

PRESS RELEASE

February 12, 2009

**FROM: DENESE R. STALLINGS, HEALTH DIRECTOR
CLEVELAND COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

On February 10, 2009, Cleveland County Animal Control received a complaint at 221 Falls St, Lawndale, North Carolina, in reference to a skunk on the property displaying abnormal behavior. The Cleveland County Health Department was notified on February 12, 2009, that the **skunk** tested positive for rabies. This makes the first (**1st**) rabies case in Cleveland County in 2009.

Residents need to make sure their animals are under their direct control. Animals that are allowed to run loose are at risk of coming into contact with a rabid animal. If your animal is exposed to a rabid animal and not vaccinated, then your animal will have to be euthanized or quarantined for six months.

During the next six months, anyone living in the vicinity of 221 Falls St, Lawndale, North Carolina should observe his or her animals for any unusual behavior. In addition, residents need to make sure that all cats, dogs and ferrets have a current rabies vaccination. North Carolina State Law requires all cats and dogs to have rabies shots at four months of age, and require a booster every three years.

Anyone that sees an animal demonstrating unusual behavior needs to call the Cleveland County Animal Control Department at 481-9884.