



Shows and Exhibitions Guidance for State Animal Health Officials

Developed by the National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials (NASAHO)
RHDV2 Subcommittee

Background

Rabbit events or meetings with live rabbits can contradict several biosecurity recommendations. Biosecurity practices are always a good idea, not just for RHD, but more common contagious conditions such as Pasteurella, mites, etc. The highest risk areas are those with infected feral domestic or wild rabbits. Indoor rabbits cared for with excellent biosecurity practices are at very low risk.

Rabbits co-mingled at club meetings or shows have greater risk of contracting snuffles from an infected rabbit compared to RHD. Risk of disease transmission could be reduced at club meetings by only having rabbits from one premises present per meeting.

All club members must wash hands before and after handling rabbits and arrive at the meeting site with clean clothing and clean/disinfected footwear. After returning home, they should change clothes and footwear and wash their hands before caring for their own rabbits. We all have different levels of risk we are willing to accept; the most conservative will not take animals away from home or allow them to contact other animals. Not every 4-H'er is required to show his/her animal if they do not want to for whatever reason.

Quarantined premises or Premises under Emergency Rule Restrictions

- If a premises or geographic region is under official quarantine (authorized by the State Veterinarian), movement of rabbits, rabbit products, and equipment from quarantine areas to shows is prohibited.
- After the official quarantine expires, show/fair management will need to establish policies for exhibitors from the previous quarantine and control areas who wish to attend their show.
- NOTE: ARBA established "quarantine" areas (ie: 150 miles from infected premises) are member recommendations without legal authority.

Fair, Show and Exhibition Requirements

- Consider postponing or cancelling shows in infected states during an outbreak.
- It is up to each rabbit show's management to evaluate their risks and decide what parameters they would like to establish and enforce.
- ARBA rabbit shows, 4-H rabbit shows, and fairs can determine if they choose to add additional requirements to attend an event (ie: RHDV2 vaccination).

- It is recommended that a veterinarian inspect all rabbits prior to entry or that a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI) is issued prior to arrival.
- Check with your State Veterinarian for guidance or recommendations based on risk.

Interstate Movement

- Each state has different interstate movement rules for rabbits.
- Each state will have differences in their OIE declared status (ie: “free”, “stable endemic”)
- Some States require a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection or have additional restrictions for states with outbreaks of RHDV.
- Check with the state of destination.

What are specific biosecurity recommendations for events?

In addition to the biosecurity guidance document, special additional considerations should be included for exhibition animals:

- **Showing**
 - Judges and veterinarians should change gloves or wash hands/arms between animals.
 - Judges should wear short sleeves and not pick up rabbits to avoid contamination of their clothing.
 - Do not share show carpets and designate one per animal.
 - Be sure the show has excellent vector control. Flies, rats, cats, dogs, birds, etc. can move the virus around on their feet or body.
- **Animal Health**
 - Monitor your rabbits closely for signs of illness (going off feed, looking limp/depressed, or behavioral changes) and seek immediate veterinary care.
 - Remove sick rabbits from the premises, and keep in designated isolation area.
- **Housing**
 - Keep show rabbits in cages off the ground.
 - Do not allow nose to nose contact between rabbits.
 - Clean and disinfect daily whenever possible.
 - Do not allow your rabbit to exercise in common areas on the ground.
 - Do not allow non-showing spectators into the rabbit areas: fence off the show area
- **Human Best Practices**
 - Wash your hands frequently.
 - Wear different clothes and shoes at the show than you do at home and before contacting the rest of your herd.
 - Do not share equipment, grooming tools, feeding implements.
 - Wash hands before and after handling or caring for rabbits and between groups.
 - Don't handle others' rabbits.

- Clean and Disinfect Equipment and common grooming stations (See [USDA C&D guidance](#))
 - Cleaning
 - Remove all visible organic debris from items to be disinfected (cages, feeding equipment, waterers, etc.). Items made of wood are best discarded or burned.
 - Wash items thoroughly with soap and water; rinse well and let dry.
 - Disinfection
 - Saturate by submersion or spray with 10% household bleach (sodium hypochlorite) OR 1% Virkon-S (by DuPont) OR accelerated hydrogen peroxide products (Rescue, Accel, Virox 5).
 - Allow 10 minutes of contact, then rinse and let dry before allowing animal contact.
- Feeding
 - Source hay from unaffected areas.
 - Keep feed covered or in a container with a lid while at the show.
 - Do not share feed, water or treats with other exhibitors.
- Going Home
 - Clean and disinfect all cages, equipment and transportation after the show.
 - Isolate all rabbits returning from the event for 30 days prior to reintroduction to the herd.
 - Feed and care for returning rabbits last.
 - Report any mortality or morbidity events to your veterinarian.