, 1995; Griffin, Fischer, & T., 2001; Porter & Whitcomb, 2007; Schonlau, Asch, & Du, 2003).

### 3.3. Designs of invitations

The survey invitation often consists of various kinds of information, such as the organization's name, the title of the web survey, passwords of access, URLs to the web site, explanations of the purpose and use of the survey (Crawford, 2006b). Three issues have been extensively studied in the literature: the personalization, the mention of scarcity, and the providing of automatic or password protected access.

First, the personalization of invitations (e.g., personalization of salutation, job titles, offices of senders, and signatures) has been consistently found to be a significant predictor of response rates of mail surveys (Heberlein & Baumgartner, 1978; Yammarino et al., 1991). Most of the personalization tactics in mail surveys positively influence response rates in web surveys (Cook et al., 2000; Edwards et al., 2002; Heerwegh, 2005; Joinson, Woodley, & Reips, 2007; Porter & Whitcomb, 2005; Singer, 1978). However, some tactics of personalization such as personalized greetings and personalized e-mail addresses were found as insignificant factor on responses (Pearson & Levine, 2003; Porter & Whitcomb, 2003a). Besides, a study found that personalization in e-mail invitation attracts more socially desired answers to sensitive questions in web surveys (Heerwegh, Vanhove, Matthijs, & Loosveldt, 2005).

Second, a statement that tells the respondent that they are the small selected group to be chosen or a statement that tells the deadline of survey participation is approaching are example of mentioning the scarcity. In mail surveys, mentioning the scarcity can significantly increase response rates (Edwards et al., 2002; Henley, 1976; Roberts, McCrory, & Forthofer, 1978). And similar results were found in web surveys (Porter & Whitcomb, 2003a).

Third, the access control is suggested in the web survey to prevent uninvited responses or multiple responses (Dillman, Tortora, Conrard, & Bowker, 1998). Three regular methods of access controls are: manual login in which respondents need to type both a username and a password to enter the web survey site, semiautomatic login in which only a username or a password is assigned, and automatic login in which a unique identifier is embedded into the URL so respondents do not need to entry the password to access (Crawford et al., 2001). It was found that the semiautomatic

approach can achieve higher response rates, completion rates, and less socially biased answer to sensitive questions (Crawford et al., 2001; Heerwegh & Loosveldt, 2002, 2003).

Researchers also made technical suggestions for designing invitations (Crawford et al., 2001; Heerwegh, 2005; Kaczmirek, 2005; Peytchev et al., 2006; Whitcomb & Porter, 2004). These suggestions include identifying the survey task clearly, avoiding attachments and html documents, identifying where researchers obtained respondents' e-mail addresses, providing realistic estimation of the time to finish the survey, providing contact information for needed help, and tailoring the invitations to the characters of target populations in screen design.

### 3.4. The use of pre-notifications and reminders

Experimental studies have consistently proved the effects of pre-notification and reminders on response rates (Bosnjak et al., 2008; Trouteaud, 2004; Wygant, Olsen, Call, & Curtin, 2005). The effect sizes range from modest (Crawford et al., 2001) to doubling the response rate (Cook et al., 2000). Several meta-analyses of both mail and web surveys have consistently concluded that the number of contacts is one of the most important factor to predict response rates (Cook et al., 2000; Fox, Schwartz, & Hart, 2006; Heberlein & Baumgartner, 1978; Manfreda et al., 2008; Yammarino et al., 1991). The pre-notification to potential respondents plays a particularly critical role because potential respondents' decision about logging in the web survey web site is largely based on the information provided by the initial contacts (Crawford et al., 2001). The first reminder has a more positive effects when it is 2 days after the initial invitation than 5 days (Crawford et al., 2001).

### 3.5. Incentives

The incentive is often used to increase response rates in both mail and web surveys. An extensive literature has documented various effects of using incentives that vary in types, timings, and amount (e.g., Fox et al., 1988; Goritz, 2006; Heberlein & Baumgartner, 1978).

In mail surveys, incentives such as gifts, check, or cashes can be included in the survey envelopes. However, web surveys can normally use incentives that can be easily transferred in the electronic environment, such as redeemable loyalty points, lotteries, gift certificate, donations to charity, and provision of survey results (Goritz, 2006). From the security reason, electronic gift certificate was recommended because giving out electronic gift certificate does not require respondents' personal information such as home addresses or bank accounts (Kraut et al., 2004). However, in a study that examined the effects of \$5 bill in mails and \$5 Amazon gift certificates via both mails and e-mails, Amazon gift certificates in either conditions led to significantly lower response rates than the cash condition (Birnholtz, Horn, Finholt, & Bae, 2004).

In mail surveys, consistent evidences indicate that pre-paid incentives boost response rates but post-paid incentives do not (Porter, 2004). In line with the findings in mail surveys, post-paid incentives in web surveys such as lotteries do not substantively help response rates (Goritz, 2006; Porter & Whitcomb, 2003b). However, contrast with the findings in web surveys, one study found that pre-paid incentives did not yield significantly higher response rates than post-paid incentives or even no incentive among members in a professional associate (Bosnjak & Tuten, 2003).

Research also indicates that the amount of incentives does not improve response rate in a linear way. The amount of incentives and the split-up of lotteries (one large prize or several smaller prizes), do not significantly affect the response rates in both mail and web surveys (Bosnjak & Tuten, 2003; Goritz, 2006; Porter & Whitcomb, 2003b).

## 4. Factors affecting response rates in survey completion

### 4.1. Participation in web surveys

Various factors affect respondents' participation decision of whether they participate in a survey. Adapted from Groves' categorization (Groves et al., 1992), we group contributing factors influencing participation decisions in web surveys into three categories: society-related factors, respondent-related factors, and design-related factors. The first two categories of factors will be discussed here, while the design-related factors can be referred to in the previous sections.

The social-level factors are defined as a set of global characters in any society that have an impact on survey participation (Groves et al., 1992). These factors include the degree of survey fatigue in a society, the social cohesion, and the public attitudes towards the survey industry (Groves et al., 1992; Schleifer, 1986). The social-level factors are important because they may affect the trends of response rates of various forms of surveys, online or offline, in the entire society. Over the past several decades, there are trends of decreasing response rates around the world (Atrostic, Burt, Silberstein, Winters, & Bates, 2001; Baruch, 1999; de Heer, 1999). One meta-analysis on web surveys (Sheehan & McMillan, 1999) concludes that the year in which a survey is published is the most important predictor of response rates.

The sample-level factors that influence response rates have been examined with three approaches: (a) comparing response rates in a single survey among different populations, (b) studying how respondents' socio-demographic characters affect response rates, and (c) measuring when and how the personality characters influence respondents' participation decision.

First, types of populations were found to significantly affect the response rate according to several meta-analyses (Baruch, 2000; Cook et al., 2000; Heberlein & Baumgartner, 1978; Shih & Fan, 2008). For example, general populations are found less willing to respond than employee populations, student populations, or army populations (Heberlein & Baumgartner, 1978; Shih & Fan, 2008). Among the professionals, the top managers were found less likely to respond than the employees and managers (Baruch, 2000).

Second, the socio-demographic factors of populations such as age, gender, income, and health status are found to vary with response rates in mail surveys (Groves et al., 1992). In web surveys, the effects of socio-demographic factors on response rates are two-fold. On the one hand, the socio-demographic factors are related to respondents' Internet resources and computer literacy (Diment & Garrett-Jones, 2007; Frazee, Hardin, Brashears, Smith, & Lockaby, 2003; Grigorian, Seelig, & Herrmann, 2004; Miller, Miller-Kobayashi, Caldwell, Thurston, & Collett, 2002; Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003). On the other hand, after controlling the Internet access and computer skills, it was found that some socio-demographic factors such as age and race still affect respondents' willingness to do a web survey (Couper, Conrad, et al., 2007).

Third, when comparing the personality between web surveys' respondents and non-respondents, respondents who are more likely to participate in the survey are conscientiousness (Rogelberg et al., 2003), agreeable (Marcus & Schutz, 2005; Rogelberg et al., 2003; Tuten & Bosnjak, 2001), and openness to experience (Marcus & Schutz, 2005; Tuten & Bosnjak, 2001). Furthermore, some studies examining the effect of personality on different stages of survey participation found that people with a higher need for cognition are more likely to login the web survey, but are not likely to finish the questionnaire; however, people with a higher emotional stability are more likely to complete the survey once they log in it (Galesic & Bosnjak, 2006).

### 4.2. Theories examining participation decision

Different theories were used to explain and predict the process of participation decision in traditional surveys. The three most influential ones among them are social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Dillman, 1978; Goyder, 1987), social psychological approach (Groves et al., 1992), and leverage-saliency theory (Groves, Presser, & Dipko, 2004; Groves, Singer, & Corning, 2001).

Social exchange theory proposed that respondents are more likely to respond to a self-administered survey when "the respondent trusts that the expected rewards of responding will outweigh the anticipated costs" (Dillman, 2007, p. 27). According to this theory, designing and implementing surveys should aim at increasing perceived rewards, reducing perceived costs for responding, and building up the trusts that the promised rewards will be fulfilled. For example, providing pre-paid incentive is an effective way to increase perceived rewards while providing post-paid incentives does not; keeping questionnaires short and easy can reduce perceived costs for responding; and notifying the authoritative sponsorship of a survey help establish trust (Dillman, 2007, pp. 14–21).

