

Animal Health Alert: Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHD) Update
12.16.2020

Dear colleagues,

In December 2020, Los Angeles County Veterinary Public Health collected a deceased jackrabbit that tested positive for Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease virus. The rabbit was found in Palmdale, near Technology Drive, west of highway 14. Previously, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) confirmed that the disease was detected in wild cottontail rabbits in the areas of Juniper Hills and Littlerock of Los Angeles County. Infected wild rabbits have also been found in Kern, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego counties (updated list<<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Laboratories/Wildlife-Investigations/Monitoring#55671861-rabbit-hemorrhagic-disease>>).

Additionally, on December 7, 2020, the California Department of Food and Agriculture posted an alert<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/Animal_Health/RHD.html> indicating that infected domestic rabbits have recently been found in Kern, Los Angeles, and Riverside counties. This is in addition to San Bernardino county, where they were found previously. Outside of California, RHDV2 has caused mortalities in both wild and domestic rabbits in Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah.

RHDV2 is a foreign animal disease and a calicivirus that is not related to coronaviruses. This disease is not a food safety concern and does not affect humans or domestic animals other than rabbits. RHDV2 is highly contagious and often lethal to both domestic and wild rabbit populations. Infected rabbits may exhibit no symptoms leading up to sudden death, or may suffer from fever, swelling, internal bleeding or liver necrosis.

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease is a reportable disease in Los Angeles County, California, and in the United States in general. To report a suspect case in Los Angeles County, even if it is not tested, complete the reporting form here<<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/docs/Forms/AnimalDiseaseReportForm.pdf>> and email to vet@ph.lacounty.gov or fax to 213-481-2375.

As of May 12, a quarantine<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/pdfs/RHDQuarantineNotice-RabbitsEnteringCaliforniaFromRHD-AffectedStates.pdf> has been placed on rabbits, hares and all associated products and equipment entering California from a state where RHDV2 has been diagnosed in the prior 12 months. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has posted a map of RHDV2 affected counties<<https://usda-aphis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=37791da88ef04cd08404a5794aaf0be3>>.

Currently no approved RHDV2 vaccines are available in the United States. However, California veterinarians may apply to order and import approved vaccinations through the United States

Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). Information on how to order the vaccine is available here<<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/RHDV.htm>>. The USDA has also created an FAQ<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/downloads/faq-rhd-vaccine.pdf> about RHDV2 vaccines.

All rabbit owners and veterinarians are advised to learn about RHD and how to protect rabbits. For more information about biosecurity and disinfection recommendations:

Keeping Your Rabbit Safe From Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease - Biosecurity Recommendations<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/pdfs/CDFAProtectYourRabbitsRHD.pdf> - CDFA How To Keep Your Clinic and Patients Safe from Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/pdfs/RHDBiosecurityGuidanceforVeterinaryClinicsFactsheet.pdf> - CDFA General Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of RHDV Contaminated Premises<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/downloads/rhdv-cleaning-guidance.pdf> - USDA

For more information on RHD and the current outbreak of RHDV2:

Rabbit Hemorrhagic

Disease<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/pdfs/RabbitHemorrhagicDisease.pdf> -

CDFA Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Frequently Asked

Questions<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/Animal_Health/pdfs/RabbitHemorrhagicDiseaseQA.pdf> - CDFA Quick Facts about Rabbit Hemorrhagic

Disease<<https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=179037&inline>> - CDFW Rabbit

Hemorrhagic Disease Detected in California<<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/RHDV.htm>> -

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Please call 213-288-7060 or email vet@ph.lacounty.gov<<mailto:vet@ph.lacounty.gov>> if you have questions about RHD.

Sincerely,

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