



**Ohio Department of Health**  
246 North High Street  
P.O. Box 118  
Columbus, Ohio 43216-0118  
www.odh.state.oh.us

*Bob Taft, Governor*  
*J. Nick Baird M.D., Director*

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Office of Public Affairs • (614) 644-8562  
Jay Carey, Director

## **ODH PLANS ORAL RACCOON VACCINATION BAITING**

COLUMBUS – The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) will once again participate in a multistate effort coordinated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to reduce the spread of raccoon strain rabies.

The Oral Rabies Vaccination (ORV) baiting begins Sept. 7 in Ohio, weather permitting, and cover 4,526 square miles of the state’s eastern border, creating a 25-mile wide immune barrier. The process will take about two weeks to complete.

As in past years, baiting will take place in Ashtabula, Trumbull, Mahoning, Columbiana and Jefferson counties, and parts of Carroll, Harrison, Belmont and Monroe counties. The baiting teams also will operate in eastern Washington County due to a suspect raccoon strain rabies case in West Virginia.

Other new baiting areas include portions of Cuyahoga, Portage and Summit counties as a precautionary measure following a cluster outbreak of raccoon rabies this summer in Lake, Geauga and Cuyahoga counties. To combat the outbreak, a supplemental vaccine baiting took place Aug. 5 in Lake and Geauga County, and along the eastern edge of Cuyahoga County. Those three areas are not part of the fall baiting effort.

“As this summer has shown, Ohio must remain vigilant in its efforts to contain raccoon-strain rabies,” said ODH Director, J. Nick Baird M.D. “Ongoing surveillance and oral rabies vaccine treatments are crucial steps in reducing the threat of raccoon rabies in Ohio.”

Most of the 879,159 baits will be distributed by air, with the use of specially equipped planes from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and a helicopter from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. In urban and residential areas, vaccine-laden baits will be distributed by vehicles staffed by local health departments and other local agency volunteers.

Ohio’s partners in the multi-state baiting are: Maryland, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Tennessee, in what is known as the Appalachian Ridge Oral Rabies Vaccination (ORV) program. The six-state effort will involve distribution of about 5 million baits and cover more than 26,000 square miles.

(more)

## **ODH Rabies Baiting**

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Residents are once again reminded to leave baits alone and to keep pets confined during the baiting period. Dogs in particular are attracted to the baits and will occasionally eat them. The baits are not harmful to pets. Do not try to take bait away from your pet. Please keep the following information in mind:

- Know what the baits look like. They are 1.25 x 1.25 x .75 inches in size, brown and square in shape. The vaccine packet is encased in a hard fishmeal polymer shell.
- Instruct children to leave the baits alone.
- Once your area is baited, keep dogs and cats inside or on leashes for at least a week. It is important that raccoons have every opportunity to eat the baits and become vaccinated.
- Do not attempt to take bait away from your pet; you may be bitten.
- Anyone handling baits should wear gloves. If baits are found in areas frequented by pets or children, toss them into deeper cover. Damaged baits can be disposed of in the trash.
- If a person is exposed to the vaccine (red liquid), wash any areas of the skin that came into contact with the vaccine thoroughly with soap and water.
- If someone has been exposed to the vaccine or has questions, call the local county health department or ODH's information line at 1-888-RABIES-1.

This is the eighth year ODH has conducted ORV baiting to reduce raccoon rabies activity in the northeast part of the state. It is the fourth time the department will be assisted by members of the Ohio National Guard. Additionally, ODH will be assisted by wildlife biologists from the USDA/APHIS Wildlife Services and staff from the Ohio departments of Natural Resources and Agriculture.

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For more information about the ORV Program at ODH please visit our Web site at:

<http://www.odh.state.oh.us/ODHPrograms/ZOODIS/ZooMain1.htm>

**Editors' Note: B-roll video clips or print-ready digital images are available by contacting the ODH Office of Public Affairs at (614) 644-8562. No media personnel will be permitted on flights per USDA policy.**