

Ohio Department of Health Appalachian Ridge Oral Rabies Vaccination Program - August 2004 At-a-Glance

Background Rabies is a viral disease that affects animals and people. It is still almost always fatal. The strain of rabies associated with raccoons is of particular concern because it affects so many other wild animals and spills over into our domestic animals (especially cats). In 2003, Virginia reported the first human death due to raccoon rabies. In newly infected areas, raccoon rabies results in a 10-fold increase in human rabies exposures and treatments. For these reasons, Ohio does not want this strain of rabies to become established. To control the disease, an oral rabies vaccine has been distributed along the Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia border since 1997. This has created a 25 mile wide immune barrier which, until now, has been successful in stopping further spread. On July 20, 2004 a raccoon with raccoon rabies was confirmed in Lake County, about 7 miles west of the current barrier. It is unknown if this occurred through translocation, human conveyance, or by natural raccoon movement. Breaches in the barrier were anticipated, and contingency plans have gone into affect. The goal is to increase surveillance for sick raccoons to better define the extent of the epizootic and to quickly immunize as many raccoons as possible to stop any further transmission.

Procedures Oral Rabies Vaccine (ORV) baits will be distributed in about a 20 mile radius around any known cases, to include Lake, Geauga and eastern Cuyahoga counties. Specially equipped airplanes will distribute most of the baits. Ground teams using vehicles will distribute baits in urban and suburban areas.

Start Date The operation starts on Thursday, August 5, 2004. Aerial and ground distribution will be conducted concurrently and should take about a day to complete, pending good weather.

Bait Distribution Baits are delivered at a density of about 75 baits per km² or about one bait per 3.3 acres. Ground teams consisting of USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services and local health department personnel will be delivering vaccine-laden baits in urban and suburban areas, mostly by vehicle. In rural areas, baits are distributed by specially equipped, Beechcraft Twin Air Planes at an altitude of about 500 ft. The base of the aerial operations is the Youngstown-Elser Metro Airport, in North Lima, Ohio. About 117,000 pieces of bait will be distributed covering 622 square miles.

Counties Lake, Geauga, and eastern Cuyahoga counties

Program Partners Ohio Department of Health
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
USDA-APHIS, Wildlife Services Program
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Year	Raccoon-strain Animal Rabies Cases
1997	62
1998	26
1999	6
2000	0
2001	1
2002	0
2003	3
2004	2 (as of 7/29)

For more information on Rabies, go to
www.odh.state.oh.us/ODHPrograms/ZOODIS/ZooMain1.htm