

**JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE**

Public Health Facility, 531 Meade Street, Watertown, New York 13601

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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 distribute oral rabies vaccine (ORV) baits in Jefferson County. Bait distribution in New York is part of a nationwide, cooperative effort by USDA to prevent the spread of raccoon rabies in the eastern U.S.

USDA-WS typically distributes ORV baits throughout Jefferson County in August each year. This additional bait drop will distribute ORV baits in northern regions of Jefferson County to prevent spread of rabies. Areas along the St. Lawrence River, the City of Watertown and LeRay will have increased number of baits distributed, as these areas have had persistent rabies cases. Weather permitting, ORV baits will be distributed by air beginning Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup> and continue through Wednesday, May 14<sup>th</sup>.

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. 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, unless it is in a lawn or driveway. Instruct children to leave the baits alone.
- If intact baits are found in areas frequented by children or pets, pick it up with paper towels/gloves and toss it into a brushy or forested area.
- If the bait is broken, the liquid should be visible. Use gloves to place the bait into a plastic bag. Cover the bait with 1:10 dilution of bleach and wipe down affected areas with bleach solution. Place the cleaning materials in a bag and dispose of in your regular garbage.
- If you have contact with a bait, wash your skin with soap and water. Contact the phone number on the bait or call Jefferson County Public Health Service (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 15<sup>th</sup> 5:00-7:00pm and on Thursday, June 19<sup>th</sup> 5:00-7:00pm. More information can be found online at [www.jcphs.org](http://www.jcphs.org).

