

Tennessee Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Guidance for Shows and Fairs

Due to the presence of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHDV2) in close proximity to Tennessee, the state veterinarian's office recommends that rabbit shows and events be postponed or canceled at this time. Breeders in areas affected by RHDV2 are also encouraged to enact strict biosecurity measures to reduce the opportunity of their herds contracting this deadly virus.

RHDV2 is a highly contagious and potentially lethal disease of rabbits; commingling of rabbits at shows and events could present a risk for transmission of the RHDV2 virus. **The decision to continue, postpone or cancel rabbit shows and events will ultimately be up to the local event organizers.**

If events take place, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Animal Health Division recommends that event organizers consider extra precautionary measures to minimize the risk of transmission of RHDV2. The following strategies may be implemented:

ENTRY CONTROL MEASURES

Certificates of veterinary inspection (CVIs): CVIs may be required by event coordinators 3-5 days prior to entry at an event but may not prevent rabbits who could be incubating RHDV2 from developing clinical signs of disease while at an event.

Out-of-state participants: Out-of-state participants should check with their state animal health officials prior to leaving for the event to determine the requirements for the return of rabbits to their state after the event. A list of contact information for all state animal health officials can be obtained from this [website](#). **Event organizers are responsible for making sure that all participants at an event have the required documentation and permanent identification, including CVIs, as deemed necessary by the state. For information on CVI requirements for out-of-state rabbits entering Tennessee, contact that state veterinarian's office at 615-837-5120.**

Exam of all incoming rabbits: A qualified, licensed, and accredited veterinarian should be on site to oversee the examination process. If any rabbits are suspected of having RHDV2, the animals should not be permitted to enter the event and must be reported to the state veterinarian's office at 615-837-5120.

PREMISES CONTROL MEASURES

Minimize common water and feed source use during the event. Discourage use of shared equipment and supplies between participants. Ensure there is appropriate distancing/spacing between cages so there is no contact between rabbits. All participants should wash their hands before and after handling the rabbit(s) and arrive at the show or event with clean clothing and clean/disinfected footwear. After returning home, they should change clothes and footwear and wash their hands before caring for their own rabbits.

Thorough cleaning and disinfection are very important at any facility where rabbits are housed. Suggested disinfectants include sodium hypochlorite (1:10 dilution household bleach), substituted phenolics such as 2% One-stroke Environ® (Vestal Lab Inc., St. Louis, MO), and potassium peroxymonosulfate (e.g. 1% Virkon-S by DuPont).

Regular observation of all susceptible rabbits for clinical signs of RHDV2 by event organizers during the event. Suspect RHDV2 cases should be isolated and reported to the State Veterinarian's Office (615) 837-5120.

VACCINE INFORMATION

RHDV2 vaccine is not licensed in the US and is only available through manufacturers in Europe. Therefore, veterinarians are required to apply for approval to import the vaccine through the USDA Center for Veterinary Biologics with approval from the State Veterinarian. This will not be considered unless the disease enters the state.