



Attention Rabbit Owners:

As you may be aware, the Ohio Department of Agriculture has confirmed the first case of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease virus 2 (RHD2) in the U.S. in Medina County, Ohio on September 19, 2018. Authorities are investigating domestic and wild populations in the area.

Whether or not your area is impacted, rabbit owners can benefit from implementing biosecurity measures on farm and at home to prevent inadvertent transmission of any illness that could impact the well-being of pets and livestock.

KEY INFORMATION

- The first confirmed case of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus 2 (RHD2) in the U.S. was found in Medina Co. Ohio.
- The disease **DOES NOT POSE A THREAT TO HUMANS OR OTHER ANIMALS**, but is fatal in rabbits.
- RHD2 can spread animal-to-animal and via contaminated urine, feces, food, bedding, fur and water. Preventing cross-contamination of these materials between rabbits and other animals can reduce risk.
- Minimize risk of spreading disease by sanitizing shoes and washing clothes after visiting a rabbitry.
- Limit visitors to your rabbitry and ensure visitors wash and sanitize shoes and clothing before entering.
- Isolate rabbits from outside populations of domestic and wild rabbits.
- Reduce risk for wild rabbits to contact domestic rabbits (raised cages, well-sealed enclosures or barns)
- Clean and sanitize any equipment including tools, cages, feeding bowls, as well as any newly introduced equipment.
- Wash tools and hands before and after use and between cages when cleaning pens and boxes.
- Observe your rabbits carefully for symptoms. **If illness is suspected contact your Veterinarian Immediately**

Symptoms

- Rabbits may develop fever
- Appear dull and be reluctant to eat
- Congested membranes around eyes
- Show signs of nervousness
- Incoordination or excitement
- Paddling
- Difficulty breathing may be present
- Blood-stained, frothy discharge from nose seen at death
- Death within 12 to 36 hours



This disease MUST BE REPORTED to state or federal authorities immediately upon diagnosis or suspicion of the disease. If you suspect cases of the disease, have questions, or need more information, please contact ODA Division of Animal Health at (614) 728-6220.

Additional Information:

- Ohio Veterinary Association Article: <https://www.ohiovma.org/news/?p=5182>
- Biosecurity for Rabbits: <http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/U/UNP-0140/UNP-0140.pdf>
- Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease.
http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/rabbit_hemorrhagic_disease.pdf

Important information on cleaning and sanitizing

Remember that disinfection cannot occur until surfaces are first cleaned. Cleaning should be accomplished by physically scrubbing surfaces with soap and water to dislodge physical debris and dirt followed by a thorough rinsing with clean water and a drying step. Only after these steps should sanitation measures be used. This is because bleach and other disinfectants lose efficiency in the presence of dirt particles, binding to any organic matter instead of working to disinfect the germs in question.

Follow all label instructions on bleach and other chemical bottles. The label is the law for use. Disinfecting surfaces can be done with a 10% bleach solution diluting 1 part bleach with 9 parts water. **Leave your diluted solution in contact with the surface to be disinfected for at least 10 minutes to ensure disinfection before rinsing and wiping surfaces with clean water.** This can be accomplished by dunking tools or spraying surfaces.

If you see symptoms, contact your vet immediately.

Sources

- 3M. "Disinfection with Bleach: Tech Talk". (June 2011). At <https://multimedia.3m.com/mws/media/735976O/disinfection-with-bleach-tech-talk.pdf>
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- Spencer, Robert. "Biosecurity Measures for Rabbit Production". (April 2013). At <http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/U/UNP-0140/UNP-0140.pdf>
- Spickler, Anna Rovid. "Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease." (June 2016) At <http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/DiseaseInfo/factsheets.php>

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