

A dozen dogs infected with flu that spread at Florida shows

May 31 2017, by Tamara Lush

Health officials have now confirmed a dozen cases of H3N2 canine influenza in Florida, where they say the flu was spreading among animals at two dog shows.

Rossana Passaniti of the University of Florida said Wednesday that the dogs testing positive for the flu were either at a Perry, Georgia dog show from May 19-21 or the Deland, Florida dog show the following weekend—or were exposed to dogs that had been at those shows.

She said there have been no dog deaths at UF veterinary hospitals.

There is no evidence that the virus infects people, and all the dogs being treated are in stable condition, according to a news release from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The mortality rate for dog flu is low and most dogs recover at home without any complications.

A news release from the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine in Gainesville said common symptoms of dog flu include sneezing, nasal discharge and frequent coughing. Symptoms can last for two weeks and be contagious for longer.

"Veterinarians in central and north Florida are treating many dogs that are suspected to have dog flu," the release said, adding that all of the dogs under treatment are in stable condition.

Vaccines do exist for dog flu, and a 21-day quarantine is recommended for dogs with H3N2 strain.

One Deland veterinary clinic wrote on its Facebook page on May 25 that if any clients were at the shows to avoid dog parks, shows or "areas where your dog would have nose to nose contact with other dogs" for the next 4 weeks. FloridaWild Veterinary Hospital warned clients with dogs exhibiting symptoms to call ahead so that staff can evaluate the animals in their owners' cars, to avoid spreading the contagion.

"More severe cases will be referred to the University of Florida for hospitalization and isolation," the clinic wrote.

It was first detected in South Korea in 2007 before making its way to the United States in 2015. H3N2 made headlines that year after an estimated 1,000 dogs in Chicago contracted the virus.

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