

Highly unlikely for COVID-19 to transmit to humans from pets, livestock

After a tiger at the Bronx Zoo recently tested positive for COVID-19, some pet owners are wondering if the respiratory disease can be transmitted from cats and dogs. While there have been nearly 2 million people worldwide infected with COVID-19, only two dogs, two cats and one tiger have tested positive for the novel coronavirus as of early April. “There’s an awful lot that we are still learning about the virus,” said Leah Cohn, professor of small animal internal medicine at the MU College of Veterinary Medicine. “We have not seen a rise in respiratory diseases or infections in dogs and cats, which is an encouraging sign that the virus is not making our pets sick.” While there have been few instances of humans transmitting the virus to animals, no evidence to date suggests domestic animals can infect humans. Out of an abundance of caution, Cohn recommends pet owners who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 avoid snuggling closely with their pets and to call a veterinarian if their pet experiences severe coughing, lethargy or diarrhea. “Research has shown that companion animals offer us tremendous benefits emotionally, mentally and even physically,” Cohn said. “The likelihood of transmitting

the coronavirus to your pet is very low, but washing your hands before and after playing with your pet is still a good idea.” In addition to pets, livestock also seem highly unlikely to be able to transmit the novel coronavirus. “As of now, there is no evidence to support the idea that livestock can become infected or are a source for transmitting the virus,” said John Middleton, professor of large animal internal medicine at the College of Veterinary Medicine. “People don’t typically interact with livestock as closely or intimately as with companion animals, so the risk of transmission is very low.” Middleton added that veterinarians are collaborating with professionals in human medicine to learn more about COVID-19 and develop antibody testing by studying people who have recovered from the disease. “If we can learn how many people have developed antibodies and are therefore no longer at risk for spreading the virus to others, that will help us put strategies in place to prevent further spread,” Middleton said. “But as individuals we can all do our part to help slow the spread by taking simple steps like hand washing, distancing ourselves at least six feet from others and avoiding touching our eyes, nose and mouth.”

4-H Achievers

We now have a Facebook page to keep us informed on happenings for our club. Wren Dockary has completed getting The Achievers Facebook page up and running. Thank You Wren. Since we have missed several of our scheduled events this will be a great way to stay connected. Especially now during the Coronavirus. We can stay in our own homes, keep informed and mostly stay safe. If we already have your Email address it will automatically be connected. If we do not have an Email on file for you: Please send it to Debbie, so she can forward it to Wren. Thank You ! Please also use this site to post your 4-H pictures, who is in the picture(s), a short description of what you are doing and where you are. Continue to stay safe. Hope the worst is behind us.

Respectfully submitted by Mikayla, Ryan, and Justin Robertson, Achievers Reporters



This baby calf is wondering? if Spring will ever return. Burr!

Morale boosters for the empty-handed morel seekers

MDC says morels illusive for some, but spring woods are always interesting

KANSAS CITY, MO. – Late April is a peak season for morel mushrooms in western Missouri, to the delight of people who like to cook them and find them in the freshly greening outdoors. Where they appear, though, is a challenge for those new to seeking the sponge-like fungi. Or for those veterans who cannot find them. Morels appear and disappear suddenly and randomly. Mushroom hunting morale can suffer when the weather and woods seem perfect, but no morels are found.

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) recommends morel hunts as a fun outing for families. But keeping it fun for children (and restless grownups) increases the chances of finding morels, while it also helps connect them with other wonders nature offers. Here’s some morale booster tactics for families, but ones that can also be adapted to the solo mushroom hunter.

Plan the trip as a spring walk to see what is growing outdoors. Don’t make finding morels a make-or-break success point of the outing. Make them a bonus. But take along a collection sack just in case.

Pack snacks and drinking water. Take a break in scenic spots to enjoy snacks. Sometimes sitting still is when focus zeros in on morels, which have colors and shapes that let them seemingly hide in plain sight on a forest floor. A snack and time to explore nature can make the outing a success for children, regardless of morels.

Make wildflowers part of the search. The early spring wildflowers are a visual treat. Looking for them adds to the adventure. Take a small notebook or make a mental count on how many different types are seen. Some morel stalkers may want to identify wildflowers and talk about the eco-niches where they are found. But simply seeing and enjoying wildflowers works, too.

Use insect repellent, wear sturdy clothes and shoes or boots, know what poison ivy looks like and avoid when possible. A warm bath once home is a good way to celebrate the outing.

When morels are scarce, let children pick the path and inspect what they find. A hollow oak blown down by winter winds is a worthy find. Note ferns, point out wildlife.

During a rest break, take quiet time and listen for what sounds are in the woods, whisper what you hear among the birds or the wind in the trees. Maybe even a turkey will gobble.

Missouri’s spring turkey hunting season runs from April 20 to May 10. Hunting ends each day at 1 p.m. Avoid hunting morels in popular public hunting areas until after 1 p.m.

Where to look? Morels are found where you find them, a veteran conservation agent once said. They usually pop up on the ground in moist forest areas, open woodlands, along brushy stream ways, in wooded draws, or fence lines. But as the agent said, they also appear in odd places and don’t appear where they’re supposed to be, like around dead elms. Some people find morels in their backyard or in their neighborhood public park.

The number one secret to finding morels is to make looking for them part of a good walk, and then keep looking from now into early May.

One more thing, pay scant heed to your text messages that mention friends who have found 300 morels so far and haven’t even checked their honey hole yet. Or, the person who harvested a turkey gobbler and found that the bird fell in a big patch of morels, near the lake where they limit out on crappie before lunch. Sure, morels are fun to find and a good excuse to enjoy a tasty mushroom flavored with skillet-browned flour topped with salt and pepper.

However, experienced morel hunters know enjoying all that nature offers in the spring woods is the best part, and finding a few mushrooms or none is as normal as spring arriving after winter.

For more information on morels in Missouri, visit <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZnL>.

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