Social psychological theory of persuasion asserted that most decisions on surveys' participation are heuristic ones that are based on peripheral aspects of the options (Groves et al., 1992). Several compliance principles guided the heuristic decision making, such as reciprocation, authority, consistency, scarcity, social validation, and liking (Groves et al., 1992). Based on this theory, in survey-request situation respondents are often not motivated enough to invest much energy and time to make the participation decision. As a result, they will make their decisions based on peripheral aspects of the options rather than all the information about options (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984, 1986).

Leverage-saliency theory (Groves et al., 2001) indicates that individuals assign different weights (i.e., leverages) to different aspects of a survey request. The effect of each aspect of a survey on the participation decision is affected by how prominent it is pronounced in the request protocol (i.e., saliency). For example, providing incentives is not an effective way to increase response and reduce dropouts under certain circumstance for certain population (Cobanoglu & Cobanoglu, 2003; Goritz, 2006).

Both social exchange theory and the social psychological theory of persuasion have been successfully applied to traditional surveys. However, in web surveys, some implications of these theories have not been successfully validated. For example, both the two theories imply that pre-paid incentives are superior to post-paid incentives, because only the pre-paid incentive increase perceived rewards in social exchange theory, or invokes the reciprocity heuristic in the social psychological theory. However, in web surveys, some study found pre-paid incentives did not yield higher response rate than post-paid incentives (Bosnjak & Tuten, 2003). This finding raises doubts to the relevance of these theories in the web surveys' context, given the substantial psychological and practical differences between the web surveys and other modes of surveys. The Leverage-Saliency theory, on the other hand, has not been tested with sufficient studies in web surveys yet (Groves et al., 2004).

In addition, other conceptual models have been used to predict and explain specifically web survey's participation decisions, including Ajzen's (1985) and Ajzen and Driver (1991) planned-behavior approach and Rogelberg's (2000, 2006) response behavior model. Ajzen's planned-behavior approach posits that moral obligation, attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control are the four sources to affect behavioral intention and participation behaviors (Bosnjak, Tuten, & Wittmann, 2005). This model has been satisfactorily predicting and explaining the participations in a five-wave web panel survey (Bosnjak et al., 2005). While Ajzen's model is intended to apply to a wide variety of human behaviors, Rogelberg's

response behavior model was built specifically for examining organizational surveys. It identified eleven factors to predict response intentions and response behavior for the organizational survey. These factors include factors such as technology resources, technology attitude, and perception of Internet anonymity, attitude toward surveys, data usage, and individual traits. This theory was tested in a university satisfaction web survey and the results supported the model (Rogelberg, Spitzmüller, Little, & Reeve, 2006).

## 5. Factors affecting response rates in survey return

The web survey has its unique advantages and disadvantages in collecting all the completed survey. It is the last important step to ensure a good response rate. On the one hand, survey return and data entry are fully automated through the web survey software. The completed surveys will not be lost in the process of mail delivery or manual data entry like in mail surveys. Data download directly from the survey website are normally ready for immediate data analysis in SPSS, SAS, or other statistical programs. On the other hand, technical failure, computer virus, or Internet crimes can partially damage or entirely destroy the survey data stored in a server or a personal computer in a very short period of time without any precursors. At present, the literature on survey return is very limited and mainly focuses on two areas, software quality and data security.

### 5.1. Survey software

Over 300 web survey software products are listed in [www.websm.org](http://www.websm.org), such as SurveyMonkey, ClickSurvey, e-Questionnaire, MobileSurvey, SmartSurveys, Web-Based Survey, ZipSurvey, and Websurveyor. The existing literature (Couper, 2000; Couper et al., 2004; Dillman, 2000) indicates that it is particularly important that survey software programs support different browsers. Often, the same web questionnaire could be displayed differently to respondents in different computer configurations, different web browsers, different Internet services, and different Internet transmission capabilities. Because of these variations, some respondents may not be able to browse the questionnaires normally, submit their answers successfully, or even quit the surveys eventually. In addition, it is also important that survey software programs support diverse formats such as XLS and SPSS for effective data importation and data exportation. The high-quality data converting will sustain the success of data collection with high response rates.

### 5.2. Data safety

Although web surveys may not be more risky than traditional ones, the data safety should be protected against deliberate hacking, accident leaking, or careless disclosure for both remote hosted solutions and home hosted solutions (Cho & LaRose, 1999; Kraut et al., 2004). Surveyors can use various protecting strategies, such as keeping identifying information separately from other data, using passwords protection or encryption, using multiple servers to hold different part of the survey, and installing firewalls and virtual private networks (Cho & LaRose, 1999; Crawford, 2006a; Kraut et al., 2004; O'Neil, 2001).

## 6. Conclusion

The present review suggest that a wide variety of factors affecting the response rate of the web survey involve in all the four stages of the entire web survey process rather than only in survey delivery or survey . Thus, to increase the average response rate of web surveys, which is approximately 10% lower than that of mail

or telephone surveys, web survey researchers should pay attention not only to general factors involved in any survey work but more importantly to specific factors uniquely related to a web survey. Based on the model of the web survey process, we would offer the following suggestions for increasing the response rate of web surveys.

In the first stage of the web survey, the response rate, by design, is significantly influenced by various factors, such as topics, length, ordering, formatting of web survey , during survey design and development, far before respondents decided whether they participate in the survey or not. We believe that the best way to assess the quality of a web survey before its actual use is to pilot the web survey with a small group of respondents in the real life situation and then invite content experts or methodology experts to review the pilot results. Just like multiple revisions make a perfect paper, with several small pilot studies, researchers will design and develop a web survey with a satisfactory response rate.

In the second stage of the web survey delivery, factors, such as sampling methods, contact delivery modes, invitation designs, informed consent methods, pre-notification and reminders, and incentive approaches, are influencing the response rate. Our major suggestion is that the key to increase response rates in this stage concerns not only with how to ensure respondents will receive the survey invitation via various communicative techniques; but more importantly, it concerns with how to make sure they can easily find the survey website and delightfully open the web survey. In other words, the real goal of this stage is that respondents will actually open a web survey rather than eventually receive the survey notice.

In the third stage of the survey completion, there are also various factors contributing to the response rate, as reviewed in the present paper before. Our practical suggestion is that it is important to know respondents' levels of computer user and web use. For example, for a web survey targeting elementary school students, researchers should carefully consider how well these students can type simple phrases and use mouse to choose answers to multiple-choice questions. For a web survey examining adults with various ages, it is critical to know how comfortably they can use web browsers in different computers and navigate within and between websites.

In the last stage of the web survey return, various technical failures will substantially decrease the response rate, even if a web survey is strong in the first three stages. We suggest that, before deciding to use any web survey websites or software one should always carefully check the data safety issue and always quickly run a pilot study to see how well the format of the collected survey data can be directly used for data analysis in a given data analysis software such as SPSS and SAS or Ethnograph and NVivo.

To improve the quality of web surveys in general and to increase the response rate in particular [admitting that low response rates do not necessarily increase nonresponse errors. see Groves and Peytcheva (2008)], web survey researchers should make further efforts in at least following four areas. First, among the four stages of the web survey, extensive research has been focused on the first two stages, survey development (e.g., how to better format the survey) and survey delivery (e.g., how to better contact respondents). Research programs are needed to examine the last two stages (i.e., survey completion and survey return); especially to enhance the much needed research in the stage of the survey return. These efforts will help advance balanced knowledge of the entire web survey process rather than one or two stages. Second, empirical research is needed to examine various response behaviors. Researchers can take advantage of existing web survey programs to examine the paradata that contain each participant's specific information collected during the web survey process, e.g., how a respondent only view questions but does not



answer them, when a respondent drops off from a web survey, and what hyperlinks or radio buttons a respondent clicks (Bosnjak & Tuten, 2001; Heerwegh, 2003). Researchers can also design experimental studies to collect laboratory behavioral data. These two lines of research will help understand micro-level psychological processes of web survey behaviors. Third, it is the good time to develop theories on the basis of existing empirical studies. While several behavioral theories have been applied to the stage of survey completion, further theoretical efforts should be made to synthesize existing empirical evidence accumulated over the past decade and explain why web surveys have substantial lower response rates and what should be done in the everyday practice to improve the response rate. Last, there is an urgent need to compare and assess the existing web survey software programs. Given several hundreds of web survey programs are developed and used, researchers should evaluate their effectiveness in collecting survey data and provide suggestions for web survey users to choose ones with the best quality in obtaining higher response rates.

