

Calicivirus and vaccinations

Update for New Zealand veterinarians

19 July 2018

Results confirming rabbit calicivirus has impacted a small number of domestic rabbits are providing a timely reminder for veterinarians to ensure pet owners have access to the newest vaccination available.

A single domestic rabbit which died in Blenheim has tested positive for the new RHDV2 strain, while one outbreak of the original RHDV1 Czech strain was detected in samples from seven domestic rabbits in Canterbury. There have been no detected infections in domestic rabbits with the controlled calicivirus RHDV1 K5 release that was undertaken earlier in the year.

The May 2018 discovery of the new RHDV2 virus strain which has been found in a total of three wild rabbits in Marlborough and the Bay of Plenty confirmed the strain is established in New Zealand. It is unlikely that the new strain can be eradicated or contained now that it has been confirmed in wild rabbits on both the North and South Islands.

The first shipment of RHDV2 vaccine was sent in June 2018 to vets who had ordered it. Vets can place more orders for the RHDV2 vaccine withASUREQuality.

The New Zealand Veterinary Association recommends that when Filavac is available, it should be used to protect against all three strains.

Rabbits who receive Filavac do not need to continue receiving Cylap for their RHDV1 protection. If Cylap has already been administered, it is recommended that veterinarians wait two weeks before vaccinating with Filavac.

We encourage you to continue advising rabbit owners to follow practices to minimise potential risk to their animals, including controlling insects and not feeding grass grazed by wild rabbits.

Questions on the calicivirus RHDV2 response	MPI's general enquiries line: 0800 00 83 33 info@mpi.govt.nz
MPI Pest and Disease Hotline	0800 80 99 66