

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Guidance for Shows and Fairs

Due to the presence of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHDV2) in neighboring states, the Kansas Department of Agriculture's Division of Animal Health recommends that rabbit shows and events be canceled, postponed, or held by virtual means at this time. The decision to cancel, postpone, adapt to virtual, or continue rabbit shows and events will ultimately be up to the local event organizers. The American Rabbit Breeders Association is discouraging exhibitors, judges, registrars, transporters, and vendors residing in or traveling by motor vehicle through an area of the country that is part of an active RHDV2 outbreak. ARBA has a current map of RHDV2 cases at <https://arba.net/announcements/>. Breeders in these areas are also encouraged to enact strict biosecurity measures to reduce the opportunity of their herds contracting this deadly virus.

If event planning continues, KDA strongly recommends that event organizers consider extra precautionary measures to minimize the risk of transmission of RHDV2. The following strategies may be implemented:

ENTRY CONTROL MEASURES

Certificates of veterinary inspection (CVIs): CVIs could be required 48 hours prior to arrival at an event for in-state rabbits. RHDV2 is a highly contagious and potentially lethal disease of rabbits; commingling of rabbits at shows and events could present a risk for transmission of the RHDV2 virus. Rabbits could be incubating RHDV2 without exhibiting (showing) clinical signs of disease while at an event.

Out-of-state participants: Out-of-state rabbits are required to have a CVI prior to entry into Kansas. Participants should check with their state animal health officials prior to leaving for the event to determine the requirements for the return of rabbits to their state after the event. A list of contact information for all state animal health officials can be obtained at this website: <https://www.usaha.org/federal-and-state-animal-health>.

Exam of all incoming rabbits: A qualified, licensed and accredited veterinarian should be on site to oversee the examination process. If any rabbits are suspected of having RHDV2, the animals should not be permitted to enter the event and must be reported to the KDA Division of Animal Health office at 785-564-6601.

PREMISES CONTROL MEASURES

- **Event organizers should engage in regular observation of all susceptible rabbits for clinical signs of RHDV2** during the event. Suspect RHDV2 cases should be isolated and reported to the KDA Division of Animal Health office at 785-564-6601.
- Minimize common water and feed source use during the event.
- Discourage use of shared equipment and supplies between participants.

- Ensure there is appropriate distancing/spacing between cages so there is no contact between rabbits.
- Participants should wash their hands before and after handling the rabbit(s). Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are not effective against RHDV2.
- Participants should arrive at the show or event with clean clothing and clean/disinfected footwear.
- After returning home, participants should change clothes and footwear and wash their hands before caring for their own rabbits.
- Thorough cleaning and disinfection are very important at any facility where rabbits are housed. Suggested disinfectants include sodium hypochlorite (1:10 dilution household bleach), substituted phenolics such as 2% One-stroke Environ® (Vestal Lab Inc., St. Louis, MO), and potassium peroxymonosulfate (e.g. 1% Virkon-S by DuPont).
- More information can be found on the KDA website at www.agriculture.ks.gov/RHDV2. or on the USDA's fact sheet at https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/fs-rhdv2.pdf.

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