## References

- Ajzen, I. (1985). A theory of planned behavior. In J. K. J. Beckman (Ed.), *Action-control: From cognition to behavior*. Heidelberg, Germany: Springer.
- Ajzen, I., & Driver, B. L. (1991). Prediction of leisure participation from behavioral, normative, and control beliefs: An application of the theory of planned behavior. *Leisure Sciences*, 13, 185–204.
- Asiu, B. W., Antons, C. M., & Fultz, M. L. (1998). *Undergraduate perceptions of survey participation: Improving response rates and validity*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Institutional Research, Minneapolis, Minn.
- Atrostic, B. K., Burt, G., Silberstein, A., Winters, F., & Bates, N. (2001). Nonresponse in federal household surveys: New measures and new insights. *Journal of Official Statistics*, 17, 209–226.
- Baruch, Y. (1999). Response rate in academic studies: A comparative analysis. *Human Relations*, 52, 421–438.
- Baruch, Y. (2000). Teleworking: Benefits and pitfalls as perceived by professionals and managers. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 15, 34–49.
- Birnholtz, J. P., Horn, D. B., Finholt, T. A., & Bae, S. J. (2004). The effects of cash, electronic, and paper gift certificates as respondent incentives for a Web-based survey of technologically sophisticated respondents. *Social Science Computer Review*, 22, 355–362.
- Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. New York: Wiley.
- Bosnjak, M., & Tuten, T. L. (2001). Classifying response behaviors in web-based surveys [Electronic Version]. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*. Available from <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol6/issue3/boznjak.html> Retrieved May 4, 2008.
- Bosnjak, M., Neubarth, W., Couper, M. P., Bandilla, W., & Kaczmarek, L. (2008). Prenotification in Web-based access panel surveys – The influence of mobile text messaging versus e-mail on response rates and sample composition. *Social Science Computer Review*, 26, 213–223.
- Bosnjak, M., & Tuten, T. L. (2003). Prepaid and promised incentives in Web surveys. *Social Science Computer Review*, 21, 208–217.
- Bosnjak, M., Tuten, T. L., & Wittmann, W. W. (2005). Unit (non)response in Web-based access panel surveys: An extended planned-behavior approach. *Psychology and Marketing*, 22, 489–505.
- Cho, H., & LaRose, R. (1999). Privacy issues in Internet surveys. *Social Science Computer Review*, 17, 421–434.
- Cobanoglu, C., & Cobanoglu, N. (2003). The effect of incentives in web surveys: Application and ethical considerations. *International Journal of Market Research*, 45, 475–488.
- Cook, C., Heath, F., & Thompson, R. L. (2000). A meta-analysis of response rates in Web- or Internet-based surveys. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 60, 821–836.
- Couper, M. P. (2000). Web surveys – A review of issues and approaches. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 64, 464–494.
- Couper, M. P., Conrad, F. G., & Tourangeau, R. (2007). Visual context effects in web surveys. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 71, 623–634.
- Couper, M. P., & Hansen, S. E. (2002). Computer-assisted interviewing. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 557–576). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Couper, M. P., Kapteyn, A., Schonlau, M., & Winter, J. (2007). Noncoverage and nonresponse in an Internet survey. *Social Science Research*, 36, 131–148.
- Couper, M. P., Tourangeau, R., Conrad, F. G., & Crawford, S. D. (2004). What they see is what we get – Response options for web surveys. *Social Science Computer Review*, 22, 111–127.
- Couper, M. P., Traugott, M. W., & Lamias, M. J. (2001). Web survey design and administration. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 65, 230–253.
- Crawford, S. D. (2006a). *Web survey implementation*. University of North Carolina.
- Crawford, S. D. (2006b). *Web survey implementation*. Paper presented at the Ethnicity, Culture, Race and Aging (ECRA) seminar series, Chapel Hill, NC.
- Crawford, S. D., Couper, M. P., & Lamias, M. J. (2001). Web surveys: Perceptions of burden. *Social Science Computer Review*, 19, 146–162.
- Crawford, S. D., McCabe, S. E., & Pope, D. (2005). Applying Web-based survey design standards. *Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community*, 29, 43–66.
- de Heer, W. (1999). International response rates trends: Results of an international survey. *Journal of Official Statistics*, 5, 129–142.
- de Leeuw, E. D. (2005). To mix or not to mix data collection modes in surveys. *Journal of Official Statistics*, 21, 233–255.
- de Leeuw, E. D., Dillman, D. A., & Hox, J. J. (2006). Mixed mode surveys: When and why. In J. Hox, E. D. Leeuw, & D. Dillman (Eds.), *International Handbook of Survey Methodology*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates (LEA).
- Dillman, D. A. (1978). *Mail and telephone surveys: The total design method for surveys*. New York: Wiley.
- Dillman, D. A. (2000). *Mail and Internet surveys: The tailored design method* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Dillman, D. A. (2007). *Mail and Internet Surveys: The tailored design method. 2007 update with new Internet, visual, and mixed-mode guide* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Dillman, D. A., Clark, J. R., & West, K. K. (1995). Influence of an invitation to answer by telephone on response to census questionnaire. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 58, 557–568.
- Dillman, D. A., Tortora, R., Conrad, J., & Bowker, D. (1998). *Influence of plain vs. fancy design on response rates for web surveys*. Paper presented at the Joint Statistical Meetings, Dallas, Texas.
- Dillman, D. A., Tortora, R. D., & Bowker, D. (1998). *Principles for constructing web surveys*. Paper presented at the SESRC Technical Report 90-50, Pullman, Washington.
- Dillman, D. A., Gertseva, A., & Mahon-Haft, T. (2005). Achieving usability in establishment surveys through the application of visual design principles. *Journal of Official Statistics*, 21, 183–214.
- Dillman, D. A., & Smyth, J. D. (2007). Design effects in the transition to Web-based surveys. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 32(5S), 90–96.
- Dillman, D. A., & Tarnai, J. (1988). Administrative issues in mixed mode surveys. In R. M. Groves, P. Biemer, L. Lyberg, J. Massey, W. L. Nicholls, & J. Waksberg (Eds.), *Telephone survey methodology*. New York: Wiley.
- Diment, K., & Garrett-Jones, S. (2007). How demographic characteristics affect mode preference in a postal/web mixed-mode survey of Australian researchers. *Social Science Computer Review*, 25, 510–517.
- Dommeier, C. J., & Moriarty, E. (2000). Comparing two forms of an e-mail survey: Embedded vs. attached. *International Journal of Market Research*, 42, 39–50.
- Edwards, P., Roberts, I., Clarke, M., DiGiuseppi, C., Pratap, S., Wentz, R., et al. (2002). Increasing response rates to postal questionnaires: Systematic review. *British Medical Journal*, 324.
- Fox, G., Crask, M. R., & Kim, J. (1988). Mail survey response rate: A meta-analysis of selected techniques for inducing response. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 52, 467–491.
- Fox, G., Schwartz, A., & Hart, K. M. (2006). Work-family balance and academic advancement in medical schools. *Academic Psychiatry*, 30, 227–234.
- Fraze, S., Hardin, K. K., Brashears, M. T., Smith, J. H., & Lockaby, J. D. (2003). The effects of delivery mode upon survey response rate and perceived attitudes of Texas Agri-Science teachers. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 44(2), 27–37.
- Fricker, S., Galesic, M., Tourangeau, R., & Yan, T. (2005). An experimental comparison of web and telephone surveys. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 69, 370–392.
- Fricker, R. D., & Schonlau, M. (2002). Advantages and disadvantages of Internet research surveys: Evidence from the literature. *Field Methods*, 14, 347–367.
- Galesic, M., & Bosnjak, M. (2006). *Personality traits and participation in an online access panel*. Paper presented at the the German Online Research Conference (GOR 06), Bielefeld, Germany.
- Galesic, M., & Tourangeau, R. (2007). What is sexual harassment? It depends on who asks! Framing effects on survey responses. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 21, 189–202.
- Goritz, A. S. (2006). Incentives in web studies: Methodological issues and a review. *International Journal of Internet Science*, 1, 58–70.
- Goyder, J. (1982). Further evidence on factors affecting response rates to mailed questionnaires. *American Sociological Review*, 47, 550–553.
- Goyder, J. (1987). *The silent minority: Nonrespondents on sample surveys*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Griffin, D. H., Fischer, D. P., & Morgan, M. T. (2001). *Testing an Internet response option for the American community survey*. Paper presented at the Annual conference of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.
- Grigorian, K. H., Seelig, S. E., & Herrmann, A. (2004). *Quality at what cost – Evaluating CATI quality improvement measures in a large national longitudinal survey*. Paper presented at the the annual meeting of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, Pointe Hilton Tapatio Cliffs, Phoenix, Arizona.
- Groves, R. M. (1989). *Survey errors and survey costs*. New York: Wiley.
- Groves, R. M., Cialdini, R. B., & Couper, M. P. (1992). Understanding the decision to participate in a survey. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 56, 475–495.
- Groves, R. M., & Peytcheva, E. (2008). The impact of nonresponse rates on nonresponse bias: A meta-analysis. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 72, 167–189.
- Groves, R. M., Presser, S., & Dipko, S. (2004). The role of topic interest in survey participation decision. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 68, 2–31.
- Groves, R. M., Singer, E., & Corning, A. (2001). Leverage-saliency theory of survey participation. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 64, 299–308.
- Handwerk, P., Carson, C., & Blackwell, K. (2000). *On-line versus paper-and-pencil surveying of students: A case study*. Paper presented at the the Association of Institutional Research Conference, Cincinnati, Ohio.

