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NEWS RELEASE - RABBIT HEMORRHAGIC DISEASE
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PIERRE, S.D. - Rabbit owners in South Dakota should be aware that a fatal, highly contagious viral disease of rabbits has recently been identified in multiple states. Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus, or RHDV, has been diagnosed as the cause of death in wild rabbits and hares in New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, Colorado, and California as well as domestic rabbits in Washington, New York, New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, Colorado, and Nevada.

To date, the virus has not been identified in South Dakota. It is important, however, that rabbit owners be vigilant for the disease. RHDV may be the cause of sudden death, fever, anorexia, wasting, diarrhea, and respiratory illness in rabbits. The virus is spread directly between rabbits and can survive for a few weeks in contaminated environments. Enhanced biosecurity with good cleaning and sanitation practices will help prevent introduction and spread of the virus. Rabbit owners should consider restricting visitors to their rabbitries, and isolate new additions for at least 2 weeks. There is currently no vaccine for RHDV licensed for use in the United States, although a foreign produced vaccine is available in states where the virus has already been identified. RHDV does not infect humans, livestock, or non-rabbit pets.

Rabbit owners should be alert to the health of their rabbits and should report any illness to their veterinarian. All rabbits entering South Dakota must be accompanied by a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI, or health certificate). Rabbit owners are encouraged to work with local veterinarians or contact the state veterinarian in the state of destination when planning movement of rabbits out of state.

Additional information can be found on the AIB website: <https://aib.sd.gov/otherdisease.html>

*OEDEKOVEN (OH' dih koh ven)