



June 15, 2020

United States
Department of
Agriculture

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

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 19 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 vehicle in order to reach desired locations close to larger human populations that would otherwise be difficult.

Vehicle vaccine distribution will take place from July 31 through August 10th.
Fixed wing vaccine distribution will take place from August 10th through August 31st.
Helicopter vaccine distribution will take place from August 10th through the 17th.

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 two different types of vaccine baits that will be dispersed; a plastic packet that is coated in fish meal which holds the vaccine and a block made of fish meal that holds the vaccine packet within the center. The fish meal coating attracts 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.