- Heberlein, T. A., & Baumgartner, R. (1978). Factors affecting response rates to mailed questionnaires: A quantitative analysis of the published literature. *American Sociological Review*, 43, 447–462.
- Heerwegh, D. (2003). Explaining response latencies and changing answers using client-side paradata from a web survey. *Social Science Computer Review*, 21, 360–373.
- Heerwegh, D. (2005). Effects of personal salutations in e-mail invitations to participate in a web survey. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 69, 588–598.
- Heerwegh, D., & Loosveldt, G. (2002). Web surveys –The effect of controlling survey access using PIN numbers. *Social Science Computer Review*, 20, 10–21.
- Heerwegh, D., & Loosveldt, G. (2003). An evaluation of the semiautomatic login procedure to control web survey access. *Social Science Computer Review*, 21, 223–234.
- Heerwegh, D., Vanhove, T., Matthijs, K., & Loosveldt, G. (2005). The effect of personalization on response rates and data quality in web surveys. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology: Theory and Practice*, 18, 85–99.
- Henley, J. (1976). Response rate to mail questionnaires with a return deadline. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 40, 374–375.
- Joinson, A. N., Woodley, A., & Reips, U.-D. (2007). Personalization, authentication and self-disclosure in self-administered Internet surveys. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 23, 275–285.
- Kaczmarek, L. (2005). Web surveys. A brief guide on usability and implementation issues. In M. P. M. Hassenzahl (Ed.), *Usability professionals* (pp. 102–105). Linz, Austria: German Chapter der Usability Professionals Association e.V.
- Kraut, R., Olson, J., Banaji, M., Bruckman, A., Cohen, J., & Couper, M. P. (2004). Psychological research online: Opportunities and challenges. *American Psychologist*, 59(2), 105–117.
- Lensvelt-Mulders, G. J. L. M., Hox, J. J., der Heijden, P. G. M. v., & Maas, C. J. M. (2005). Meta-analysis of randomized response research: 35 years of validation studies. *Sociological Methods and Research*, 33, 319–348.
- Manfreda, K. L., Bosnjak, M., Berzelak, J., Haas, I., & Vehovar, V. (2008). Web surveys versus other survey modes. *International Journal of Market Research*, 50, 79–104.
- Marcus, B., & Schutz, A. (2005). Who are the people reluctant to participate in research? Personality correlates of four different types of nonresponse as inferred from self- and observer ratings. *Journal of Personality*, 73, 959–984.
- Mason, R., Carlson, J. E., & Tourangeau, R. (1994). Contrast effects and subtraction in part – whole questions. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 58, 569–578.
- McCabe, S. E., Couper, M. P., Cranford, J. A., & Boyd, C. J. (2006). Comparison of web and mail surveys for studying secondary consequences associated with substance use: Evidence for minimal mode effects. *Addictive Behaviors*, 31, 162–168.
- Miller, T. I., Miller-Kobayashi, M., Caldwell, E., Thurston, S., & Collett, B. (2002). Citizen surveys on the web: General population surveys of community opinion. *Social Science Computer Review*, 20(2), 124–136.
- National Telecommunications and Information Administration (2004). *A nation online: Entering the broadband age*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce.
- Nielsen, J. (2000). *Designing web usability: The practice of simplicity*. Indianapolis, Indiana: New Riders Publishing.
- O’Neil, D. (2001). Analysis of Internet users’ level of online privacy concerns. *Social Science Computer Review*, 19(17), 17–31.
- Pearson, J., & Levine, R. A. (2003). *Salutations and response rates to online surveys*. Paper presented at the Association for survey computing fourth international conference on the impact of technology on the survey process, University of Warwick, England.
- Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1984). The effects of involvement on response to argument quality and quantity: Central and peripheral routes to persuasion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46, 69–81.
- Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). *Communication and persuasion: Central and peripheral routes and attitude change*. New York: Springer Verlag.
- Peytchev, A., Couper, M. P., McCabe, S. E., & Crawford, S. D. (2006). Web survey design: Paging versus scrolling. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 70, 596–607.
- Porter, S. R. (2004). Raising response rates: What works? *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 2004(121), 5–21.
- Porter, S. R., & Whitcomb, M. E. (2003a). The impact of contact type on web survey response rates. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 67, 579–588.
- Porter, S. R., & Whitcomb, M. E. (2003b). The impact of lottery incentives on student survey response rates. *Research in Higher Education*, 44, 389–407.
- Porter, S. R., & Whitcomb, M. E. (2005). E-mail subject lines and their effect on web survey viewing and response. *Social Science Computer Review*, 23, 380–387.
- Porter, S. R., & Whitcomb, M. E. (2007). Mixed-mode contacts in web surveys: Paper is not necessary better. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 71, 635–648.
- Quigley, B., Riemer, R. A., Cruzen, D. E., & Rosen, S. (2000). *Internet versus paper survey administration: Preliminary findings on response rates*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the International Military Testing Association, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK.
- Roberts, R. E., McCrory, O. F., & Forthofer, R. N. (1978). Further evidence on using a deadline to stimulate responses to a mail survey. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 42, 407–410.
- Rogelberg, S. G., Conway, J. M., Sederburg, M. E., Spitzmüller, C., Aziz, S., & Knight, W. E. (2003). Profiling active and passive nonrespondents to an organizational survey. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88, 1104–1114.
- Rogelberg, S. G., Luong, A., Sederburg, M. E., & Cristol, D. S. (2000). Employee attitude surveys: Examining the attitudes of noncompliant employees. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85, 284–293.
- Rogelberg, S. G., Spitzmüller, C., Little, I. S., & Reeve, C. L. (2006). Understanding response behavior to an online special topics organizational satisfaction survey. *Personnel Psychology*, 59, 903–923.
- Schleifer, S. (1986). Trends in attitudes toward and participation in survey research. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 50, 17–26.
- Schonlau, M., Asch, B. J., & Du, C. (2003). Web surveys as part of a mixed-mode strategy for populations that cannot be contacted by e-mail. *Social Science Computer Review*, 21, 218–222.
- Sheehan, K. B. (2001). E-mail survey response rates: A review [Electronic Version]. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 6. Available from <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol6/issue2/sheehan.html> Retrieved March 11, 2008.
- Sheehan, K. B., & McMillan, S. J. (1999). Response variation in email surveys: An exploration. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 39, 45–54.
- Shih, T. H., & Fan, X. (2008). Comparing response rates from web and mail surveys: A meta-analysis. *Field Methods*, 20, 249–271.
- Singer, E. (1978). Informed consent: Consequences for response rate and response quality in social surveys. *American Sociological Review*, 43, 144–162.
- Tourangeau, R., Couper, M. P., & Conrad, F. (2004). Spacing, position, and order – Interpretive heuristics for visual features of survey questions. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 68, 368–393.
- Tourangeau, R., & Rasinski, K. A. (1988). Cognitive processes underlying context effects in attitude measurement. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103, 299–314.
- Tourangeau, R., Rasinski, K. A., & Norman, B. (1991). Measuring happiness in surveys: A test of the subtraction hypothesis. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 55, 255–266.
- Tourangeau, R., Rasinski, K. A., Norman, B., & Roy, D. A. (1989). Carryover effects in attitude surveys. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 53, 495–524.
- Tourangeau, R., Rips, L. J., & Rasinski, K. A. (2000). *The psychology of survey response*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Trouteaud, A. R. (2004). How you ask counts: A test of Internet-related components of response rates to a web-based survey. *Social Science Computer Review*, 22, 385–392.
- Tuten, T. L., & Bosnjak, M. (2001). Understanding differences in web usage: The role of need for cognition and the five factor model of personality. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 29, 391–398.
- Venkatesh, V., Morris, M. G., Davis, G. B., & Davis, F. D. (2003). User acceptance of information technology: Toward a unified view. *MIS Quarterly*, 27, 425–478.
- Walston, J. T., Lissitz, R. W., & Rudner, L. M. (2006). The influence of Web-based questionnaire presentation variations on survey cooperation and perceptions of survey quality. *Journal of Official Statistics*, 22, 271–291.
- Whitcomb, M. E., & Porter, S. R. (2004). E-mail contacts – A test of complex graphical designs in survey research. *Social Science Computer Review*, 22, 370–376.
- Wygant, S., Olsen, D., Call, V., & Curtin, J. (2005). *Comparative analyses of parallel paper, phone, and web surveys: Some effects of reminder, incentive and mode*. Brigham Young University.
- Yammarino, F. J., Skinner, S. J., & Childers, T. L. (1991). Understanding mail survey response behavior: A meta-analysis. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 55, 613–639.
- Yu, J., & Cooper, H. (1983). A quantitative review of research design effects on response rates to questionnaires. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 20, 36–44.

### **The adequacy of response rates to online and paper surveys: what can be done?**

Duncan D. Nulty\*

*Griffith University, Queensland, Australia*

This article is about differences between, and the adequacy of, response rates to online and paper-based course and teaching evaluation surveys. Its aim is to provide practical guidance on these matters. The first part of the article gives an overview of online surveying in general, a review of data relating to survey response rates and practical advice to help boost response rates. The second part of the article discusses when a response rate may be considered large enough for the survey data to provide adequate evidence for accountability and improvement purposes. The article ends with suggestions for improving the effectiveness of evaluation strategy. These suggestions are: to seek to obtain the highest response rates possible to all surveys; to take account of probable effects of survey design and methods on the feedback obtained when interpreting that feedback; and to enhance this action by making use of data derived from multiple methods of gathering feedback.

