

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Raccoon-Rabies Vaccination Baiting Begins August 19

Operations May be Extended Due to Weather Conditions

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The Ohio Department of Health (ODH), in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services program and local health departments, will begin fall oral rabies vaccination (ORV) operations this month in 13 eastern Ohio counties. Weather permitting, actual baiting will tentatively begin Sunday, August 19, 2018 and will cover 4,473 square miles of the state’s northeastern and eastern border. Bait distribution should be completed by approximately Tuesday, August 28, 2018.

As in past years, the oral rabies vaccine RABORAL V-RG® will be distributed along with the new oral rabies vaccine under field evaluation, called ONRAB. Baits will be distributed by various methods in each county, including fixed-wing aircraft, helicopter and vehicles staffed by USDA. Residents in the areas to be baited should be aware of low-flying aircraft and should keep children and pets away from the baits. Dogs are attracted to the baits and will occasionally eat them. The baits are not harmful to pets. Please keep the following information in mind:

- Know what the baits look like.
 - The coated sachet, which will be distributed by aircraft (fixed wing and helicopter), is about the size of a ketchup packet. It is white and rolled in a brown fishmeal glaze.
 - The hard, brown fishmeal block, which will be distributed by vehicle in urban areas, is about 2 by 2 inches with the sachet inside the block.
 - The ONRAB blister pack, which will be distributed by fixed wing aircraft in rural areas and by helicopter and vehicle in urban and suburban areas, is 1 by 2 inches with a dark green and sweet smelling waxy coating.
- Instruct children to leave the baits alone.
- The baits are not harmful to pets. Once your area is baited, keep dogs and cats inside or on leashes for up to five days. Most baits disappear within 24 hours; however, it is important raccoons and other wildlife have every opportunity to eat them.
- Do not attempt to take baits away from your pet; you may be bitten.
- Anyone handling baits should wear gloves. If baits are found in areas frequented by pets or children, toss them into deeper cover. Damaged baits can be disposed of in the trash.
- If a person is exposed to the vaccine (liquid) within the bait, thoroughly wash any areas of the skin that came into contact with the vaccine with soap and water.
- If someone has been exposed to the vaccine or has questions about the baiting, call the ORV Information Line at 888.RABIES1 (722-4371) or your local health department.

Rabies is a viral disease that affects mammals, including people. It is almost always fatal. Oral rabies vaccine baiting operations are intended to immunize raccoons that are at greatest risk of being exposed

to raccoon rabies coming into the state. This will then create an “immune barrier” along the Ohio state line that can prevent the spread of raccoon rabies variant (RRV) into the rest of the state.

During 2017, six animals were confirmed to be infected with RRV virus in Ohio. These animals were found in Columbiana, Mahoning and Stark counties. So far in 2018, three raccoons from Mahoning, Trumbull and Tuscarawas counties have tested positive for RRV. [Details of rabies cases are available on the ODH website.](#)

The rabies virus is found in the saliva of infected animals, most often raccoons, skunks and bats, and is spread when saliva from an infected animal gets into a wound or mucous membrane (such as the eye or mouth). Animal bites are the most common route of exposure. Bats, raccoons and skunks pose the greatest risk of rabies in Ohio. To protect your family against this still-deadly disease:

- Avoid contact with wild animals and animals you do not know.
- Vaccinate your pets against rabies and keep them current on their shots.
- If bitten, call your doctor. If your pet has contact with a wild animal, call your veterinarian.
- Potential rabies exposures should also be reported to your local health department.

Ohio’s partners in the multistate baiting are Pennsylvania and West Virginia, in what is known as the North Lima, Ohio ORV project. The three-state effort will involve distribution of approximately 1.6 million baits and cover more than 6,600 square miles in portions of the three states by fixed wing aircraft, helicopter and ground/vehicle baiting. In all, about 1,000,000 vaccine-laden baits will be distributed covering about 4,473 square miles in the state of Ohio. ODH has participated in the program since 1997.

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Resources:

Ohio Department of Health Zoonotic Disease Program
<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/orv>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/rabies/

USDA APHIS Wildlife Services
<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife-damage/rabies>
https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/news/sa_by_date/sa-2018/orv-efforts
https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/news/sa_by_date/sa-2018/orv-evaluations
<http://arcs.is/01PXL> (daily progress map)

Editor’s Note:

Please note the following from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

“According to [Ohio Administrative Code 1501:31-15-03](#), it is illegal to live trap, move and release raccoons. Persons dealing with a nuisance raccoon cannot relocate the animal. There are only two legal options for nuisance raccoons; euthanize or release on the same property where they were live trapped. Uninformed people who are relocating nuisance raccoons may be contributing to rabies crossing the barrier.”