

RABIES ADVISORY NOTICE FOR LIVESTOCK

This notice is being provided to you because you are the owner of an animal which has suffered exposure either through a bite wound or other contact with a rabid animal, or because your animal(s) has been near or in the same area as a known or suspect rabid animal.

Rabies, an endemic disease in New Jersey, is a fatal disease of warm-blooded mammals caused by a virus. Livestock can become infected with rabies in many different ways, the most common routes being (1) being bitten by a rabid animal; (2) coming into contact with saliva from an infected animal, dead or alive, come into contact with an open cut, sore or wound; or (3) getting saliva from an infected animal, dead or alive, having contact with its eyes, mouth or nose. Livestock that are not mammals, including fish and poultry, are not susceptible to rabies.

Rabies is commonly recognized as aggressive behavior in dogs and cats, and while this “furious” form of rabies does occur in livestock, they often manifest clinical signs of the “dumb” or “paralytic” form of rabies. Signs of the “dumb” form may include depression, refusal to eat, difficulty eating/drinking/swallowing, profuse drooling, blindness, head-pressing, circling, vocalizing, fever, straining to defecate, and limp tail. Other signs may include constant yawning, itching, or nibbling. Horse owners should be aware that rabies can also mimic signs of colic. Irrespective of clinical signs, rabies is rapidly progressive and always fatal. Clinical signs generally develop 3-4 weeks after exposure; however, the incubation period (time between exposure and development of clinical signs) may extend to six months or longer. You should seek the advice of a veterinarian if your livestock show any clinical signs during the period of observation and contact the proper authorities.

You can reduce the risk of rabies exposure in your livestock by:

- vaccinating your animals;
- limiting contact between your livestock and wildlife;
- avoid pasturing livestock in remote areas on your property where contact with wildlife is more likely;
- cleaning up any scrap material or equipment that wildlife might use for shelter or nesting; and
- not leaving out food (including pet food), scraps or garbage that could attract scavengers.

USDA licensed rabies vaccines that are available for livestock in the United States include those for horses, cattle and sheep. In New Jersey, rabies vaccinations must be administered by a veterinarian. Livestock that have contact with humans (e.g. farms, petting zoos, fairs, riding stables, shows, exhibitions, etc.) as well as livestock that are particularly valuable (such as valuable breeding stock) should be kept up-to-date with their rabies vaccine. Rabies vaccination is highly recommended in goats, pigs and new world camelids even in the absence of a label claim for licensed use in these animals. Please contact your veterinarian to discuss the possibilities.

If you have any questions about this notice, please contact the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Health at (609) 671-6400. If you have any questions about rabies in humans, dogs, cats, and ferrets please contact your local health department (www.localhealth.nj.gov) or the New Jersey Department of Health (<http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/rabies.shtml>).

MANAGEMENT OF LIVESTOCK EXPOSED TO A KNOWN OR SUSPECTED RABID ANIMAL

| Exposure Category | Currently Vaccinated | Not Currently Vaccinated |
|---|--|--|
| Category 1 (visible bite; known or suspect rabies animal) | - rabies booster ASAP - confinement notice - 45-day confinement | - euthanasia or - 6-month confinement in approved pen or facility - confinement notice - vaccination: booster immediately if previous vaccine lapsed/ vaccinate 1 month before release if never vaccinated |
| Category 2 (direct contact with known or suspect rabid animal; no visible wounds) | Same as above | Same as above |
| Category 3 (bites of unknown origin) | - rabies booster ASAP - Rabies Advisory Notice - 45-day observation (informal) | - administer rabies vaccine - Rabies Advisory Notice - advise observation for 6 months (informal) |
| Category 4 (possible contact with known or suspect rabid animal; no visible wounds) | Same as above | Same as above |

This information is intended for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace consultation with a health care professional.

References and further reading:

Rabies and Rabies-Related Lyssaviruses (<http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/rabies.pdf>) (2012); The Center for Food Security & public Health – Iowa State University

Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control, 2016

(<https://avmajournals.avma.org/doi/pdf/10.2460/javma.248.5.505>).

Veterinary Medicine 10th edition; A textbook of diseases of Cattle, horse, sheep, pigs and goats (2007).