#### **Online surveying in general**

There are many advantages associated with the use of information technology to support approaches to evaluation (Dommeyer et al., 2004; Salmon et al. 2004; Watt et al. 2002). As examples, Watt et al. (2002) note that ‘using web-based evaluation questionnaires can bypass many of the bottlenecks in the evaluation system (e.g. data entry and administration) and move to a more “just in time” evaluation model’ (327). Another advantage is avoiding the need to administer surveys in class (Dommeyer et al. 2004). Unsurprisingly, there is increasing growth in the use of web-based surveying for course and teaching evaluation (Hastie & Palmer 1997; Seal & Przasnyski 2001). This growth is happening despite concerns from students (e.g. regarding confidentiality and ease of use) (Dommeyer, Baum & Hanna 2002), and concerns from staff (e.g. about the adequacy of response rates) (Dommeyer, Baum et al. 2002).

Online surveying practice varies greatly. For example, in Australia, the University of South Australia uses a system supporting *solely* online administration of surveys, while Murdoch University and Curtin University among others are moving the same way. Griffith University and Queensland University of Technology have each developed integrated web-based systems that take a hybrid approach offering academics a choice of paper or online administration for their surveys. Respondents, however, have no choice: they receive either a paper-based survey or an online survey. Other emerging systems allow choice of response mode by combining multiple modes of administration and response (Pearson Assessments 2006), thereby allowing survey designers to better match the method of survey administration to the needs, abilities or preferences of respondents and avoid skewing the data.

---

\*Email: [d.nulty@griffith.edu.au](mailto:d.nulty@griffith.edu.au)

Despite these variations, there are some common features to online surveying practice. These have been described by (Dommeyer et al. 2004). They reported that: a typical online evaluation involves: giving students assurances that their responses will be de-identified and that aggregate reports will be made available only after the final grades are determined; providing students with the URL to access the survey—generally using their student ID number; students responding numerically to multiple response items and typing answers to open-ended questions; providing students with a receipt verifying that they have completed the evaluation; and providing at least two weeks in which the students can respond, usually near the end of term/semester (612).

### **Comparability of online and on-paper survey response-rate data**

(McCormack 2003) reported that there are ‘new expectations in relation to the evaluation of teaching, for example, expectations about the role of evaluation of teaching in promotion and probation and about the public availability of student evaluation results on institution web sites ...’ (2). More specifically, the expectations are that teaching evaluations should be used directly, openly and compulsorily in promotion and probation decisions, and that data on student evaluation of courses should be made available publicly to inform the public. Such expectations may be seen as an extension of the change in the focus of teaching and course evaluations from formative to summative (Ballantyne 2003).

These changes in expectations and focus are occurring at the same time that the use of online surveying is increasing. Considered together, this has raised interest in issues around response rates to these surveys. Yet, a recent review of literature regarding instruments for obtaining student feedback (Richardson 2005) claimed that ‘little is known about the response rates obtained in electronic surveys, or whether different modes of administration yield similar patterns of results’ (406).

Closer scrutiny of the literature, however, reveals that a good deal *is* known. Moreover, there is also a fair amount of information available in relation to the comparison between patterns of results obtained through using different modes of administration of surveys. Some of that literature is reviewed below—with the caveat that while it is strongly suggestive of what one might call a ‘prevailing position’, it also illustrates substantial variability.

In general, online surveys are much less likely to achieve response rates as high as surveys administered on paper—despite the use of various practices to lift them. Some literature demonstrating this follows and has been summarized in Table 1. In addition, in some cases (such as Griffith University), the reported response rate for paper-based surveys is conservative because an academic may only hand out paper surveys to one sub-group (e.g. one class) of students rather than to all that were enrolled. Given that this practice is not reported centrally, there is no way to take it into account when calculating the overall response rate.

In summary, of the eight examples cited in Table 1, most of the online surveys achieved response rates that were much lower than the paper-based ones (on average, 33% compared with 56% = 23% lower). Thus, in general, these data show that online surveys do not achieve response rates that are even close to what is achieved with paper-based surveys. There are just two exceptions which will be detailed next.

In the research by Watt et al. (2002), the overall response rate for online surveys was 32.6%, while for paper surveys it was 33.3% (333). This finding is inconsistent with the other data reported in Table 1. However, the context for the low on-paper response rate in Watt et al.’s research is that the courses surveyed were all taught in distance education mode. This means that these paper surveys were not handed out in a face-to-face environment as they were in the other studies. This finding raises a question about the impact of face-to-face administration of surveys.

Table 1. Comparisons of response rates to paper-based and online surveys.

Who	Paper-based response rate (%)	Online response rate (%)	Difference (%)
Cook et al. (2000)	55.6	–	–16
Baruch (1999)	–	39.6	–
Dommeyer et al. (2004)	75	43	–32
Ballantyne (2005)	55	47	–8
Ogier (2005)	65	30	–35
Nair et al. (2005)	56	31	–31
Griffith University (2005)	57	20	–37
Sweep (2006)*	56	23	–33
Watt et al. (2002)	32.6	33.3	<1
Overall	56	33	–23

\*(T. Sweep, pers. comm.)

The data clearly show that face-to-face administration results in higher response rates. What is unknown is whether response rates to online surveys would rise to the same level if they were also conducted in a face-to-face way.

The author has not found any study reporting on this question. It seems likely that this is because one of the main benefits (and uses) of the online survey process is to avoid the need to conduct the survey in class (Dommeyer et al. 2004). Clearly, if the only way to achieve high response rates with online surveys was to administer them in a face-to-face setting it would negate these benefits. In general, such steps are not taken—and are unlikely to be taken.

Watt et al.'s (2002) research suggests that when paper surveys of courses and teaching are not administered face to face, the response rates might be as low as for non-face-to-face online surveys. It is reasonable to hypothesize that in a non-face-to-face setting it is easier to submit an online response than it is to physically mail a paper one. It follows that in non-face-to-face settings this should advantage online survey response rates. It is not, therefore, a conclusion of this article that on-paper surveys are intrinsically 'better' than online surveys.

The second exception to the data reported in Table 1 is contained within the detail of the study conducted by Dommeyer et al. (2004). These researchers conducted an experiment in which they found that response rates to online surveys were lower than for on-paper surveys in 14 cases out of 16—significantly so in 10 of these. Where response rates were not significantly different was usually when students were offered a (very) small grade incentive (respondents' grades were increased by one quarter of 1%). When the grade incentive was applied, the response rates for both online and on-paper surveys were high—and almost identical (86.67% and 86.99% respectively). This result appears to be unique: that is, I have found no other literature to demonstrate that it can be, or has been, repeated. Overall, however, Dommeyer et al. reported that online surveys achieved a 43% response rate, while on-paper achieved 75%.

### Boosting online survey response rates

The most prevalent methods for boosting online survey response rates are:

- (1) repeat reminder emails to non-respondents (students);
- (2) repeat reminder emails to survey owners (academics);
- (3) incentives to students in the form of prizes for respondents awarded through a lottery.

Table 2. Methods used to boost online survey response rates in five universities.

University	Methods used	Online survey response rate (%)
Murdoch University (Ballantyne 2005)	1, 2 & 3	47
Canterbury University (Ogier 2005)	1 & 3	30
Monash University (Nair et al. 2005)	1	31
Griffith University	no measures taken	20
QUT (Sweep 2006)*	no measures taken	23

\*(T. Sweep, pers. comm.)

Methods used in the institutions investigated, together with the response rate achieved for online surveys, are summarized in Table 2. These data suggest that, generally speaking, the greater the number of measures taken to boost online response rates, the higher those rates are.

In addition to the measures specified above, Ballantyne (2005) reported that for each survey at her university the email sent to students contained a URL which allowed them to access the survey more easily. This same URL was also embedded in the course WebCT pages and the course welcome pages. All surveys were also, by default, open for 20 days. Aside from these extensive mechanisms, Ballantyne speculated on the reasons for the relative success at Murdoch University. She noted that Murdoch had been using online surveys since 1998 and that it has had mandatory surveying since 1993. She proposed that this has helped to create a culture in which such surveys were accepted by students and staff.

Neither Griffith University nor QUT used email reminders for online surveys, nor any form of incentive scheme to potential respondents. Academics were simply advised to ensure that they encourage the students to respond. Clearly, given that these institutions achieved the lowest online response rates (20% and 23% respectively) encouragement alone appears to have little effect.

### Additional approaches to boosting response rates

Two websites offer particularly succinct, credible and partly overlapping advice regarding practices that can boost response rates. These are Zúñiga (2004) from the US Teaching and Learning with Technology/Flashlight Group, and Quinn (2002) from the University of South Australia. Zúñiga offered a set of seven 'best practices for increasing response rates to online surveys'. These are:

- (1) *Push the survey*. This basically means making it easy for students to access the survey by, for example, providing them with the survey URL in an email sent directly to them.
- (2) *Provide frequent reminders*. Zúñiga advocated 'At least three reminders'. Others, however, point to the inevitable diminishing return on this investment coupled with the possibility of irritating the survey population (Kittleston 1995; Cook et al. 2000). In the context of surveying multiple lecturers in any one course, and multiple courses in any one semester, respondents are likely to have several surveys to complete. The potential for a barrage of reminders—and commensurately higher levels of irritation—is evident.
- (3) *Involve academics*. Zúñiga contended that 'Nothing helps more than regular reminders to students from faculty'. This assertion does not appear to be entirely supported by the literature. As shown earlier in this paper, institutions that did not use direct email reminders to students—implicitly relying on academics to promote participation—achieved much lower response rates than those that did. The combination of direct reminders backed up

by encouragement from academics, however, was certainly better than either method alone. It may be particularly so if the academics also take the opportunity to demonstrate and/or convince students that their feedback has been, or will be, used to good effect (see no. 4 below).

