

Rabbit Control CALICIVIRUS RHDV1-K RELEASE PROGRAM

Participant Information & Guidance

1. Preparation



IMPORTANT: Check for kittens (baby rabbits). Do not release virus into breeding populations; i.e., where kittens are sighted. Baby rabbits may develop immunity, to future outbreaks/releases of the virus.

- What you need:
 - 4-6 feeding "dishes" ~30-50 cm in diameter (we suggest plant pot trays)
 - "Clipped/dressed" oats (available at most rural supply stores)

2.

Feeding Site(s) Selection (~2 WEEKS BEFORE)

- **Trial different locations** on your property to identify most best feeding site(s)
- **Where to look:** near warrens (under logs, sheds, shipping containers, etc), lawn, veggie patches or other known feeding areas
- **DO NOT** place feeding dish(es) near piles of rabbit poo (they don't like to eat there)
- **DO NOT** throw oats down the warrens; always use shallow feeding dishes
- Place feeding dish 2-3 meters from active warren entrances
- **Fill dish with oats in a thin, even layer** (not a heap). Rabbits feed from the outside edge toward the centre & will often feed side-by-side.
- **Put oats out in the evening** when rabbits are most active
- **Check & remove or cover up dishes early each morning** to better ensure it's rabbits eating the oats and not non-target species eating them throughout the day
- **Move untouched dishes every 1-2 nights** & try other spots
- **After a few nights, identify your most active feeding sites (up to max of 4);** these will be your pre-feeding sites & where you will feed the virus-treated oats on your release day

Essential

Pre-Feeding Phase – Min. 4 Nights Prior to Release

3.

- **A successful pre-feeding phase is ESSENTIAL** to success of your release
- This phase establishes habit of rabbits eating the same type of oats, from the same spots in which you will ultimately feed the virus-treated oats
- Rabbits **MUST** consistently eat pre-feed oats at the same sites for a minimum of 4 consecutive nights immediately prior to your release day
- **Contact LBG if rabbits are not eating your pre-feed**

About the virus

RHDV1 K5 is a species-specific virus used across the country as a biocontrol for rabbit management. It specifically & only affects rabbits. It is harmless to humans, pets, and wildlife.

The virus won't eliminate all rabbits, but can significantly reduce populations to support further control efforts.

4.

Release Night

- Collect your virus-treated oats from LBG team on your scheduled "Release Date".
- Remove **ALL** remaining pre-feed oats before putting out the virus-treated oats. This ensures you do not "dilute" the virus dose.
- Use the same dishes & sites established during pre-feeding.
- Use **ALL** of virus-treated oats provided to you; they will remain viable for ~ 24-hours.

Rabbits impacted by Calicivirus RHDV1 K5 are found with this distinct posture.



5.

After Release

- The virus takes 48-72 hours to impact a rabbit
- Leave any remaining virus-treated oats in feeding dishes & resume feeding untreated 'pre-feed' oats for 3-4 nights in same spots. This encourages rabbits to continue visiting & mingle, helping spread the virus through the group.
- You should see a reduction or absence of rabbits in ~ 4 weeks;
- If you find dead rabbits, leave them or put them near/or in a warren/burrow to encourage further spread of the virus
- Do not dispose of them in the bin

MORE INFORMATION

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