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Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus Update

THIS ANNOUNCEMENT WILL BE UPDATED AS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE.

Updates are in blue.

Updated January 24, 2022

GDA approved the importation of RHDV vaccine by Georgia licensed veterinarians for administration to domestic rabbits living in Georgia. GDA posted contact information for veterinary practices that will be administering vaccine. An additional RHDV-2 vaccine produced by [Medgene Labs](#) is now available for use by licensed veterinarians in the state of Georgia.

On January 24, 2022, the Georgia Department of Agriculture's (GDA) Animal Health Division confirmed Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus 2 (RHDV2) in unvaccinated, domestic rabbits housed indoors at a single Cobb County premises. The premises remains under quarantine while the investigation is ongoing to determine the source of the virus. It does not appear to be linked to the closed Cobb County or Gwinnett County cases.

August 2, 2021, GDA Animal Industry Division confirmed RHDV2 in domestic rabbits at a single Gwinnett County premise. The investigation is ongoing to determine the source of the virus and it does not appear to be linked to the Cobb County case. GDA has released the quarantine on the Gwinnett County premises after completion of a 90-day quarantine, cleaning, and disinfection, with no additional cases, illnesses, or deaths reported during that time.

June 22, 2021, the GDA Animal Industry Division confirmed RHDV2 in domestic rabbits at a single Cobb County premise. The investigation is ongoing to determine the source of the virus. GDA has released the quarantine on the Cobb County premises after completion of a 90-day quarantine, cleaning, and disinfection, with no additional cases, illnesses, or deaths reported during that time.

RHDV2 is a highly contagious Calicivirus that affects domestic rabbits, as well as wild or feral rabbits and hares. The virus is shed by infected rabbits, and transmitted through direct contact, fomites (bedding, water, feed, hay, etc.) and mechanical vectors (i.e., insects). The virus is hardy in the environment, especially when protected by organic material and survives in extreme temperatures. Clinical signs for RHDV2 in rabbits range from sudden death to anorexia, lethargy, conjunctivitis, respiratory signs and bloodstained noses or mouths.

Good biosecurity practices are the best defense against RHDV2 infection and rabbit owners are strongly advised to take the following measures to protect rabbitries:

- Keep domestic rabbits separate from other pets, livestock, and wild animals.
- Wash hands thoroughly before entering rabbit housing areas or interacting with domestic rabbits.
- Use dedicated clothing and footwear when interacting with domestic rabbits.
- Clean and disinfect equipment, materials and surfaces used for rabbit care.
- Properly dispose of animal waste, bedding, and supplies.
- Quarantine newly acquired animals from other pets and livestock for at least 30 days.
- Establish a working relationship with a veterinarian to review biosecurity practices and health concerns.

RHDV2 is a reportable disease in Georgia. Veterinarians should report sick or dead domestic rabbits to the State Veterinarian's office at (404) 656-3667 or the office of the USDA Area Veterinarian in Charge (AVIC) at (770) 761-5420. Sick or dead wild rabbits should be reported to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources at 1-(833)-557-3303 or (706) 557-3333.

Georgia requires an official CVI issued within the previous 30 days for domestic rabbits entering the state for sale, trade, adoption or exchange for a fee or other type of compensation. GDA is currently reviewing this rule and if appropriate, will post any updates to entry requirements for rabbits coming into Georgia.

For more information on national RHDV2 outbreak areas, please visit

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/maps/animal-health/rhd>.

You can find GDA resources on RHDV2 at

<https://agr.georgia.gov/rabbit-hemorrhagic-disease-rhd>

GDA press releases regarding RHDV can be found here: <https://agr.georgia.gov/news/press-releases>