



# Wyoming Livestock Board

"To represent and serve Wyoming's livestock industry through protecting livestock health and verifying livestock ownership."

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## RHDV2 Updates for Veterinarians and Rabbit Owners

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus 2 (RHDV2) is stable/endemic in Wyoming. RHDV2 has been confirmed in 14 states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Eleven of the states involved in the current outbreak have transitioned to stable/endemic status. The disease in these states is present in wild or feral domestic populations and, because of this, elimination of the disease from all populations in these states is unlikely. In addition, imported vaccine is in use in all of the stable/endemic states. Domestic, feral domestic and wild lagomorph populations are involved in the outbreak.

Transmission routes include direct contact with live or dead infected rabbits, meat, or fur; mechanical vectors (e.g., wild carnivores and raptors); or by contaminated fomites (e.g., chilled or frozen meat, food, bedding and water) through oral, respiratory, or conjunctival routes and skin trauma. **Strict biosecurity measures** are essential to prevent introduction of the virus to rabbitries, laboratories, wildlife rehabilitation facilities, and private residences as well as to prevent transmission between domestic and wild rabbit populations. Biosecurity measures include sanitation and disinfection, the maintenance of closed colonies or isolating new rabbits entering a rabbitry and creating separation between domestic and wild rabbit populations

RHDV2 remains a reportable disease in Wyoming. Veterinarians must report all suspect and positive cases to the Wyoming State Veterinarian's office. A quarantine may be placed on suspect and/or positive premises to protect rabbits both within and outside of Wyoming. RHDV2 positive premises will be quarantined for 30 days (previously 120 days) following the last death. Under quarantine, no rabbits may enter or leave the premises for 30 days. Due to the survivability of RHDV in the environment, thorough cleaning and disinfection during the quarantine period is highly recommended.

Deceased domestic rabbits may be submitted to the WSVL for PCR testing. Please contact the laboratory directly regarding cost and sample submission, 307.766.9925. If a whole rabbit carcass is submitted, a diagnosis may be received within 2-3 days. Rabbits at highest risk are those exposed to wild rabbits or jackrabbits. If a diagnosis of RHDV2 is confirmed, all in-contact rabbits are at risk.

### RHDV2 Vaccine

Currently, there are no licensed RHDV2 vaccines produced in the United States. The USDA Center for Veterinary Biologics has approved importation of two RHDV2 vaccines from Europe. Accredited veterinarians may import vaccine at the discretion of the state veterinarian. An APHIS import permit is required. The accredited veterinarian is responsible for international shipment logistics of the vaccine.

For a list of veterinary clinics who have received the vaccine in Wyoming, please contact the Wyoming State Veterinarian's office, 307.777.6440.

### **Wild or feral rabbits**

The WGFD is currently conducting opportunistic surveillance for this disease and requests suspect RHDV2 rabbit carcasses to be submitted to the Wildlife Health Laboratory (WHL). Please contact the WHL for information regarding sample submission at (307) 745-5865. If needing to handle carcasses, please use caution and wear gloves/additional PPE, as dead rabbits could also potentially carry zoonotic diseases.

### **Resources and Information on RHD**

<https://wlsb.state.wy.us/public/animal-health>

[https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Wildlife-in-Wyoming/More-Wildlife/Wildlife-Disease/Wildlife-Disease-Information/Rabbit-Hemorrhagic-Disease-Virus-2-\(RHDV\)](https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Wildlife-in-Wyoming/More-Wildlife/Wildlife-Disease/Wildlife-Disease-Information/Rabbit-Hemorrhagic-Disease-Virus-2-(RHDV))

[https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/downloads/rhdv-cleaning-guidance.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/downloads/rhdv-cleaning-guidance.pdf)

[https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/downloads/faq-rhd-vaccine.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/downloads/faq-rhd-vaccine.pdf)

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