



February 2018

APC renewal

It's APC renewal time. You should have received an email from us on 7 February.

That email has your username and password, as well as a link to the APC renewal site.

Your username and password are system generated and are new each year.

[Email us](#) if you need us to re-send the email to you.

RHDV1-K5 information

The application for the importation and release of RHDV1-V5 in New Zealand has been successful, and the product is now registered on the [ACVM register](#).

Proposed release regions are likely to be Canterbury, Otago and Marlborough, but it is expected that the virus will spread beyond these regions over time. A date for release of the virus has not yet been advised.

The applicants hope that the Korean variant (RHDV1 K5 or K5) will overcome the natural resistance that the New Zealand pest rabbit population has developed to the existing virus (RHDV1 v321). In naïve rabbits, there is no difference in morbidity and mortality between RHDV1 v321 and K5.

How to protect New Zealand's pet rabbits

1. Vaccination with Cylap®

The vaccination that is registered for use against RHDV1 v321 in New Zealand rabbits (Cylap®), **does not claim to have efficacy against K5**. The registered label recommendation is for Cylap to be administered at 10-12 weeks, followed by an annual booster.

The NSW Department of Primary Industries implemented a pilot study through the Invasive Animals CRC to determine the suitability of Cylap® to protect domestic and production rabbits from RHDV1 K5. The experiment compared the mortality of a small number of vaccinated and unvaccinated rabbits that were infected with a high dose of RHDV1 K5 thirty days post vaccination. All of the rabbits that were vaccinated with Cylap® survived the infection and none of the unvaccinated rabbits survived. Based on this study the indications are that Cylap® will provide protection against K5.

Rabbits at risk of exposure to K5 should be vaccinated with Cylap® (off-label protocol) and kept up-to-date. The Melbourne Rabbit Clinic's (Australia's first dedicated rabbit and guinea pig clinic) recommendation for Cylap® administration to protect against K5 is:

1. Vaccinate at 10-12 weeks
2. Booster at 14-16 weeks (off-label)
3. Booster 12 monthly (ongoing).

The off-label component is the addition of one extra vaccination 4 weeks after the initial vaccination.

Off-label use of the vaccination should only be done with consent from the owner.

In all instances vaccination should be administered to healthy animals, and a risk/benefit discussion with each owner is strongly recommended. Adverse events include skin reactions, inappetence and malaise, and should be notified.

2. Biosecurity Measures

1. Control insects (especially flies and fleas) as much as possible both indoors and outdoors.
Flies are the main vector through which the virus is spread.
2. Remove uneaten food on a daily basis.
3. Keep your pet rabbit indoors where possible.
4. Rabbit-proof your backyard to prevent access by wild rabbits.
5. Regularly decontaminate equipment and materials (e.g. cages, hutches, bowls) with either 10% bleach or 10% sodium hydroxide. 10minutes contact times is required, then rinse off.
6. Limit contact with and handling of unfamiliar pet rabbits.

7. Use good biosecurity measures (e.g. wash hands, shoes and clothing) after handling other people's rabbits.
8. Avoid cutting grass and feeding it to your rabbits if there is the risk of contamination from wild rabbits.
9. Infected rabbits should be isolated and disposed of in a manner that will minimise environmental contamination.

Thanks to NZVA for permission to reproduce this information.



Authorising the use and purchase of RVMs

Under the ACVM Act registered veterinarians who hold a current annual practising certificate are specifically 'recognised' to authorise the purchase of and use of RVMs.

However, the Act allows for this recognition to be suspended and withdrawn if veterinarians don't comply with the requirements. A breach could also result in prosecution.

Vetscript

Each month in Vetscript, our professional advisor Wayne Ricketts discusses issues that he's been thinking about. In [November](#) and [December](#), Wayne looked at issues around fitness to transport. In [February](#), he talked about approaches to regulation.

Vetscript is available to all NZVA members, and you can read Wayne's articles on our website.

