
RESOLUTION NUMBER: 4 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON ONE HEALTH

**SUBJECT MATTER: Funding for Fiscal Year 2023 for the United States
Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health
Inspection Service, Wildlife Services National Rabies
Management Program**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS), National Rabies Management Program (NRMP) has demonstrated that strategic implementation of cooperative oral rabies vaccination (ORV) programs targeting wildlife are cost-effective in reducing rabies transmission to protect human and animal health and reduce the cost of living with rabies. The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) determined that the most effective strategy to control terrestrial rabies targets the sources of infection (i.e., wildlife vector populations) with landscape scale control efforts. ORV programs are designed to immunize target wildlife species by increasing the percentage of rabies-immune animals within vaccination zones, resulting in the reduction of rabies cases, prevention of viral spread (Phase 1 goal of the NRMP), and eventual raccoon rabies variant elimination (Phase 2 goal of the NRMP).

A comprehensive raccoon rabies management strategy has been cooperatively developed with federal, state, provincial, and local partners for the elimination of the raccoon rabies variant in the United States (US) and Canada. In 2020, the NRMP and cooperators distributed greater than 9 million ORV baits, greater than 8.2 million in the eastern United States to combat raccoon rabies in 17 states and greater than 1 million in Texas to prevent the reemergence of canine rabies in coyotes and grey foxes along the Mexican border. The total area baited in 2020 was greater than 62,000 square miles, an area slightly smaller than Wisconsin. In 2019, 20 miles of the ORV zone, equating to 2,324 square miles, was removed along the border with Canada in northern New York, Vermont, and New Hampshire. In 2020, an additional 32 km (20mi) of the ORV zone, equating to 496 square miles, was removed along the border with Canada and northern New York. Additionally, 4,012 square miles of ORV zone was removed in Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, and Kentucky because raccoon rabies was eliminated from those areas. Baits were shifted into raccoon rabies enzootic areas of Maine, New York, and Alabama and reclassified as 1,322 square miles as new area under management. To date, there was no new NRMP initiated contingency actions in 2021.

Successful ORV programs in Texas continue with rabies elimination in gray foxes and maintenance of an immune barrier along the Mexican border to keep the US free of canine rabies in coyotes and gray fox rabies.

The requested funding will allow USDA to:

- Continue the enhanced rabies surveillance program, including USDA-APHIS-WS _____ biologists, conducting between 5,000-7,000 field rabies tests each year, 8% of all _____ rabies testing in the US
- Implement contingency actions in response to rabid animals in sensitive areas
- Continue Phase 1 of the NRMP to maintain existing ORV programs to control rabies and prevent spread in wildlife populations
- Continue the evaluation of novel and US-licensed vaccines and baits
- Continue studies related to rabies control in skunks, mongoose, and vampire bats
- Initiate and enhance the operations of Phase 2 of the NRMP to eliminate the raccoon rabies variant in the US

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association requests the 117th Congress to appropriate a minimum of \$33 million for the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services, National Rabies Management Program.