



RABBIT VIRAL DISEASES

<http://www.home.netspeed.com.au/reguli/rabbitclub.htm>

MYXOMATOSIS

- Symptoms: swollen genitals, swollen area around eyes, weepy eyes, lethargy, stops eating & drinking. Slow, cruel death so euthanasia only option once diagnosed.
- Spread by mosquitoes mostly. Virus does not live long outside a body. Protect with flyscreen wire and mosquito netting.
- NO CURE AND NO VACCINE (vaccines exist overseas but are NOT allowed in Australia)

RABBIT HAEMORRHAGIC DISEASES (CALICI VIRUSES)

Calici viruses are known to mutate and also at least one (RHDV2) has the potential to jump species. There are three variants around (that the government will admit to):-

- 1) RHDV-1a (also known as the Czech virus). The original virus. Somehow escaped Wardang Island (South Australia) in 1995. There is a vaccine, Cylap. This has not been updated in 20 years but it will protect against RHDV-1a. The vaccine should be administered annually when the rabbit is over 10 weeks as under that age, it has a natural immunity. **NO CURE BUT THERE IS A VACCINE (albeit a dated one)**
- 2) RHDV-2. This is a different virus which somehow turned up in Canberra in August 2015 and rapidly spread around the country, causing massive losses of domestic rabbits – pets, exhibition rabbits and meat rabbits. Many commercial rabbitries have been wiped out. Deaths are in the thousands, particularly in WA, SA and Tasmania. Cylap gives no protection and it can kill rabbits as young as 4 weeks. There is a vaccine developed in France but it is not allowed in this country. **NO CURE AND NO VACCINE**
- 3) RHDV-1a-K5 (also known as the Korean virus) This one is being deliberately released. It is being sent to farmers who request it by Australia Post (Startrack). March 2017 is when it will be sent out. There is a lot of conflicting information about this. The Australian Veterinary Association (and thus most vets) claim Cylap will give protection but this is based on a very small sample test which, in other circumstances, would not pass muster. They also recommend off-label increasing of the strength and frequency of the dose. The manufacturer does not endorse either of these. The best that can be said is that it **MAY** give some protection. There is no vaccine anywhere specifically against K5. You can vaccinate but be aware it may not be effective against this strain. **NO CURE AND NO SPECIFIC VACCINE**
 - Symptoms of all RHDV variants are similar: There are very few. The rabbit is healthy and eating well one day and dead the next. Some might be a bit lethargic. There may be some blood from the nose or other orifices but not always. Sometimes it can take longer and the rabbit struggles to breathe as blood fills its lungs and it literally drowns in its own blood. It can die screaming in pain – so much for government claims it is a more humane way of killing rabbits.
 - The virus is very persistent. It can live outside a body for 4 to 6 months. It can be carried on clothing, shoes and car tyres, fur of other animals, flies or other insects, on hay or lucerne trees, grass. However, it can be killed quite easily with a 10% solution of bleach or F10 veterinary disinfectant. It can travel very fast – over 450 km in a day. It is also fast acting – one breeder lost all his rabbits in 48 hours, another noted 10 days from the first to the last death.

- Prevention apart from vaccination where it would be effective: covering all cages with flyscreen wire or mosquito netting, moving rabbits inside, spraying F10 around their cages, insect spray to kill possible carriers, excluding wild rabbits, foot baths (cat trays filled with disinfectant for shoes of anyone entering where pet/exhibition rabbits are), restricting entry to strangers and anyone who doesn't have to be there.

What can you do?

