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USDA Conducts 2026 Oral Rabies Vaccination Efforts Targeting Wildlife in Eastern United States

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Washington, D.C., July 31, 2026—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will begin its annual distribution of RABORAL V-RG®, an oral rabies vaccine (ORV) bait, in select areas in the eastern United States to prevent the spread of raccoon rabies into America's heartland.

Rabies is a serious public health concern. While rabies is almost always fatal once symptoms appear, it also is 100% preventable. Human exposures can be successfully remedied if medical attention is sought immediately following exposure. Costs associated with rabies detection, prevention, and control may exceed $500 million annually in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 90 percent of reported rabies cases in the United States are in wildlife.

APHIS and its cooperators will begin distributing ORV baits today across rural areas by airplane and in suburban or urban areas by helicopter, vehicle, and bait station. RABORAL V-RG® rabies baits are coated with a fishmeal attractant and are packaged in two-inch plastic sachets.

The RABORAL V-RG® vaccine is safe for many animals, including domestic dogs and cats. Humans and pets cannot get rabies from contact with the baits but should

leave them undisturbed if they are encountered. Dogs that consume many baits may experience a temporary upset stomach, but there are no long-term health risks. If people come in contact with baits, they should immediately wash the contact area with warm water and soap.

ORV baits will be distributed during the following time periods and based out of airports in the cities listed below:

In Northeast to Mid-Atlantic states during August:

- The Watertown, New York, project will include portions of northern New York in the St. Lawrence Valley region and distribute 220,000 baits by airplane, helicopter and vehicles. In addition to RABORAL V-RG®, APHIS will distribute another ORV bait, ONRAB, in select areas of New York as part of an ongoing field assessment.
- The Barre, Vermont, project will encompass parts of northern New Hampshire, northeastern New York and northern Vermont and distribute almost 460,000 baits by airplanes and vehicles. APHIS will also be distributing ONRAB in this region.
- The Houlton, Maine, project will cover parts of northern Maine and distribute approximately 598,000 ORV baits by airplane and vehicle.
- The Jamestown, New York, project will include areas in western New York and distribute approximately 379,000 ORV baits by airplane and helicopter. Field assessment of ONRAB will occur in this area concurrently.
- The North Lima, Ohio, project will involve distribution of approximately 729,000 RABORAL V-RG® baits in parts of western Pennsylvania. Field assessment of ONRAB will also occur in western Pennsylvania at the same time.
- The Buckhannon, West Virginia, project will include portions of western Pennsylvania and West Virginia, distributing approximately 364,000 ORV baits by airplane and vehicle. ONRAB field assessment also will take place in select areas of West Virginia.

In Massachusetts from mid-September through mid-October:

- The Cape Cod, Mass., project will cover parts of peninsular and mainland Massachusetts and distribute 75,000 ORV baits by helicopter, bait station, and vehicle.

In Southern states during October:

- The Abingdon, Va., project will cover parts of North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and a small portion of southern West Virginia, distributing more than 686,000 ORV baits by airplane, helicopter, and vehicle.
- The Andrews, N.C., project will include areas in western North Carolina and north Georgia and will distribute approximately 415,000 ORV baits by airplane, helicopter and vehicle.
- The Dalton, Ga., project will cover areas in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee, distributing 648,000 ORV baits by airplane and helicopter.
- The Gadsden, Ala., project will cover parts of northeast and central Alabama and distribute approximately 712,000 baits by airplane, helicopter, and vehicle.

For additional information concerning rabies or the ORV program, please visit www.aphis.usda.gov/national-wildlife-programs/rabies or contact APHIS Wildlife Services toll free at 1-866-4-USDA-WS (1-866-487-3297).

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