



# Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease Virus type 2 (RHDV2)-VHD

- Rabbit haemorrhagic disease does not affect humans or other animals. However, it is highly contagious and fatal to domestic rabbits and wild rabbits.
- RHDV2 ,can be transmitted through direct contact with infected rabbits or carcasses, meat or fur, faeces, bodily fluids, bedding material, feed and water bowls, and hay.
- The virus can remain in the environment for an extended time, even in extreme temperatures. Pet owners and breeders should be alert for any signs their rabbits are infected..
- Infected animals may experience lethargy, decreased appetite, laboured breathing, swelling, and internal bleeding. Owners should also watch for bloodstained noses or mouths although often the only sign is sudden death of the animal.
- The best defence against RHDV2 infection is increased biosecurity measures and vaccination.





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**Rabbit owners are urged to follow these procedures:**

- Separate domestic rabbits from other pets, live-stock, and wild animals.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect surfaces and equip-ment used for rabbit care.
- Thoroughly wash hands, clothes, and shoes before and after contact with domestic rabbits.
- Dedicate a pair of shoes to be worn in rabbit hous-ing and don't wear them outside the housing area.
- Quarantine newly-acquired domestic animals for at least 30 days from other pets and livestock.
- Do not handle dead wild rabbits.





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## Hunting of Wild Rabbits

- VHD2 can persist in chilled or frozen rabbit meat for an undetermined period of time and may be a source of infection for domestic and wild rabbits.
- Hunters should wear gloves and disinfect tools, equipment, and hands after dressing wild rabbits.
- Hunted wild rabbits should not be dressed on the field and offal and skins should not be disposed of in the environment.
- Hunting dogs are not to be allowed to enter in the rabbit premises due to the risk to spread the disease.





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## Unwanted pet and commercial rabbits

- If you have a pet or commercial rabbit that you can no longer care for, the safest route is to give the rabbit up for adoption and not set it free outdoor.
- The release of domestic rabbits into the environment may result in the death of the rabbit, be the source of spread of diseases into the wild rabbit population and may be a source of genetic contamination to the wild rabbit population
- Your veterinarian, a number of NGO's, as well as rabbit clubs, may be helpful in finding a safe place for your rabbit



## Veterinary Regulation Directorate (VRD)

**If you find dead wild rabbits or if you are a rabbit owner, who is experiencing a high number of sudden deaths, you should immediately contact the Animal Health Unit - Veterinary Regulation Directorate 22925189/ 22925195/22925588**