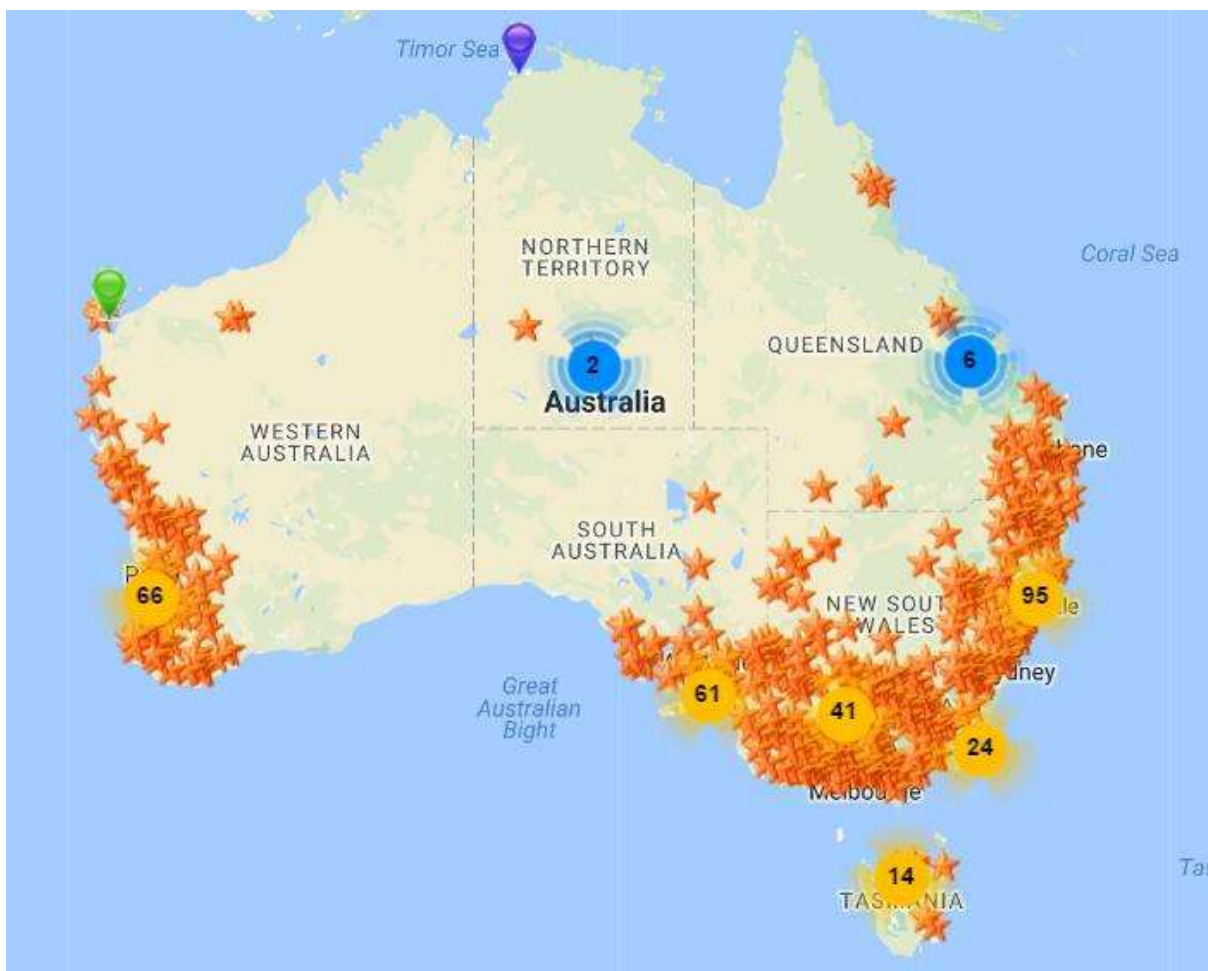
Contact Barnaby Joyce (minister@maff.gov.au) and voice your concerns that these viruses have been released without proper vaccinations being made available beforehand.

Contact your local member and ask the same questions.

Sign the petitions

- Vaccine for RHDV2 <https://www.change.org/p/barnaby-joyce-new-vaccine-needed-for-new-rabbit-virus-rhdv2-now>
- Against the approval for (and release of) K5 virus <https://www.change.org/p/we-are-against-the-approval-of-k5-calici-virus-made-in-korea-for-use-in-australia-please-help-stop-this-happening>

Join the Facebook Group Against K5 Virus and for a Vaccine to Save Rabbits from RHDV2 to be kept up to date with factual information <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1486751604975052/>



Map of release sites for K5 (the orange stars)