



HEALTH DEPARTMENT Public Health Unit

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH- Linda Beers, MPH
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For More Information:

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Rabies Bait Drops Planned for Essex County in August

Rabies bait drops are part of a comprehensive effort by the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to reduce rabies in wildlife, primarily raccoons and skunks. Bait drops will be conducted this year in Essex County during the week of August 7-11. This ongoing program involves distributing oral rabies vaccine (ORV) baits across designated areas throughout eastern states in the US. The effectiveness of the ONRAB vaccine bait to control rabies spread is being closely monitored as part of the initiative.

Beginning in early August, a total of 1.7 million ONRAB Oral Rabies Vaccine (ORV) baits will be distributed across predetermined geographic regions in New York State. While ECHD shares our local rabies data with USDA and makes recommendations for locations with the most need for rabies prevention, APHIS ultimately decides the geographical areas to receive the ONRAB bait.

Each ONRAB bait is a sealed package containing the vaccine and a palatable attractant. Animals consuming the bait will receive a dose of rabies vaccine, thereby developing immunity to the disease. It is important to note that ONRAB baits pose no risk to humans, livestock or pets. If encountered, please leave the bait undisturbed. In the event of contact with the bait, promptly wash the affected area with soap and warm water. A toll-free number is printed on each bait for any inquiries or concerns.

Controlling rabies is important because rabies is a serious public health concern. While rabies is almost always fatal once symptoms appear, it is also 100% preventable. To date this year, Essex County has had five lab-confirmed cases of rabies in wild animals (2 skunk; 2 raccoon; 1 woodchuck). Forty-six other specimens submitted from Essex County to date in 2024 have tested negative for the virus.

The Essex County Health Department is committed to supporting rabies prevention through additional efforts, such as free vaccine clinics, animal testing, post-exposure prophylaxis, and public education.

Report human rabies exposures, such as potential bat contact or animal bites to ECHD at 518-873-3500.



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If your pet or livestock has contact with saliva or brain tissue of a suspected rabid animal, contact your veterinarian for medical care and contact ECHD to determine if additional follow-up is necessary.

To learn more about rabies or the ORV program, visit

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/national-wildlife-programs/rabies/vaccine>.

To register a dog, cat, or ferret for a rabies vaccine clinic, go to

<https://essexcountyny.gov/Health/rabies-clinics/>

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