



Feral Rabbit Control

Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease Virus RHDV1 K5 use in the City of Rockingham

Why control feral rabbits?

Feral rabbits are Australia's most destructive agricultural pest animal, costing millions in lost agricultural production annually. From a conservation perspective, rabbits prevent the natural regeneration of native vegetation and compete with native animals for food. As part of an integrated feral animal management program, RHDV1 K5 is used by City of Rockingham contractors for the control of feral rabbits.

What is RHDV1 K5?

RHDV1 K5 is a naturally occurring Korean variant of the Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV1) that has been present in Australia since 1996.

In April 2016, RHDV1 K5 was approved as a Restricted Chemical Product by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicine Authority for the biological control of wild rabbit populations in Australia. The RHDV1 K5 virus was released in March 2017 at more than 600 locations nationally and 110 across Western Australia.

RHDV1 K5 causes a fatal haemorrhagic disease in the European rabbit. Once a rabbit contracts the virus, death is rapid. RHDV is one of the more humane methods of controlling wild rabbits. There is no treatment or cure for the disease, however a vaccine for domestic and production rabbits is available.

Application of RHDV1 K5

The supply and use of RHDV1 K5 in Western Australia to authorised users was enabled under the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Regulations Amendment 2017. The City of Rockingham uses licenced, qualified and experienced contractors that have completed formal training with Department Primary Industries and Regional Development for the handling and application of RHDV1 K5.

Vaccination of domestic rabbits

Up-to-date vaccinations and insect proofing of hutches will safeguard domestic pet rabbits against RHDV1 K5 and other rabbit diseases that occur in Australia. Please speak with your local vet for further advice.

Further Information

- Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/biological-control/rabbit-biocontrol-rhdv1-k5-national-release>
- Australian Veterinary Association, <https://www.ava.com.au/node/86882>

