(June 14, 2011 Stillwater, OK) – Today, many people consider their pets important members of the family. As people venture outdoors to enjoy the summer weather, here are some easy health tips from Oklahoma State University's Center for Veterinary Health Sciences to keep in mind for your pets well being:

- Heat exhaustion is just as dangerous for animals as it is for humans. Do not leave an animal in a parked car. Dogs do not sweat like people do. They pant to cool themselves and when confined in an enclosure with poor ventilation, the dog will quickly suffer from heat stress. Even in the shade with the windows cracked, when the temperature outside is 85?F, the inside of a vehicle can quickly reach 120?F. If the dog cannot go inside with you, leave it at home when running errands.
- If you travel with your pet in the car, make sure the animal is properly restrained while the vehicle is moving. Pets need to keep their heads inside the vehicle and should not ride in the bed of a truck.
- For outdoor pets, make sure your pet has access to shade and a continuous supply of cool water in containers that cannot be tipped over. If possible, add ice cubes or small frozen containers of water to your pet's water bowl every morning.
- If you jog with your pet, keep in mind that over exertion in hot weather can easily cause overheating, especially in humid weather. Even if the dog is in excellent shape and jogs daily with you in cooler weather, in the summer a pet can easily overheat.
- Signs of overheating or heat stress may include elevated body temperature and heart rate, excessive panting, dark or bright red tongue and gums, staring and unresponsive, staggering, seizures, bloody diarrhea or vomiting, coma and even death.
- If heat exhaustion occurs, sponge the animal's neck and groin areas with cool water and call your veterinarian immediately.
- While clipping your dog may seem like a good way to help your pet stay cool, consult your veterinarian first. Closely clipping your dog's coat may cause its skin to sunburn as a human's skin would if exposed. The dog's natural coat protects its skin by design.

The Oklahoma State University Center for Veterinary Health Sciences is one of 28 veterinary colleges in the United States and is fully accredited by the Council on Education of the American Veterinary Medical Association. The center's Boren Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital is open to the public and provides routine and specialized care for small and large animals. It also offers 24-hour emergency care and is certified by the American Animal Hospital Association. For more information, visit

www.cvhs.okstate.edu
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