



RHDV1-K5 Wild Rabbit Control Program, Central Coast

March 2022

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO VETS

A wild rabbit control program is scheduled for the Central Coast Local Government Area in mid-March 2022 and will include the release of **Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV-K5)**, a rabbit calicivirus K5 strain.

Rabbits are a declared pest species under the *Local Land Services Act 2013*. Competition and land degradation by wild rabbits is listed as a key threat to Australian native animals, plants and Endangered Ecological Communities under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and the *NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*.

RHDV-K5 is released as a live virus in solution to chopped carrots.

The RHDV1-K5 release date is: 17 March 2022.

This notification is to allow veterinarians time to inform clients of the need to **vaccinate pet rabbits** as all rabbits, including **pet rabbits can be affected**. For best protection rabbits should be vaccinated prior to 1 March 2022.

- RHDV-K5 is spread by insects (such as fleas and flies), via direct contact between rabbits and by predator faeces (cat, dog, and fox).
- RHDV is species specific; RHDV affects only rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*).
- RHDV is not harmful to native animals or domestic pests other than rabbits.

More information on RHDV can be found on the Australian Veterinarian Association website [Vaccination of rabbits and ferrets \(ava.com.au\)](http://ava.com.au).

Please note that RHDV2 has been detected in wild rabbits in Greater Sydney. It is not known how the virus entered Australia. RHDV2 can cause death in even young kittens and a proportion of vaccinated adults.

Any veterinarian in NSW or the ACT who suspects a domestic rabbit may have RHDV2 should submit a fresh chilled (not frozen) 1.5g liver sample (not formalin fixed) to the State Diagnostic Laboratory at EMAI. See the DPI website [Rabbit haemorrhagic disease virus \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://nsw.gov.au) for more details.

For more information on RHDV-K5 release in the Central Coast LGA, contact Lisa Goodchild, District Veterinarian, on 0427 559 656 or lisa.goodchild@lls.nsw.gov.au

