



"Helping to maintain a healthy community"

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Press Release

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FALL RACCOON VACCINATION WILL START SEPT. 6, 2005

Chardon, Ohio. – August 30, 2005 – The United States Department of Agriculture, Ohio Department of Health, the Ohio Department of Agriculture, and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources will resume vaccinating raccoons for rabies in Lake and Geauga counties and parts of Cuyahoga, Summit and Portage Counties starting Tuesday, September 6. The Geauga County General Health District will be assisting with the vaccination program in Geauga County.

A raccoon is vaccinated by eating bait containing the oral rabies vaccine (ORV). Both ground baiting (using vehicles in more densely populated areas) and aerial baiting (using a low-flying airplane in rural areas) will be used in Geauga, Lake and Cuyahoga counties. Geauga County Health District vehicles will be seen distributing oral vaccine baits in the county's five municipalities starting Wednesday, September 7. On average, one bait is found for every 3.3 acres. It is estimated that the ORV baits will immunize about one third of the raccoon population for 1 year.

The bait is not harmful to humans, pets, or livestock. The bait is made of fishmeal, an ingredient in animal feed, so it is not harmful to touch intact bait. If you find intact bait near your home, leave it alone. However, if the bait is out in the open or where contact by pets or children is possible, put on gloves and toss it into deeper cover. If the bait is broken open or damaged, wear gloves or protect your hands by using a paper towel or plastic bag before picking it up and discarding it.

Important Reminders:

- Keep dogs and cats inside or on leashes for several days after your area has been baited. Most bait will be gone in about 3 days.
- Tell your children about the raccoon vaccination program and tell them to leave any bait alone.
- Do not handle partially eaten or damaged bait with bare hands.
- Damaged bait should be placed in a baggie and disposed of in normal trash.
- If you touch the bait or the liquid vaccine (red fluid inside the bait), thoroughly wash your hands or exposed skin with soap and water.
- The ORV baiting program is **NOT** a substitute for having your dog, cat or ferret vaccinated against rabies.

For more information, please contact the Geauga County Health District at (440) 285-2222 x 6578
