

Vaccines arrived for rabbit calicivirus RHDV2 strain

Information for pet rabbit owners

14 June 2018

Following the discovery of a new strain of calicivirus last month, MPI has now sourced a first batch of vaccine doses to protect pet rabbits.

The initial order of 2000 doses for the RHDV2 strain have now arrived in the country and will be distributed to veterinary practices early to mid-next week.

The vaccine needed hadn't been held in New Zealand till now, because the RHDV2 virus strain was not known to be present here.

Rabbit owners who would like to vaccinate their rabbits will need to book an appointment with their veterinarian. While MPI will cover the cost of these first 2000 vaccine doses, rabbit owners will need to cover any additional costs, such as the veterinarian's consultation fee.

We know that the current supply doesn't meet the demand, however urgent and ongoing vaccination supplies have been developed viaASUREQuality Limited.

The virus affects rabbits and the European hare. It has no impact on human health or other animals, but we can't rule out a potential risk to pet rabbits.

There are also a number of practical steps people can take to minimise the risk to their pets. If you own rabbits, you should:

- keep them separate from wild rabbits
- wash hands between handling rabbits
- control insects around pet rabbits as they can spread the virus between rabbits.

Talk to your vet for further information on protecting your rabbit.

Questions on the calicivirus RHDV2 response

MPI Pest and Disease Hotline

MPI's general enquiries line:

0800 00 83 33

0800 80 99 66