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Field Evaluation Continues in Oral Rabies Vaccine for Raccoons, Other Wildlife

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WASHINGTON, July 25, 2022—The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today announced it will continue field evaluation of the oral rabies vaccine (ORV) bait ONRAB in seven states. This year’s field evaluation is part of an ongoing project addressing operational questions related to bait density, distribution methods and effectiveness in raccoons, skunks, and other wildlife and is associated with a larger-scale rabies management effort in additional states.

APHIS’ Wildlife Services (WS) leads the cooperative National Rabies Management Program that works to prevent the spread of rabies in wildlife. The program currently uses another rabies vaccine, RABORAL V-RG®, to control the disease in raccoons, coyotes, and foxes. The ONRAB vaccine is being assessed to determine whether it can effectively manage rabies in raccoons and skunks.

Beginning in late July, WS and cooperators will distribute approximately 3.5 million ONRAB ORV baits in parts of Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio,

Pennsylvania, and West Virginia to test the immune effects in targeted wildlife. Additionally, a small-scale project will take place during October in Chattanooga, Tenn. to evaluate the effectiveness of using ONRAB relative to bait distribution methods. WS personnel will sample raccoons and skunks following bait distribution to determine vaccination rates.

Field evaluation of ONRAB during 2022 is a collaborative effort among APHIS, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the vaccine manufacturer (Artemis Technologies Inc., an indirect, wholly-owned subsidiary of Ceva Sante Animale S.A., Guelph, Ontario, Canada), and State departments of agriculture, health, and natural resources. Distribution of this ORV bait will span portions of:

- Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Clinton, Erie, Essex, Genesee, Jefferson, Lewis, Niagara, Oneida, Onondaga, Orleans, Oswego, St. Lawrence, and Wyoming counties in New York.
- Addison, Caledonia, Chittenden, Essex, Franklin, Orange, Orleans and Washington counties in Vermont.
- Coos and Grafton counties in New Hampshire.
- Ashtabula, Belmont, Carroll, Columbiana, Geauga, Harrison, Jefferson, Lake, Mahoning, Monroe, Portage, and Trumbull counties in Ohio.
- Allegheny, Beaver, Crawford, Erie, Greene, Lawrence, Mercer, Washington, and Westmoreland counties in Pennsylvania.
- Barbour, Brooke, Doddridge, Greenbrier, Fayette, Hancock, Harrison, Lewis, Marion, Marshall, McDowell, Mercer, Monongalia, Nicholas, Ohio, Pocahontas, Raleigh, Randolph, Summers, Taylor, Tyler, Upshur, Webster, Wetzel, and Wyoming counties in West Virginia.
- Bradley, Hamilton, and Marion counties in Tennessee.

The ONRAB bait is a blister pack filled with the vaccine and coated with a sweet attractant. When an animal bites into one of the baits it will release the vaccine into their mouth and, with an adequate dose, develop immunity to rabies. Humans and pets cannot get rabies from contact with the bait but are asked to leave the bait undisturbed if they encounter it. If contact with bait occurs, the contact area should be immediately rinsed with warm water and soap. Each bait carries a toll-free number that people can call if they have additional questions concerning a bait contact.

Rabies is a serious public health concern. While rabies is almost always fatal once symptoms appear, it also is 100% preventable. Human exposures can be successfully remedied if medical attention is sought immediately following exposure. Costs associated with rabies detection, prevention and control may exceed \$500 million annually in the United States. According to the CDC, about 90 percent of reported rabies cases in the U.S. are in wildlife-

For additional information concerning rabies or the ORV program, please visit <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/wildlifedamage/programs/nrmp> or contact WS toll free at 1-866-4-USDA-WS (1-866-487-3297). To view a photo of the ONRAB vaccine bait, please visit: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usdagov/7780297536/in/album-72157623983143606/>

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