



JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

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Spring Oral Rabies Vaccine Bait Distribution Program to Begin

Watertown, NY – The United States Department of Agriculture, Wildlife Services program (USDA-WS) will begin an additional distribution of oral rabies vaccine (ORV) baits across Jefferson County in May. Bait distribution in New York is part of a nationwide, cooperative effort by USDA to prevent the spread of raccoon rabies in the eastern United States. While the USDA-WS typically conducts annual baiting in August, this supplemental bait drop aims to strengthen regional rabies prevention.

Baiting will be done through both aerial baiting with low flying aircraft and ground baiting (by hand) in some areas. Distribution of baits is weather-dependent and inclement weather may result in extended distribution.

New for this year, starting on May 10th, helicopters will distribute ORV baits across the City of Watertown, the Fort Drum Cantonment area, and populated areas along the Black River corridor. After this, fixed wing aircraft and ground distribution will begin on May 14th.

Each vaccine-containing bait consists of a plastic blister pack coated with a sweet attractant to entice animals to eat the bait. When raccoons, foxes, skunks and coyotes eat the bait, they become vaccinated against rabies which helps stop the spread of rabies.

If you find an ORV bait (pictured below), follow these simple steps:

- Leave the bait untouched. Instruct children to leave the baits alone.
- If you suspect skin contact with the vaccine itself, a pink-colored liquid, immediately wash the area with soap and water and call USDA-WS at 1-866-4-USDA-WS (1-866-487-3297) or call JCPHS at 315-786-3700 for further guidance.
- Do not attempt to remove a bait from your pet, as you may be bitten. The bait is not harmful to your pet. If by chance numerous baits are consumed, your pet may get an upset stomach. If your pet ingests a bait, avoid getting your pet's saliva into your eyes, mucous membranes or skin lesions for 24 hours.

Always notify your medical provider or JCPHS if you are bitten by a pet or a wild animal. Additionally, keep your pets up to date on their rabies vaccination. JCPHS is hosting spring rabies vaccination clinics at Jefferson County Dog Control on Thursday, May 21st 5:00-7:00pm and on Thursday, June 18th 5:00-7:00pm. More information can be found online at www.jcphs.org.

