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**Mahoning County
District Board of Health**

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE	CONTACT: Mary Helen Smith Environmental Health Director Mahoning County District Board of Health (330) 270-2855 ext. 134 mhsmith@mahoninghealth.org
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ANNUAL RACCOON-RABIES VACCINATION BAITING BEGINS
IN MAHONING COUNTY
SEPTEMBER 3-5, 2014

To stop the spread of raccoon-rabies variant (RRV), the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) is currently working with federal, state, and local agencies to conduct their annual raccoon-rabies baiting operation. Baiting will take place in 14 northeastern Ohio counties with the operation taking place from Wednesday, August 20 to September 19, 2014. Ground baiting in Mahoning County will take place beginning September 3 and will run through September 5, 2014.

Rabies is a viral infection that can affect the nervous system of any mammal, including humans. It is almost always fatal. Rabies can spread rapidly and infect large numbers of raccoons making human exposure a concern. Rabies baiting operations are intended to create an immune barrier along Ohio's state lines to prevent the spread of RRV into the rest of the state.

Baits will be distributed by aircraft, helicopter, and vehicles staffed by USDA and staff from the local health departments. Residents should be aware of low-flying aircraft and baits should be left alone.

Baits and Humans

- Know what the baits look like. The plastic sachet, which will be distributed by aircraft, is about the size of a ketchup packet. It is white and rolled in a brown fishmeal glaze. In urban areas, where baits will be distributed by vehicle, the sachet will be inside a hard, brown fishmeal block, about 2-x-2-inch square. [Photos of the baits can be found on our website.](#)
- If baits are found in areas frequented by pets or children, toss them into a fence row, woodlot, ditch, or other raccoon habitat areas. Damaged baits should be bagged and disposed in the trash.
- Wear gloves, plastic bag, or use a towel if handling bait. Although there is no harm to touching damaged bait, they have a strong fishmeal smell.

50 Westchester Drive
Youngstown, OH 44515

- Wash hands and any exposed skin thoroughly with soap and water if exposed to the vaccine (liquid).
- Exposure to people who have skin, mucous membrane or eye contact with vaccine, as well as those who have eczema, have exposed breaks in skin, are pregnant, or are immunocompromised should seek medical attention if they experience any rash, fever, sore throat, headache, conjunctivitis, vomiting or diarrhea within 21 days of the exposure.
- In the event of human or pet contact with the bait/vaccine, call the Rabies Information line at 614-752-1029, option 4, call the Mahoning County District Board of Health at 330-270-2855 or Youngstown City Health Department at (330) 743 - 3333.

Baits and Pets

- Once your area is baited, keep dogs and cats inside or on leashes for up to five days. Most baits disappear within 24 hours; however, it is important that raccoons have every opportunity to eat them.
- Dogs in particular are attracted to the baits and will occasionally eat them. A few baits are not harmful to pets, although vomiting and diarrhea have occurred after pets have ingested multiple baits.
- Do not attempt to take remove bait from an animal's mouth, as you could be bitten.

In Ohio (Ohio Administrative Code 1501:31-15-03), it is illegal to live trap, move and release raccoons. Anyone dealing with a nuisance raccoon cannot relocate the animal. There are only two legal options for nuisance raccoons: euthanize or release on the same property where they were live trapped. Uninformed people who are relocating nuisance raccoons may be contributing to rabies crossing the barrier.

The rabies virus is found in the saliva of affected animals, most often raccoons, skunks and bats, and is spread when saliva from an infected animal gets into a wound or mucous membrane (such as the eye or mouth). Animal bites are the most common route of exposure. Bats, raccoons, and skunks pose the greatest risk of rabies in Ohio. To protect your family against this still-deadly disease:

- Avoid contact with wild animals and animals you do not know.
- Vaccinate your pets against rabies and keep them current on their shots.
- If bitten, call your doctor. If your pet has contact with a wild animal, call your veterinarian.
- Rabies exposures should also be reported to your local health department.

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