

Calicivirus information for owners of pet rabbits.

Rabbit haemorrhagic disease virus (RHDV), or 'calicivirus,' has been present in the landscape for more than 20 years, and several strains are now present in Australia, including the RHDV1-K5 strain released nationally over the last few years to help control pest rabbits.

Domestic rabbit owners are advised to be aware of the rabbit haemorrhagic disease virus and seek advice from their local veterinarian to help keep their pet rabbits safe from infection.

Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development research officer Susan Campbell said biological control provided a very important tool for suppressing pest rabbit numbers throughout the landscape, reducing the substantial impact pest rabbits had on both agricultural production and the environment. "Despite outbreaks being more common in spring, owners of domestic rabbits should be mindful that RHDV or the myxoma virus is a risk at any time of the year," Dr Campbell said. "We urge owners to contact their local veterinarian for advice on vaccination which covers all RHDV-type 1 strains, and to take additional precautions such as keeping rabbits in insect-proof enclosures or inside."

There have been recent reports of outbreaks of the calicivirus in the south west in addition to planned releases by biosecurity groups of the RHDV1 K5 strain of this virus. The virus is contagious and can be spread by direct contact or by insect vectors. Used across the country as a biocontrol tool for rabbit management, this virus specifically and only affects rabbits. Other species, even pets that ingest infected rabbits, are not affected by the virus.

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Find out more: The [Australian Veterinary Association](#) (AVA) website and the department's [RHDV web pages](#) provide further advice on vaccinations and other protective measures. Alternatively, you can contact your local veterinarian.

Contact LBG to find out more about our Calicivirus RHDV1-K5 Release Program:

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