

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Three dogs whose owners are in Imperial were euthanized during the past two weeks, all exhibiting the same symptoms of possible poisoning.

Troy Worth, D.V.M., of Veterinary Services said Tuesday he suspects possible malicious poisonings may have occurred, but tests are being done at a diagnostic lab in Iowa to get more information.

The dogs affected were large breeds, he said, with histories of occasionally running loose in town. All were humanely euthanized at their owners' direction after symptoms worsened, he said.

In each case, the dogs returned home vomiting large amounts, and frequently, over a 12-hour period, Dr. Worth said. The dogs then became ataxic, or exhibiting lack of coordination and wobbling in their rear legs.

At that point, the veterinarians were contacted.

Dr. Worth noted samples from each dog were sent to Iowa State University's Diagnostic Lab, where they are testing for poison and insecticides.

His advice to dog owners is to keep their animals from running loose.

"That's risk No. 1. Unfortunately, they are getting into something," he said.

Some toxic agents are treatable, Dr. Worth added, but there are few of them.

All three dogs came from different Imperial neighborhoods, including the northeast, northwest and west of the courthouse in the center of town.

A fourth dog from the Benkelman area with similar symptoms was also euthanized recently, Dr. Worth said, but they don't believe it's related to the Imperial cases.