

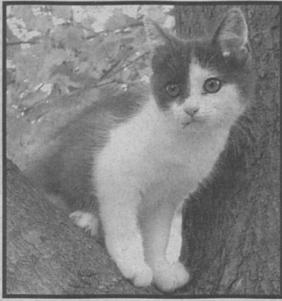
Cat Rescue Group active in Colorado County

The Cat Care Alliance (CCA) has been operating in Austin and Colorado Counties for over a year. Their mission is to improve the quality of life of feral and abandoned cats and to reduce overpopulation.

To date, CCA has trapped, neutered and vaccinated 57 cats, placed 24 in homes or barns, and currently oversees the care of approximately 36 feral cats.

There are no animal shelters in either Austin or Colorado Counties. The CCA plans to establish a cat shelter that will serve all communities in Austin and Colorado Counties.

The shelter will provide a place for managed care of cats and will also



One of the kittens rescued by Colorado County's Cat Care Alliance. Photo Courtesy of Cat Care Alliance

serve as an adoption center. The CCA is a 501c3 non-profit organization and operates solely on donations and fund raising.

The CCA is holding its second annual garage sale and cat adoption event on Saturday, November 6, from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at 236 Dewees in Columbus.

To view cats and kittens for adoption, to join the effort, or to learn more about CCA please visit their web site at www.catcarealliance.org. The CCA can be reached at 979-865-5559.

Tax-deductible donations may be sent to Cat Care Alliance, PO Box 70, Cat Spring, Texas, 78933.

The flu shot shortage...

And what that means to me

By Lois Quenneville, PA-C

Unless you are living in a cave all alone, you have heard that we have a flu shot shortage in the USA. Is this like a food or gasoline shortage? Is our civilization as we know it going to come to a screeching halt? Not very likely.

Influenza, also called "the flu" is caused by a virus. Influenza viruses infect the respiratory tract causing symptoms similar to the "common cold" — only a whole lot worse! The usual symptoms of the flu occur suddenly and are: fever (100 — 103 F), body aches, fatigue, headache, chills, often runny or congested nose, sore throat and cough. For most healthy people, they can feel really sick for about three to five days. However, if you have certain chronic medical problems, or if you are old (sorry folks, that is defined by the government as 65 years of age or older), or very young (two years and younger), you could have complications of the flu, such as developing respiratory distress, pneumonia and dehydration leading to a hospitalization. Influenza causes up to 20,000 deaths in the U.S. annually. Most people, however, just feel really bad and have to miss a couple of days of work or school.

That's not to say there aren't some killer influenza viruses out there. In 1918, the "Spanish Flu" killed 20 million people world wide (more than were killed during the First World War). In 1957, the "Asian Flu" killed one million world wide. The "Hong Kong Flu" appeared in 1968, killing 700,000 people. You may notice that the death toll was lower with each successive pandemic. This may be due to better modern public health practices and advances in medical therapies, might be because the more recent viral strains were not as "potent".

There are a couple of kinds of influenza viruses that infect humans (most influenza viruses infect birds only). These viruses are masters of disguise. They constantly change how they look, and by doing so, they slip by our bodies' immune system. That is why the flu vaccination you got last year is probably not going to help you this year.

So that brings us back to the flu shot that you might not be able to get this year. The Federal government is recommending that only the following people get vaccinated:

- People 65 years of age and older
- Children ages six months to 23 months (there is no shortage of vaccines for children)
- Adults and children two years of age and older with chronic lung or heart disorders including heart disease and asthma
- Pregnant women
- Adults and children two years of age and older with chronic metabolic diseases (including diabetes), kidney

diseases, blood disorders (such as sickle cell anemia, or weakened immune systems, including persons with HIV/AIDS)

• Children and teenagers, six months to 18 years of age, who take aspirin daily.

• Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities

• Household members and out-of-town caregivers of infants under the age of six months (children under the age of 6 months cannot be vaccinated)

• Healthcare workers who provide direct, hands-on care to patients

If you fall into any of the above categories, contact the Texas Department of Health and ask your regular vaccine provider about other options. For instance, there is a nasal-spray flu vaccine and it is an option for healthy, not pregnant, individuals ages 5 to 49 years, who are in contact with infants under six months of age or who are healthcare workers providing direct patient care. We are not sure at this time when and if any more flu shots will be available during this flu season. The government is working with the only company currently producing the flu vaccine to ensure that the people who really need it, get it. So until this all gets straightened out, here are some tips to avoid the flu...

• Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

• Cover your nose and mouth with

a tissue when you cough or sneeze — and dispose of the tissue afterward.

• If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve.

• Wash your hands after you cough or sneeze — with soap and warm water, or an alcohol-based hand cleaner.