- (4) *Persuade respondents that their responses will be used.* The issue here is whether students believe that the academics will take the feedback seriously (Nulty 1992). There is a range of ways to achieve this but all involve some active demonstration to students that feedback is valued and acted upon.
- (5) *Provide rewards.* Zúñiga stated that ‘Many institutions have found that a drawing for a prize of general interest ... [helps]’. He went on: ‘even one point earned for the course also works well even though it is not enough to change any individual student’s grade. Sometimes this reward is given to individuals, and sometimes to the whole class if more than a certain percentage of students responds.’ However, he echoed a warning made more clearly by Ehrmann (2004) that thoughtful participation is best achieved by ensuring the survey is worth students’ time, and that using extrinsic motivators may bias the sample to include more responses from those who need that form of encouragement.
- (6) *Help students understand how to give constructive criticism.* When such help is given it seems likely that there will be at least two benefits. First, students will improve their ability to make points of value in ways that are unlikely to bruise academics’ egos. Second, providing this kind of help to students will help convince them that their responses will be used (point no. 4).
- (7) *Create surveys that seek constructive criticism.* If a survey does not demand constructive criticism—for example if all the items require a simple numerical rating—then there will probably be less engagement with the survey because the survey itself sends a message that conflicts with attempts made under no. 4.

Quinn (2002) specified eight strategies that have been used by people who have achieved high response rates to online surveys. Some of these overlapped with those already detailed above, but the following five did not:

- (1) *Extend the duration of a survey’s availability.* The longer it is there the higher the chance students will respond.
- (2) *Involve students in the choice of optional questions.* Aside from making the survey intrinsically more interesting to students, this also addresses Zúñiga’s #4.
- (3) *Assure students of the anonymity of their responses.* Dommeyer, Baum & Hanna (2002) indicated that this was a concern for students, so anonymity seems likely to boost responses if it is managed effectively.
- (4) *Familiarize students with online environments by using online teaching aids/methods.* Related to this point, Richardson (2005) gave the following advice:

It would be sensible to administer feedback surveys by the same mode as that used for delivering the curriculum (classroom administration for face-to-face teaching, postal surveys for correspondence courses and electronic surveys for online courses). (406)

In the context of online surveying, it seems reasonable that the more familiar students are with the medium to be used for the survey, the more likely they will use it. Consistency of mode is likely to help achieve this outcome.

- (5) *Keep questionnaires brief.* The proposition here is that the less time it takes for a student to complete a survey, the more likely it is they will do so.

From the evidence available (e.g. Ballantyne 2005) it seems reasonable to suggest that the effect of these measures will be additive: those who use more of these approaches will achieve higher

response rates. Clearly, the literature and practice reviewed in the first section of this paper show that there is a long way to go before online survey response rates will match those of on-paper. There is an argument that can be made here. The two primary purposes of teaching and course evaluation surveys are for monitoring quality and for improving quality. Hence the actions of academics that relate to Zúñiga's fourth point, '*Persuade respondents that their responses will be used*', are the most critical—yet also the most difficult—to impact on.

In summary, there are many methods for boosting response rates to online surveys. Many of these would apply equally well to boosting response rates to any kind of survey. At present, few of the methods advocated above are used for on-paper surveys, yet on-paper surveys already achieve relatively high response rates—perhaps because they are administered to a captive audience, often with some dedicated class time sacrificed for the purpose. If classes were conducted in computer laboratories, online surveying done in class could possibly reap similar rewards. This suggestion may therefore be added to the lists offered by Zúñiga (2004) and Quinn (2002). Conversely, if some of the measures above were used with on-paper surveys, their response rates might be even higher than they already are.

### **What is an adequate response rate?**

It might be strictly more correct at this point to be asking what an adequate sample size is. However, in the context of teaching and course evaluation surveys, sampling is not likely to be in the minds of academics. It is much more likely that they will ask a question about response rates. Furthermore, if a determination is made regarding sample size, the size of the population being sampled needs to be known first and so the corresponding response rate can be readily calculated from these two figures.

Whether or not a response rate is adequate depends (in part) on the use that is being made of the data. If the data gathered from a teaching evaluation survey were to be used only to bring about improvements by that teacher, and there is even one response that provides information which can be used in this way, the survey's purpose has, at least in part, been served and the response rate is technically irrelevant. If such a single useful response were just one from (say) a hundred or more possible respondents, that is of no consequence—unless that response is entirely at odds with what the majority of other students would have said. A more likely outcome would be that a single response would be regarded as completely inadequate in the context of a summative appraisal of the performance of the teacher. Generally, course and teaching evaluation data are used for both of these purposes, and increasingly the latter (Ballantyne 2003).

Accepting that course and teaching evaluations are rarely conducted for solely formative purposes, there is certain to be widespread concern about the adequacy of the responses to these surveys. In part, this will translate into a concern about response rates. It should be noted however, that this concern occurs without sufficient awareness of the importance of sample size and population size.

Richardson (2005) cited Babbie (1973, 165) and Kidder (1981, 150–151) when stating that 50% is regarded as an acceptable response rate in social research postal surveys. Baruch (1999) researched the response rates reported by 141 published studies and 175 surveys in five top management journals published in 1975, 1985 and 1995. He found that the overall average response rate was 55.6%. Richardson (2005), however, indicated that the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee & Graduate Careers Council of Australia (2001) regarded 'an overall institutional response rate for the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) of at least 70% [to be] both desirable and achievable' (4). But, in concluding comments, he stated: 'Response rates of 60% or more are both desirable and achievable for students who have satisfactorily



completed their course units of programmes.’ (p.409.), despite having noted earlier that this rate ‘clearly leaves ample opportunity for sampling bias to affect the results’ (406).

Assertions regarding the adequacy or otherwise of a particular percentage response rate appear to be made without reference to any theoretical justification—or to the total number of potential respondents. Behind the assertions appears to be a balance between rational and political considerations of acceptability. It would be better if there was a theoretically justified, systematic way to calculate the response rate required.

### Calculating required response rates

When academics survey their students to gather opinions on their teaching, or the quality of courses, they may either ask every student enrolled in those courses to respond, or may select only a smaller sub-set of students. If every student is surveyed, the purpose is to establish the views of the entire group of students. In this instance the population is every student enrolled on the course.

When academics elect to survey a sub-set of the enrolled students, there is one of two purposes. They might only be interested in the opinions of that particular sub-set of students because they possess some characteristic that is of particular interest. For instance, the population could consist of only the mature-age students who are enrolled in the course. In these circumstances it follows that the academics have neither the interest nor the intent to deduce anything about other students, nor subsequently to take actions that in any way relate to those students or their views.

Alternatively, an academic might be interested in the views of all students enrolled on his/her course but simply finds it more practical to survey only one sub-set. In this case, the population remains all students enrolled on the course. The sub-set which is surveyed is a sample of that population. It is common that an academic may survey those students who attend a particular class on a particular day of the week and not other students who attend on other days. In these circumstances, the academic will seek to extrapolate findings from the sample to the population. Whether it is valid to do so is the issue.

In all three scenarios outlined above, it is unlikely that every student who is asked to respond to a survey will actually do so. As a result, there are a number of matters to consider before it is possible to determine whether it is valid to extrapolate findings derived from the students who did respond to either the sample from which they came or the population to which they belong.

In the first two scenarios, every student in the population is surveyed but not all respond. The respondents represent a non-random sample of the population. An appropriate question is whether the respondents differ systematically from the non-respondents, and if so, whether these differences would cause them to respond differently to the questions asked. If the answer to both questions is ‘yes’, the sample is biased and simple extrapolation of findings from the sample to the population is not valid.

It is reasonable to expect that any survey that samples a population (or that achieves only a sample by way of respondents) will incur some sampling error and possibly also some sample bias. The former is the extent to which any statistical measure applied to the sample (such as the mean) gives a result that deviates from the mean of the population as a result of random variation in the membership of the sample. The latter is where a statistical measure applied to the sample deviates from the population measure because of systematic bias in the membership of the sample. In principle, both can be reduced by increasing the sample size and/or response rate—however, neither of these steps *guarantees* a reduction in either error or bias (Dillman 2000).

There are different ways in which sample bias can be introduced. In the context of course and teaching evaluation surveys, sample bias might be introduced if the academic chooses to administer a survey in a daytime lecture in preference to an evening lecture. The evening lecture might consist of a higher proportion of people who are in full employment, study part time, and are

older. The views of these people may deviate systematically from the views expressed by those who attend the daytime lecture.

