

July 2, 2013

RE: Low-level flights by MNR aircraft over/near your vicinity (weather dependent) –August 26-30

As in previous years, the Wildlife Rabies Control Program of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources will distribute rabies vaccine-baits in the Niagara Region. The intention is to reach wild raccoons and prevent the reincursion of raccoon strain rabies into Ontario from New York.

There will be approximately four staff based at the St. Catharines/Niagara District Airport during the dawn to dusk operations.

The baits will be distributed between the Welland Canal and the Niagara River from an OMNR EC130 helicopter flying at or below 150 meters above ground. The normal baiting flights consist of to-and-fro transect (flight) lines, approximately 750m apart. Our field airbase is **St. Catharines/Niagara District Airport** and all of the baiting flights will originate from there. A baiting flight lasts about 2.5 hours during which time about 5,000 to 10,000 baits are dropped. The helicopter will conduct three or four baiting flights per day (weather permitting). We will stop dropping baits in areas where the flight lines traverse urban or other built-up areas.

The khaki-green coloured bait being dropped from the aircraft is made of wax-fat with an attractant flavour (vanilla-sugar). A label with a toll-free 1-888-574-6656 telephone number and "Do not eat" warning are on the exterior of the bait and a plastic package containing the liquid rabies vaccine is embedded in the centre. If found, the bait should not be touched, but left for foxes, skunks and raccoons to consume.

The baiting flights will occur between August 26 to 30, 2013 and flights are weather dependent. The exact date or time of the individual flights over a particular area is generally known only shortly prior to the actual flight.

Should you receive any enquiries from community members, please direct them to the Rabies Hotline (1-888-574-6656) or to me.

For any additional information, please feel free to contact me as well.

Regards,

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Natural. Valued. Protected.

Rabies vaccine-bait identification

Fall 2011

There is currently one type of vaccine bait, the Ultra-lite, that is used in Ontario for both fox and raccoon rabies control. Exposure to the bait is not harmful to people or pets; however, in the unlikely event that people or pets come in contact with the vaccine contained in the bait, contacting a doctor or veterinarian as a precaution is recommended.

Bait Ingredients

The bait formula coats the blister pack containing the vaccine. This formula consists of vegetable based fats, wax, icing sugar, vegetable oil, artificial marshmallow flavour and dark-green food grade fat-soluble dye. Also included in the bait formula is a small amount of tetracycline which is used as a marker so that researchers can determine if an animal has consumed a vaccine bait.

*Ultra-lite vaccine bait*

Blister-pack (Vaccine Carrier)

Ultra-lite

This is a polyvinyl chloride (PVC) blister pack (40 mm x 22 mm x 10 mm) which weighs approximately 4.3 grams. The blister pack is a teal green polyester flocked container with a heat-sealed laminated polyester lidding. The body of the blister pack is embedded in the bait matrix but the green lidding is exposed and has a black warning label printed on it.

Vaccine in Baits

ONRAB oral rabies vaccine

Description: a recombinant live virus liquid vaccine

Volume/bait: 1.8 ±0.1 ml in the blister pack

Other inclusions: antibiotics and vaccine stabilizers

Colour: pale orange to pale pink

Target species: skunk, possibly fox and raccoon

-30-

Contact:

Natalie Gorman, Rabies Research and Development Unit
705-755-1551

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Ontario.ca/rabies

Rabies Control Operations

Ontario 2013

-  Raccoon strain aerial baiting
August
-  Fox strain aerial baiting
September
-  Raccoon strain hand-baiting
September

