



Government of Yukon

Government of Yukon » March 2009 » News Release #09-045

Newsroom

Latest news releases

News by theme

- News by department
- Community Services
- Economic Development
- Education
- Energy, Mines and Resources
- Environment
- Executive Council Office
- Finance
- French Language Services Directorate
- Health and Social Services
- Highways and Public Works
- Justice
- Public Service Commission
- Tourism and Culture
- Women's Directorate

- News by corporations
- Yukon Development Corporation
- Yukon Energy Corporation
- Yukon Housing Corporation
- Yukon Liquor Corporation
- Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board

- Joint news releases
- Premier's News

News by date

- 2017 news releases
- January
- February
- March
- April
- May
- June
- July
- August
- September
- October
- November
- December

News archive



NEWS *release*

FOR RELEASE #09-045
March 3, 2009

Yukon Government to Establish Animal Health Program

WHITEHORSE – The Yukon government is pleased to establish an Animal Health program that will assist with emerging animal health issues, Environment Minister Elaine Taylor and Energy, Mines and Resources Minister Brad Cathers announced today.

"The new animal health program will help us keep our wild and domestic animal populations healthy and viable, which in turn will benefit all Yukoners," Taylor said.

Subject to legislative approval, the \$320,000 program will establish a Chief Veterinary Officer for the territory, along with technical support staff. These full-time animal health professionals will:

- provide program oversight, advice and veterinary services to the government's various animal health and animal protection initiatives,
- improve animal health surveillance, building links between animal and human health issues, and
- assist with the development of policies, regulations and legislation regarding animal health and animal protection.

"The animal health program will help ensure the quality and safety of animal food sources - whether domestic or wild," Cathers said. "It complements the government's ongoing support for the agriculture sector and improves our ability to support the production of Yukon-grown food."

Enhanced surveillance of and a co-ordinated response to animal health issues will significantly minimize risks posed to public health as well as to our wildlife populations due to changes in our climate.

-30-

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