

 **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **USDA Begins 2010 Oral Rabies Vaccination Efforts in Eastern United States**

WASHINGTON, Aug. 18, 2010 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service’s (APHIS) wildlife services’ (WS) program will begin its 2010 distribution of oral rabies vaccination baits in select areas along the East Coast in an effort to prevent the spread of raccoon rabies.

With their cooperators, WS will start distributing the oral rabies vaccination baits by hand and by aircraft beginning on or about Aug. 21. The baits will be distributed in the following select areas:

- The Plattsburgh, N.Y., project will cover parts of New York, Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont and distribute 943,850 baits by fixed-wing aircraft and 58,680 by hand;
- The Batavia, N.Y., project will cover parts of New York and distribute 195,170 baits by fixed and rotary-wing aircraft and 14,440 by hand;
- The North Lima, O.H., project will cover parts of Ohio and Pennsylvania and distribute 932,678 baits by fixed and rotary wing aircraft and 546,652 by hand;
- The Anne Arundel, Md., project will cover parts of Maryland and distribute 28,440 baits by rotary-wing aircraft and 43,920 by hand;
- The Clarksburg, W. Va., project will cover parts of West Virginia and Ohio and distribute 927,450 baits by fixed-wing aircraft and 28,800 by hand;
- The Greeneville, Tenn., project will cover parts of Tennessee, North Carolina and Virginia and distribute 716,850 baits by fixed-wing aircraft and 121,320 by hand;
- The Albertville, Ala., project will cover parts of Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee and distribute 712,800 baits by fixed-wing aircraft and 63,000 by hand; and
- The Cape Cod, Mass., project will cover parts of Massachusetts and distribute 7,200 baits by rotary-wing aircraft and 32,400 by hand.

The national rabies management program was established in recognition of the changing scope of rabies. The goal of the program is to prevent the further spread of wildlife rabies and eventually eliminate terrestrial rabies in the United States through an integrated program that involves vaccinating wildlife against the disease.

Oral rabies vaccination baits are coated with a fishmeal attractant and may be packaged in one-inch square cubes or two-inch plastic sachets. Humans and pets cannot get rabies from contact with the baits, but are asked to leave them undisturbed should they encounter them. This vaccine has been shown to be safe in more than 60 different species of animals, including domestic dogs and cats. Dogs that consume large numbers of baits may experience an upset

stomach, but there are no long-term health risks. Should contact with baits occur, immediately rinse the contact area with warm water and soap. For photos of the vaccination baits, please visit [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife\\_damage/oral\\_rabies/photo\\_gallery.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/oral_rabies/photo_gallery.shtml).

Most sightings of rabid raccoons occur during the spring and summer months when people are more likely to come into contact with wildlife. Raccoon rabies is caused by a virus that infects the central nervous system in mammals. Signs suggesting rabies infection include unusual, aggressive or calm and “friendly” behavior, an inability to eat or drink, balance problems, circling, seizures, coma and finally death. While rabies is fatal, human exposures can be successfully treated, if treatment is sought immediately following a bite.

Since, 1995, WS has been working cooperatively with local, state and federal governments, universities and other partners to address this public health problem by distributing oral rabies vaccination baits in targeted areas. This cooperative program targets the raccoon variant, canine variant in coyotes and a unique variant of gray fox rabies.

For additional information concerning the raccoon oral rabies vaccination program, please visit [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife\\_damage/oral\\_rabies/index.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/oral_rabies/index.shtml) or contact WS toll free at 1-866-4-USDA-WS (1-866-487-3297).

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