Sample bias can also be introduced as a product of the survey method that is chosen. Watt et al. (2002, 329) have reported that web users are demographically different from other users. Salmon et al. (2004) reported that variance in data from web surveys was less than for paper surveys. It is reasonable to suppose that an online survey will attract responses from students who are demographically different from students who would respond to a paper survey.

Third, sample bias can be introduced because of systematic differences between respondents and non-respondents. As noted by Richardson (2005, 406), research shows that ‘demographic characteristics of people responding to surveys are different from those who do not respond in terms of age and social class’ (Goyder 1987, Chapter 5). While that may not matter to most academics conducting evaluations of their teaching and courses, Goyder more importantly reported that ‘respondents differ from non-respondents in their attitudes and behaviour’ (Goyder 1987, Chapter 7) and other research has shown that ‘students who respond to surveys differ from those who do not respond in terms of their study behaviour and academic attainment ...’ (Astin 1970; Neilsen et al. 1978; Watkins & Hattie 1985, 406).

Richardson (2005) concluded: ‘It is therefore reasonable to assume that students who respond to feedback questionnaires will be *systematically* different from those who do not respond in their attitudes and experience of higher education’ (406, emphasis added) and furthermore, ‘it is not possible to *predict* attitudes or behaviours on the basis of known demographic characteristics’ (Goyder 1987, Chapter 7, emphasis added). This means it is impossible to use demographic data concerning students to construct a sampling frame that might seek to overcome sampling bias.

Thus, not only are the expressed views of respondents likely to be different from those of non-respondents but responses gathered using web surveys are likely to be different from those gathered using paper-based surveys.

In the face of evidence of this kind, are we still prepared to accept response rates of 50%–60%–70% as adequate? It seems reasonable to argue that despite our best efforts it will often be difficult and/or expensive to obtain response rates above 70%. Politically, it is discomfiting to accept low response rates because the proportion of non-respondents may be too high for us to be sure that those who responded are representative of the others who did not. The issue becomes ‘what are we prepared to accept?’. As such, there is some degree of arbitrariness about the decision.

But there is some theory to guide us in the domain of statisticians and mathematicians beginning with a seminal paper by Neyman (1934), which discusses ‘the method of stratified sampling’ compared with ‘the method of purposive selection’, followed in 1955 by a paper entitled ‘A unified theory of sampling from finite populations’ (Godambe 1955) and more recently a paper by Smith (1983), ‘On the validity of inferences from non-random sample’. A more accessible account of the salient points has been provided in Chapter 5 of Dillman (2000, 194–213).

First, there is a systematic way to calculate the sample size required for a specified level of confidence in the result, in relation to a population of a specified size, with a specified degree of sampling error, given a specified level of probability for a particular answer to be provided by a respondent (Dillman 2000, 206–207).

Specifically, and in relation to the context of teaching evaluation, under the following conditions it is possible to use a formula provided by Dillman (2000) to calculate how many respondents are required (and therefore also the required response rate).

The conditions are:

- The total number of students in the population that is being surveyed is known.
- All students in the population are surveyed. (Note: It is not actually necessary to survey all the students, but this assumption is necessary for the argument being made about *response*

rate. In practice, if the reader wants to calculate sample size instead, the requirement to survey all the students can be removed.)

- There is a known probability of any one student providing a certain answer to a question on a survey.
- The required/desired level of accuracy of result is known or set.
- There is a known or chosen level of confidence required/desired for the same result to be obtained from other samples of the same size from the same total group of students in the course.

In order to seek to present data representing the ‘best possible scenario’ (i.e. one that maximizes the probability of needing the lowest response rates) the formula supplied by Dillman (2000) was initially applied with liberal conditions set. These were: to set a 10% sampling error (higher than the normal 3%), to assume a simple yes/no question is to be answered equally by respondents in 50:50 ratio (the most conservative situation), and to accept an 80% confidence level (much lower than the normal 95% used by statisticians).

However, in practice it is known that students’ responses to questions on teaching and course evaluation surveys use the top ratings more frequently than the lower ones. Considering data gathered in one Australian university over an eight-year period with over 25,000 surveys using a 1 to 5 scale, actual percentages are 72% of students responding with a rating of 4 or 5, the remainder using a rating of 1, 2 or 3. Thus, the assumption of a 50:50 split on a ‘yes/no’ question can be altered to a (nominal) 70:30 split. Applying this more liberal condition yields lower required response rates, which are tabulated in Table 3 in the columns headed ‘Liberal conditions’.

Columns under the heading ‘Stringent conditions’ present the required responses and response rates when more stringent (and more common) conditions are set: specifically 3% sampling error, and 95% confidence level.

Starting with the data from the liberal conditions, the table shows that for class sizes below 20 the response rate required needs to be above 58%. This is greater than the maximum achieved by all but one of the universities cited earlier when using paper-based surveys (that maximum was only a little higher at 65%). In other words, the table suggests that even the relatively good response rates obtained to paper surveys of teaching and courses are only adequate when the class size is 20 or higher—and, even then, only when liberal conditions in relation to the acceptable sampling error and required confidence level are acceptable.

Similarly, considering the response rates achieved with online surveys, the table shows that the highest response rate reported earlier (47%) is only adequate when class sizes are above (approximately) 30—and again, even then, only when liberal conditions in relation to the acceptable sampling error and required confidence level are acceptable.

In other institutions, such as Griffith University for example, class size (at best) needs to exceed 100 before its existing response rate of 20% can be considered adequate. In other words, for this institution, unless the response rate can be boosted, online surveys should not be used on classes with less than 100 students.

When the more traditional and conservative conditions are set, the best reported response rate obtained for on-paper surveys (65%) is only adequate when the class size exceeds approximately 500 students. The best reported response rates for online surveys (47%) are only adequate for class sizes above 750 students. The 20% response rate achieved for online surveys by Griffith University would not be adequate even with class sizes of 2000 students.

Table 3 is, however, only a *guide* as it is based on the application of a formula derived from a theory that has random sampling as a basic requirement. With teaching and course evaluations *this requirement is not met*. If the total enrolment of a course is sampled, it is generally a convenience sample—selecting all students who show up to the Monday daytime lecture for example.

Table 3. Required response rates by class size.

Total no. of students on the course	'Liberal conditions'		'Stringent conditions'	
	Required no. of respondents	Response rate required (%)	Required no. of respondents	Response rate required (%)
	10% sampling error; 80% confidence level; 70:30 split responses 4 or 5 compared with 1, 2, 3		3% sampling error; 95% confidence level; 70:30 split responses 4 or 5 compared with 1, 2, 3	
10	7	75%	10	100%
20	12	58	19	97
30	14	48	29	96
40	16	40	38	95
50	17	35	47	93
60	18	31	55	92
70	19	28	64	91
80	20	25	72	90
90	21	23	80	88
100	21	21	87	87
150	23	15	123	82
200	23	12	155	77
250	24	10	183	73
300	24	8	209	70
500	25	5	289	58
750	25	3	358	48
1000	26	3	406	41
2000	26	1	509	25

If all students enrolled are surveyed, or if a random selection of these are surveyed, random sampling is still not achieved in practice because those who respond are not a random selection. Indeed, those who respond are systematically different from those who do not, and that those who respond will be different depending on the method of evaluation selected (Astin 1970; Neilsen et al. 1978; Watkins & Hattie 1985; Goyder 1987; Watt et al. 2002).

## Discussion

What are the consequences of ignoring these facts? If the sample size is too small, results obtained will not be representative of the whole group of students. That is, the results will suffer from both sample error and sample bias. This means that the results obtained (from a sample) are not likely to be an indication of what the group as a whole (the population) would have said. Given that the respondents may be systematically different from non-respondents it is possible that the feedback provided could influence an academic to respond in ways that are counter to what they would do if they had feedback from all students. Similarly, if the data are used summatively to judge a teacher's performance, it may lead a person to make an erroneous judgement. Although academics (like the rest of us) have to make judgements all the time in the absence of useful information, it would be helpful if the parameters affecting the feedback were more transparently obvious. It would also be helpful if the information available was not itself misleading—as may be the case.

For example, let us consider a hypothetical scenario. If an online survey is used, the respondents are more likely to be students who are familiar with and able to use this medium. As such, these students may also comment more favourably regarding online teaching matters than the other students would. Hypothetically, these students may also constitute a minority. The result will be a survey with a low overall response rate, made up of students who are mostly familiar with, able to use and favourably disposed toward online teaching and learning provisions of the course. If this happens, and these are the only data considered, the academic concerned could form a false view that she/he should do more to boost the use of online teaching approaches.

It should be noted that the problem here is not simply that the responses to the survey have come from a minority of students, but that the survey results suffer from systematic bias. This means that these data may also misrepresent and misinform summative judgements regarding the performance of the teacher. Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine the direction of that bias. Although (in this hypothetical case) students responding to online surveys may be more positively disposed towards online teaching approaches, this does not mean that they will also be more positively disposed towards the teacher's teaching.

The hypothetical scenario above serves to illustrate another problem too: imagine an online survey of all students yields a 30% response and an on-paper survey of the same students yields a 60% response. The temptation would be to regard the results of the latter as more valid and more worthy of consideration. However, as already described above, it may be that the online survey attracted responses from those who predominantly make use of online teaching and learning resources, while the respondents to the paper survey may contain few of these people. Effectively the two surveys have sampled two different sub-groups of students with systematically different views which may (or may not) be reflected in the nature of their answers to survey questions (depending on the questions). *Neither* survey may be a valid reflection of the whole group but each one may be a valid reflection of each sub-group.

