



Animal Health Alert

March 2020

**UTAH
DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE
AND FOOD
ANIMAL HEALTH
PROGRAM**

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On March 24, the Utah Department of Health issued a State Public Health Order that requires that all licensed health-care professionals and facilities, including veterinarians and veterinary clinics, postpone all elective surgeries and procedures, effective March 25 through April 25, 2020. The State Veterinarian's office, in consultation with the Utah Veterinary Medical Association, has provided guidance for veterinarians and veterinary clinics in complying with this order, while still protecting animal and public health.

Non-elective procedures are those that treat or prevent anything that imminently affects the health or life of the animal or poses an imminent threat to agriculture or the food supply. The Department of Health order asks that all elective procedures that use any type of non-reusable PPE, such as masks, gowns, gloves, and caps, be rescheduled to free up these supplies for health care workers treating COVID-19 patients.

The Department of Health has not asked veterinarians to stop all procedures, just the elective ones that use these supplies. I would like the public to know that veterinarians will still be able to provide for their animals' critical needs, and I ask your patience as elective procedures are rescheduled. In addition, any veterinary procedures should only be done while adhering to other requests by Governor Herbert and state and local health departments for social distancing and biosecurity.

In addition, my office is advocating for veterinary clinics and the Utah Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory to be considered essential businesses in the event that non-essential businesses are asked to close. The services provided by veterinarians and diagnostic laboratories are crucial in protecting not only animal health, but public health and the food supply.

As the effects of this pandemic on our healthcare system evolve, there may be more changes or restrictions to come. Thank you for your patience and understanding as veterinarians continue to do their part to contribute to the battle against COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Dean J Taylor, DVM
Utah State Veterinarian