

# ORAL RABIES VACCINATION AREA

## NOTICE

Cooperating Federal, State, and county agencies are conducting an oral raccoon rabies baiting project in western Pennsylvania. A vaccine packet is coated or placed inside a fishmeal block, a packet coated in fishmeal or vanilla which is very tasty to raccoons. The baits are dropped from low-flying airplanes or helicopters, or by local teams on foot or in vehicles. The vaccine can NOT cause rabies. This year's operation will run **July 29<sup>th</sup> thru August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021.**



### What if I find rabies baits?

Baits should be left alone – but intact baits can be moved if they are found where children and pets play. Damaged baits should be bagged and disposed in the trash.

- Wear gloves or use a plastic bag when picking up the baits.
- Toss intact baits into a fencerow, woodlot, ditch, or other raccoon habitat areas.
- Wash your hands after any skin contact with a bait.

### What if my pet eats a bait?

- A few baits are not harmful, although eating a lot may cause vomiting or diarrhea.
- Do not risk getting bitten by taking a bait away from your pet.
- Confine your pet for a couple of days and check the area for more baits.
- If your pet eats a bait, avoid your pet's saliva for 24 hours, and wash skin or wounds that may have been licked.

### For information about the oral rabies baiting program, contact:

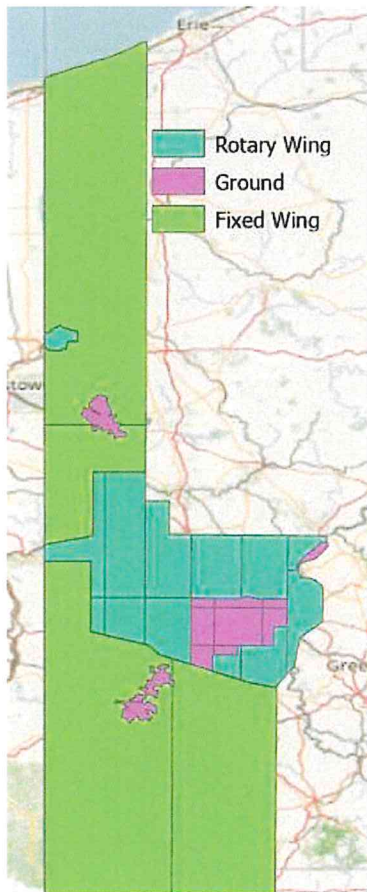
USDA Wildlife Services: 1-866-487-3297

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture: 1-717-772-2852

Pennsylvania Department of Health Information Line: 1-877-PA Health

Erie County Department of Health: 1-814-451-6700

Allegheny County Department of Health: 1-412-350-4046



**For information concerning accidental contact with baits, call 1-877-722-6725.**



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Wildlife Services  
4820 Route 711  
Suite A  
Bolivar, PA 15923  
724-238-7320

June 17, 2021

Dear Borough/Municipality Manager:

The USDA APHIS WS National Rabies Management Program (NRMP) has been distributing oral rabies vaccines (ORV) in Pennsylvania and surrounding states for 20 years to prevent the further spread of raccoon variant rabies. The project being implemented will help protect human health and safety by reducing the amount of rabies exposures to humans and pets as more animals become vaccinated.

Baits containing the rabies vaccination will be dispersed by fixed wing aircraft, helicopter or by land vehicle in order to reach desired locations based on human population density and the most effective method.

- **Vehicle vaccine distribution will take place from July 29<sup>th</sup> through August 10<sup>th</sup>.**
- **Fixed wing vaccine distribution will take place from August 19<sup>th</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>.**
- **Helicopter vaccine distribution will take place from August 1<sup>st</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup>.**

Aerial baiting will occur along North-South transects that will be above residential areas. To ensure sufficient baiting within the area, fixed wing aircraft or helicopters may be moving within the same area multiple times in a slow manner in order to keep transects close together. This could be viewed as alarming by the public who are unaware of the vaccine baiting distributions that will be occurring during that time. Municipalities are encouraged to inform the public about the vaccine distribution and when it will take place to avoid confusion.

There are three different types of vaccine baits that will be dispersed; a plastic packet that is coated in fish meal which holds the vaccine, a block made of fish meal that holds the vaccine packet within the center, and a blister packet coated in a sweet attractant. The coatings attract raccoons that will consume the bait and vaccine and introduce antibodies of the rabies virus which will help build immunity.

Oral rabies vaccines produce little threat to humans and animals when exposed, but the public is asked to avoid contact with the baits to increase the likelihood of consumption by raccoons. If a bait must be moved, please use gloves or hand tools to remove it from the undesired location.

The public is asked to keep dogs confined to their properties or on leashes during the week of rabies hand baiting and the week after. In recent years, there have been incidents of off-leash dogs consuming baits within parks. Parks are common places for human and animal interactions with raccoons and are therefore important sites for baiting to reduce rabies exposure.

Publicizing of the baiting effort in any publications, newsletters and social media content with the use of the provided educational materials is encouraged and appreciated.

For more information on ORV operations, please contact Rabies Biologist Amy Hess at office: 724-238-7320 or cell: 724-554-0618.

Thank you for your support and cooperation in raising public awareness of oral rabies vaccinations and ensuring health and safety of both people and animals.