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Canine Distemper Outbreak Suspends Adoptions at Ferret Association of Connecticut Shelter

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Hartford, CT - The Ferret Association of Connecticut (FACT) has temporarily ceased accepting ferrets at our Hartford shelter. We have received laboratory confirmation that an illness, initially diagnosed as an allergic reaction in a recent arrival was, in fact, caused by the canine distemper virus (CDV). CDV is highly dangerous to ferrets and most often fatal.

As a result, we want to remind all shelters, pounds and pet stores to be ever vigilant to ensure they are taking appropriate precautions to protect ferrets in their facility. Those precautions include isolating ferrets from dogs who may not be showing symptoms, but can still shed ("carry") the virus and infect ferrets through direct or indirect exposure. Additional information is attached. Please contact your veterinarian should you need verification that your facility protocols are appropriate for ferrets.

The FACT shelter may be closed to intakes for at least another 3 to 4 weeks; or longer, if necessary. We, and our veterinarians, need to be confident our facilities and the ferrets in the shelter are completely clear of the virus.

FACT has always encouraged people who need to find a new home for their ferret to take that responsibility themselves. We offer tips and suggestions to help them. However, there will still be situations where ferrets will need a shelter immediately; including those found outdoors or seized/surrendered to Animal Control, many of which are not properly equipped to safely house ferrets.

If your shelter can help us continue to serve the community during this period with a space to house surrenders, please contact us. We normally receive only about 5 to 15 ferrets per month and they can be housed singly or in small groups. We would also welcome the help of experienced ferret owners to house animals until we can safely accept them into the FACT shelter.

The medical expenses we have incurred are very high and will seriously impact our operating budget. We are seeking public and private charitable and in-kind donations to help us with the expense of dealing with this illness. FACT is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with a 20 year record of serving the ferrets and their owners in Connecticut and surrounding states. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

For more information, please visit <http://www.ferret-fact.org>.

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