• If you get the flu, stay home from work or school. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

And what to do if you're not that lucky, and come down with the flu...

• Stay at home and rest, especially while you have a fever.

• Stop smoking and avoid second-hand smoke, which can make the symptoms worse.

• Drink plenty of fluids like water, fruit juices and clear soups. Fever plus poor appetite lead to dehydration.

• Don't drink alcohol.

• If you can get to the doctor within 48 hours of the onset of your symptoms, there are some antiviral medications that can help alleviate the symptoms and maybe make it go away a little faster. We don't have any medications that kill a virus so antibiotics are not going to do you didly-squat.

• If someone in your family or a close contact comes down with the flu, contact your doctor. He/she may be able to prescribe the antiviral medication to you as a prophylactic, to keep you from getting the flu from them.

For those of you who voluntarily waived your right to the flu shot so that a high-risk person could get vaccinated, we salute you!

Little competes in Kentucky

Jess Little, of Rice Consolidated FFA Chapter, in Texas competed in the Diversified Crop Production — Placement Proficiency award program at the 77th National FFA Convention, Oct. 27-30 in Louisville, Kentucky.

Proficiency awards recognize FFA members who excelled as agricultural entrepreneurs, employees or volunteers while they gained hands-on career experience. Diversified Crop Production — Placement is one of 49 FFA proficiency award categories offered at local, state and national levels. Diversified Crop Production — Placement proficiency award program is sponsored by American Farm Bureau Insurance Services Inc.; National Crop Insurance Services; Rain and Hail LLC and National FFA Foundation, as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

Little got his start in the agricultural industry showing steers at the county fair. He soon acquired a job on an operation that raises corn, cotton, soybean, hay and pecans.

Little is a graduate of Rice Consolidated High School in Texas and plans to attend Texas A&M University. He is a member of the Rice Consolidated FFA Chapter and his advisors are Monte Williams, Kenneth Benson and Christie Michalchik. He



On Oct. 28 Jess Little was named the National winner of the Proficiency Award Area of Diversified Crop Production — Placement at the 2004 National FFA Convention in Louisville, Kentucky. Pictured from left to right are Eric Horne, American Farm Bureau Insurance Services Inc.; Pam Jumper, National FFA Alumni Association representing National Crop Insurance Services and National FFA Foundation; and Billy Moore, Marketing Manager Southern Division, rain & Hail LLC; and Little.

Photo courtesy of Deborah Little

is the son of David and Deborah Little.

FFA is a national organization of 464,267 student members preparing for leadership careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture with 7,194 local chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

FFA strives to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

Visit www.ffa.org for more information.

Legionnaires to decorate graves

American Legion Post #108 attempts to decorate every veteran's grave with an American Flag twice a year. Sometimes the post members are unaware of a recently deceased veteran, and sometimes Legionnaires simply fail to decorate a particular grave through carelessness.

Post Adjutant Victor Scott has devised a way for family members to place a flag on a grave that is missed. A supply of flags will be placed in the receptacle shown in the photograph.

When a family member notices a grave has been missed, he may place a flag and then notify the post officials. No longer will the grave go undecorated for any lengthy period.

Receptacles with extra flags will be placed in a prominent spot in all

(See Legionnaires, Page 7)



Happy 18th Birthday

Nov. 5

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Treatment For This Diabetes Complication

People with diabetes which is not well controlled over time often develop a complication called *diabetic neuropathy*. Nerve damage due to diabetic neuropathy can manifest itself several different ways. If, for example, a single nerve malfunctions, a single body limb could become weak. However if the nerve deficit affects the hands, feet, or a leg, an abnormal tingling or burning pain accompanied by weakness can develop. Diabetic neuropathy is the most common complication of diabetes, affecting 62% of Americans with this condition.

Treatment for diabetic neuropathy varies with the individual. In general, however, the better a person's blood sugar is controlled with oral drugs and/or insulin, the less neuropathy the person will usually experience. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like *ibuprofen* are often used for mild neuropathic pain, and antidepressants such as *amitriptyline* or seizure medications including *gabapentin* (Neurontin) have been used for severe cases. *Duloxetine* (Cymbalta) is a new drug recently approved by the US Food and Drug Administration for managing pain associated with diabetic neuropathy. In studies, people who took Cymbalta reported a 58% greater reduction in pain when compared to those who received a dummy pill.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Nov. 6

"Ponce"

From Your Family

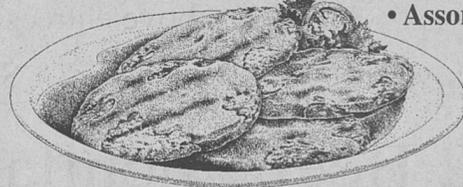
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