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Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus Summary as of August 2020

Rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus (RHDV) is a highly contagious virus that has been found in rabbits across the USA, including in northwest Washington (San Juan Islands and Clallam County areas). RHDV has not been found in Oregon. At this time, in August 2020, rabbit hemorrhagic disease is not known to be an active outbreak in Washington, Oregon, Idaho or northern California.

RHDV can cause fatal illness in domestic and wild rabbits, and no treatment has been successful for reversing rabbit hemorrhagic disease. This virus is readily transmitted between a variety of wild animal species (not just rabbits), and the virus is very persistent in the environment unless specific disinfectants are used against it. **Therefore, the best way to prevent RHDV affecting your rabbits is to practice strict "biosecurity" measures.** These include housing rabbits strictly indoors, protecting them against exposure to mosquitoes or flies that could carry virus in from outdoors, not feeding them any outdoor greens that have not been disinfected, and housing your rabbits away from all other rabbits.

Vaccination is also a possible way to help prevent disease from some strains of RHDV. However, although RHDV vaccines are readily available in countries where the disease is routinely present, the vaccine is unlicensed in the US and must be approved by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) for importation and use. This is not currently allowed in states where the virus has not been found, therefore vaccine importation is not allowed for Oregon. It must also be remembered that there are no studies as to the safety and efficacy of the imported vaccines. **No clinic in Oregon has vaccine legally available for RHDV, and if rabbits travel to another state to become vaccinated, they are by definition entering a high-risk area for becoming actually infected with the virus.**

USDA is actively working with a US based company to produce a vaccine, and it might be available by the end of 2020, without lengthy importation procedures. **AEVC will offer RHDV vaccination as soon as vaccines are available, either by legal importation or from US-based vaccine companies. When and if we obtain a supply of RHDV vaccine, we will announce this on our website, and we will make our limited supply of RHDV vaccine available to our existing patients.** Links to more info about RHDV, disinfection recommendations and vaccines are listed here:

Oregon Dept of Agriculture RHDV FAQs:

<https://www.oregon.gov/oda/shared/Documents/Publications/AnimalHealth/RHDVFAQ.pdf>

USDA Fact Sheet on Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease:

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/fs-rhdv2.pdf

Emerging Risk Notice: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/downloads/rhdv2.pdf

USDA Map of Affected Counties: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/maps/animal-health/rhd>