



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA Begins 2012 Oral Rabies Vaccine Efforts in Eastern United States

WASHINGTON, Aug. 13, 2012— To foster its goal of preventing the further spread of wildlife rabies, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service’s (APHIS) wildlife services (WS) program will begin its 2012 distribution of oral rabies vaccine baits in select areas along the East Coast. This effort seeks to prevent the spread of raccoon rabies.

With their cooperators, WS will begin distributing the oral rabies vaccination baits by aircraft and by hand beginning on or about Aug. 15. The baits will be distributed in the following select areas and time periods.

In Northeast to Mid-Atlantic States, between August 15 and mid-September:

- The Plattsburgh, NY project will cover parts of New York, Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont and distribute 580,500 baits by fixed-wing aircraft and 12,960 by hand;
- The Batavia, NY project will cover parts of New York and distribute 158,700 baits by fixed and rotary-wing aircraft and 16,920 by hand;
- The Allegheny, PA project will cover parts of Pennsylvania and distribute 314,270 baits by hand;
- The North Lima, OH project will cover parts of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia and distribute 643,500 baits by fixed and rotary-wing aircraft and 85,690 by hand;
- The Clarksburg, WV project will cover parts of West Virginia and Ohio and distribute 931,500 baits by fixed-wing aircraft and 21,960 by hand.

In southern states, between October 2 and mid-October:

- The Prattville, AL project will cover parts of Alabama and distribute 81,000 baits by rotary-wing aircraft;
- The Greeneville, TN project will cover parts of Tennessee, North Carolina and Virginia and distribute 715,500 baits by fixed-wing aircraft and 112,320 by hand;
- The Dalton, GA project will cover parts of Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee and distribute 603,000 baits by fixed-wing aircraft and 63,000 by hand.

In Massachusetts during October:

- The Cape Cod, MA project will cover parts of Massachusetts and distribute 24,240 baits by hand.

The National Rabies Management Program was established in recognition of the changing scope of rabies in which the primary human risk is now due to exposure from wildlife rather than domestic pets. The goal of the program is to prevent the further spread of wildlife rabies and eventually eliminate terrestrial rabies in the United States through an integrated program that includes vaccinating wildlife against the disease.

Oral rabies vaccination baits are coated with a fishmeal attractant and may be packaged in one-inch square cubes or two-inch plastic sachets. For photos of the vaccination baits, please visit www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/oral_rabies/photo_gallery.shtml.

The Raboral V-RG® vaccine has been shown to be safe in more than 60 different species of animals, including domestic dogs and cats. Humans and pets cannot get rabies from contact with the baits, but are asked to leave them undisturbed should they encounter them. Dogs that consume large numbers of baits may experience an upset stomach, but there are no long-term health risks. If contact with baits occurs, immediately rinse the contact area with warm water and soap.

Rabies is caused by a virus that infects the central nervous system in mammals. Signs suggestive of rabies include unusual, aggressive or calm and “friendly” behavior, an inability to eat or drink, balance problems, circling, seizures, coma and finally death. While rabies is fatal, human exposures can be successfully treated, if treatment is sought immediately following a bite.

Since 1995, WS has been working cooperatively with local, state and federal governments, universities and other partners to address this public health problem by distributing oral rabies vaccination baits in targeted areas. This cooperative program targets the raccoon variant in the eastern United States, and unique variants of rabies in coyotes and foxes in Texas.

For additional information concerning the raccoon oral rabies vaccine program, please visit www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/oral_rabies/index.shtml or contact WS toll free at 1-866-4-USDA-WS (1-866-487-3297).

With Agriculture Secretary Vilsack’s leadership, APHIS works tirelessly to create and sustain opportunities for America’s farmers, ranchers and producers. Each day, APHIS promotes U.S. agricultural health, regulates genetically engineered organisms, administers the Animal Welfare Act, and carries out wildlife damage management activities, all to safeguard the nation’s \$157 billion agriculture, fishing and forestry industries. In the event that a pest or disease of concern is detected, APHIS implements emergency protocols and partners with affected states and other countries to quickly manage or eradicate the outbreak. To promote the health of U.S. agriculture in the international trade arena, APHIS develops and advances science-based standards with trading partners to ensure America’s agricultural exports, valued at more than \$137 billion annually, are protected from unjustified restrictions.

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