In practice, it is likely that only one of these two surveys would be conducted—the academic will not have both sets of data for comparison. The academic's responses to improve his/her teaching and/or his/her course might therefore be erroneous. Similarly, the data for either survey may be misleading if used for summative purposes. This is not a problem resulting from low response rate per se but, rather, a problem associated with the potential for systematic sample bias in respect of the respondents to any one survey type—or, indeed, any survey.

This last point takes us into territory that is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that the design of a survey, not only the mode of administration, may also affect who responds to it and what they say. Thus, when interpreting survey results, it is important to think about what was asked, how it was asked and how these variables may have resulted in bias in respect of who responded, what they said *and* how these responses may have differed if the survey itself, the mode of administration and the resultant pool of respondents had been different. The implication is that data derived from surveys are likely to be somewhat more easily and validly used if the surveys themselves are appropriately designed and used for particular targeted purposes. Given that doing this is difficult, even in the best of worlds, this observation underscores the need to evaluate courses and teachers using multiple methods, and to carefully consider the differences between the pictures that emerge from each in order to triangulate a more accurate position.

It follows from all this discussion that, although Table 3 gives us a guide for response rates which could (in a theoretically ideal world) be considered adequate, the reality is that even if the response rates suggested are achieved, great care is needed to be sure that results for a survey are representative of the whole group of students enrolled. Although this is known, current practice frequently ignores this need for caution. Generic course and teaching surveys are often used to evaluate situations they were not designed for, and response rates which are below those

advocated by Table 3 are generally accepted. Despite this a high weight is simultaneously placed on student evaluation results.

### Conclusion

This article has confirmed earlier research (Cook et al. 2000) which showed that response rates to online surveys of teaching and courses are nearly always very much lower than those obtained when using on-paper surveys. While a wide range of methods exists for boosting response rates, institutions do not make full use of these. The methods that are used are more likely to be applied to boosting response rates to online surveys than on-paper surveys. This is despite the fact that this article has shown that in many cases the response rates obtained for course and teaching evaluation surveys are not adequate regardless of the method of surveying used.

Given the anonymity of responses and the impossibility of using demographic data to predict attitudinal variables in students (and therefore there being no viable way to systematically target surveys at a minimal sample of students that would be representative of the whole group), appropriate paths of action that remain are to:

- (1) use multiple methods to boost survey response rates as high as possible (regardless of whether on-paper or online surveys are used—but *especially* when online surveys are used);
- (2) consider the probable effect that use of a particular survey design and method might have on the make-up of the respondents and take this into account when interpreting the feedback obtained;
- (3) use multiple methods of evaluation to elucidate findings—so as to construct a better informed understanding of what the true picture is.

Without these actions being taken, relying heavily on student evaluations of courses and teaching is likely to be, at best, inadequate, at worst, misleading.

### Notes on contributor

Duncan Nulty is senior lecturer in the Griffith Institute for Higher Education at Griffith University, Queensland Australia. He has more than a decade of experience in teaching, course and programme evaluation obtained in several large universities. He has also conducted many educational evaluation consultancies in Australia and overseas.

### References

- Astin, A.W. 1970. The methodology of research on college impact, part two. *Sociology of Education* 43: 437–450.
- Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee & Graduate Careers Council of Australia. 2001. Code of practice on the public disclosure of data from the Graduate Careers Council of Australia's Graduate Destination Survey, Course Experience Questionnaire and Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire, available online at: [http://www.avcc.edu.au/documents/policies\\_programs/graduates/2003/COP\\_2001.pdf](http://www.avcc.edu.au/documents/policies_programs/graduates/2003/COP_2001.pdf) (accessed 7 December 2006).
- Babbie, E.R. 1973. *Survey research methods*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Ballantyne, C. 2003. Measuring quality units: considerations in choosing mandatory questions. Paper presented at the *Evaluations and Assessment Conference: A Commitment to Quality*, University of South Australia, Adelaide, 24–25 November.
- . 2005. Moving student evaluation of teaching online: reporting pilot outcomes and issues with a focus on how to increase student response rate. Paper presented at the 2005 *Australasian Evaluations Forum: University Learning and Reaching: Evaluating and Enhancing the Experience*, UNSW, Sydney, 28–29 November.

- Baruch, Y. 1999. Response rates in academic studies: a comparative analysis. *Human Relations* 52: 421–434.
- Cook, C., F. Heath, and R.L. Thompson. 2000. A meta-analysis of response rates in web or internet-based surveys. *Educational and Psychological Measurement* 60, no. 6: 821–836.
- Dillman, D.A. 2000. *Mail and internet surveys: the tailored design method*. Brisbane: Wiley.
- Dommeier, C.J., P. Baum, K. Chapman, and R.W. Hanna. 2002. Attitudes of business faculty towards two methods of collecting teaching evaluations: paper vs. online. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* 27, no. 5: 455–462.
- Dommeier, C.J., P. Baum, and R.W. Hanna. 2002. College students' attitudes toward methods of collecting teaching evaluation: in-class versus online. *Journal of Education for Business* 78, no. 2: 11–15.
- Dommeier, C.J., P. Baum, R.W. Hanna, and K.S. Chapman. 2004. Gathering faculty teaching evaluations by in-class and online surveys: their effects on response rates and evaluations. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 29, no. 5: 611–623.
- Ehrmann, S. 2004. Increasing Survey Response Rates by 'Closing the Loop' from Survey Back to Respondent, available online at: <http://www.tltgroup.org/resources/Flashlight/Participation.html> (accessed 15 March 2006).
- Godambe, V.P. 1955. A unified theory of sampling from finite populations. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 17, no. 2: 269–278.
- Goyder, J. 1987. *The silent majority: non-respondents on sample surveys*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hastie, M., and A. Palmer. 1997. The development of online evaluation instruments to compliment web-based educational resources. Paper presented at the *Third Australian World Wide Web Conference*, Lismore, New South Wales.
- Kidder, L.H. 1981. *Research methods in social relations*. New York, Holt: Rinehart & Winston.
- Kittleson, M. 1995. Determining effective follow-up of e-mail surveys. *American Journal of Health Behavior* 21, no. 3: 193–196.
- McCormack, C. 2003. Reconceptualising student evaluation of teaching: an ethical framework for changing times. Paper presented at the *Evaluations and Assessment Conference*, Adelaide, 24–25 November.
- Nair, C.S., C. Wayland, and S. Soediro. 2005. Evaluating the student experience: a leap into the future. Paper presented at the *2005 Australasian Evaluations Forum: University Learning and Teaching: Evaluating and Enhancing the Experience*, UNSW, Sydney, 28–29 November.
- Neilsen, H.D., R.H. Moos, and E.A. Lee, 1978. Response bias in follow-up studies of college students. *Research in Higher Education* 9: 97–113.
- Neyman, J. 1934. On the two different aspects of the representative method: the method of stratified sampling and the method of purposive selection. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 97, no. 4: 558–625.
- Nulty, D.D. 1992. Students' opinions on students' opinions. In *Research and development in higher education: academia under pressure: theory and practice for the 21st century*, ed M.S. Parer Jamieson, ACT, Australia: Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia Vol. 15, 498–502.
- Ogier, J. 2005. The response rates for online surveys—a hit and miss affair. Paper presented at the *2005 Australasian Evaluations Forum: University Learning and Teaching: Evaluating and Enhancing the Experience*, UNSW, Sydney, 28–29 November.
- Pearson Assessments 2006. Survey Tracker Plus, available online at: <http://www.pearsonncs.com/surveytracker/index.htm> (accessed 3 May 2006).
- Quinn, D. 2002. Improving online response rates, available online at: <http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/sei/website/Online-resprates.asp> (accessed 15 March 2006).
- Richardson, J.T.E. 2005. Instruments for obtaining student feedback: a review of the literature. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 30, no. 4: 387–415.
- Salmon, P., Deasy, T., and B. Garrigan. 2004. What escapes the Net? A statistical comparison of responses from paper and web surveys. Paper presented at the *2004 Evaluation Forum: Communicating Evaluation Outcomes: Issues and Approaches*, Melbourne, Australia, 24–25 November.
- Seal, K.C., and Z.H. Przasnyski. 2001. Using the world wide web for teaching improvement. *Computers and Education* 36: 33–40.
- Smith, T.M.F. 1983. On the validity of inferences from non-random sample. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 146, no. 4: 394–403.
- Watkins, D., and J. Hattie. 1985. A longitudinal study of the approaches to learning of Australian tertiary students. *Human Learning* 4: 127–141.

- Watt, S., C. Simpson, C. McKillop, and V. Nunn. 2002. Electronic course surveys: does automating feedback and reporting give better results? *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 27, no. 4: 325–337.
- Zúñiga, R.E. 2004, March. Increasing response rates for online surveys—a report from the Flashlight Program’s BeTA Project, available online at: <http://www.tltgroup.org/resources/F-LIGHT/2004/03-04.html#BeTA> (accessed 15 March 2006).



Copyright of *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* is the property of Routledge and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.

