

Dept. of Natural Resources: Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease detected in La Crosse County

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) announces that the state's first case of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus Serotype 2 (RHDV2) has been found in three domestic rabbits in La Crosse County.

RHDV2 is a highly contagious viral disease that affects wild and domestic rabbits. Although fatal to rabbits, the disease does not affect humans. In most cases, the only signs of RHDV2 are sudden death and blood-stained noses caused by internal bleeding. Infected rabbits experience fever, loss of appetite, difficulty breathing or seizures.

In October 2021, [DATCP authorized a RHDV2 vaccine](#) for use in Wisconsin, and the department continues to encourage rabbit owners to work with their veterinarians to have their animals immunized.

Rabbit owners can reduce the risk of disease introduction by taking precautions when moving rabbits to fairs/shows, buying equipment, handling rabbits that aren't their own, introducing new rabbits to their household, and when keeping their animals outdoors. Even with vaccine use, DATCP recommends that anyone working with or caring for rabbits [follow biosecurity guidelines](#) to prevent spread of the disease.

Rabbit owners are asked to contact their veterinarians if their animals appear sick. To report multiple dead wild rabbits, contact the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

To learn more and to see a list of frequently asked questions, visit DATCP's RHD webpage at https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/-RabbitHemorrhagicDisease.aspx.