



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



19th Annual Rabies Bait Drop Begins Aug. 11



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Aug. 6, 2015

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Bait is Oral Rabies Vaccine for Wildlife

BURLINGTON — The 19th Annual **Rabies Bait Drop** will take place (weather permitting) Aug. 11- 20 across nine Vermont counties, including all of Chittenden County, to help stop the spread of the potentially fatal viral disease.

Nine of the 11 animals that have tested positive for rabies so far in 2015 have been in Chittenden County, including five in Burlington.

“Police Departments in Chittenden County do a really good job of responding to reports of animals acting strangely and making sure the animal is trapped and tested,” said Robert Johnson, DVM, state public health veterinarian.

Baits will be dropped into rural parts of Vermont, primarily across the northern region along the Canadian border, from low-flying planes for five days. More than 450,000 baits will be dropped from Beechcraft twin-engine airplanes at an altitude of 500 feet along planned flight lines at a rate of about 91 baits per linear mile.

The bait drop is managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Wildlife Services (USDA).

“Efforts to reduce the threat of rabies have performed well, particularly in northern Vermont near the border with Canada,” Dr. Johnson said. “The vaccine was developed in the mid-1980s, and it was the first oral vaccine for rabies to be used in the United States, the first bait ever to be used to control the disease in raccoons, and the first wildlife vaccine used in the United States.”

Hand placed baits will also be distributed in urban areas. The Health Department does not expect any adverse health effects for people or pets that may come into contact with the baits. The bait cannot cause rabies. Pet owners should keep their dogs on a leash during the bait drop period.

Anyone who finds the bait should leave it untouched, unless it is discovered on a lawn or driveway. Remove the bait with a glove and wash your hands with soap and water.

The sweet-scented baits are slightly larger than a quarter and come in blister packs covered by a dark green waxy coating.

Rabies is a fatal viral disease found mainly in raccoons, foxes, bats and skunks that can infect domestic animals and people as well. The virus can spread through the bite, or contact with saliva, from an infected animal. Rabies vaccine – if given soon after a human is bitten by a rabid animal – is highly effective. Once the signs and symptoms of rabies start to appear, there is no treatment and the disease is almost always fatal.

Avoid any animal that shows strange behavior. Do not try to trap or capture the animal, but instead call the state’s Rabies Hotline at 1-800-472-2437 (1-800-4-RABIES), or in-state 802-223-8697.

For more information visit www.healthvermont.gov.

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