



Veterinary Health Advisement for Rabbit Venues & Pet Care Facilities
May 29, 2020

RABBIT HEMORRHAGIC DISEASE GUIDANCE FOR RABBIT VENUES, ANIMAL SHELTERS, RESCUES, AND RETAIL WHOLESALE FACILITIES THAT SELL RABBITS

Due to the presence of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHD) in Colorado, the Colorado Department of Agriculture State Veterinarian's Office (CDA) strongly recommends that rabbits are excluded from Critter Swaps or other shows or exhibitions at this time. RHD is a highly contagious and often lethal disease of rabbits. The commingling of rabbits at these events presents a risk for transmission of the RHD virus. As such, the American Rabbit Breeders Association is asking all breeders in AZ, NM, CO, UT, and western TX to voluntarily recognize a herd quarantine until RHD infections are effectively managed. If rabbit swap or exhibition events take place, CDA recommends that extra precautionary measures are implemented to minimize the risk of transmission of RHD:

ENTRY CONTROL MEASURES

For pet animal care facilities that import animals or for participants in swaps or exhibition events, Certificates of veterinary inspection (CVIs) should be required 3-5 days prior to entry for any rabbits coming into Colorado for sale or for an event but may not prevent rabbits who could be incubating RHD from developing clinical signs of the disease while at a Swap.

Out-of-state 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 has finished.

A qualified, licensed, and accredited veterinarian should oversee the examination of all incoming rabbits. If any rabbits are suspected of having RHD, the animals should not be permitted to enter the event and must be reported to the State Veterinarian's Office.

PREMISES CONTROL MEASURES

Minimize common water and feed sources and discourage the use of shared equipment and supplies when cleaning and disinfecting or between event participants. All employees of pet animal care facilities or event participants should wash their hands before and after handling the rabbit(s) and should maintain clean clothing and clean/disinfected footwear.

Thorough cleaning and disinfection are very important at any facility where rabbits are housed. Suggested disinfectants include sodium hypochlorite (1:10 dilution household bleach).

Pet animal care facilities and event organizers should routinely observe all susceptible rabbits for clinical signs of RHD. Suspect RHD cases should be isolated and reported to the State Veterinarian's Office.

Questions and suspected cases of RHD should be directed to the State Veterinarian's Office 303-869-9130. For more information about RHD visit colorado.gov/rhd.

