

# RHDV2 Information Session

Presented by Tom Laca & Beth Hayes



**PUEBLO COUNTY**

**COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION**

# Introduction of Presenters

Tom Laca

- Agriculture & Natural Resource Agent
- Background



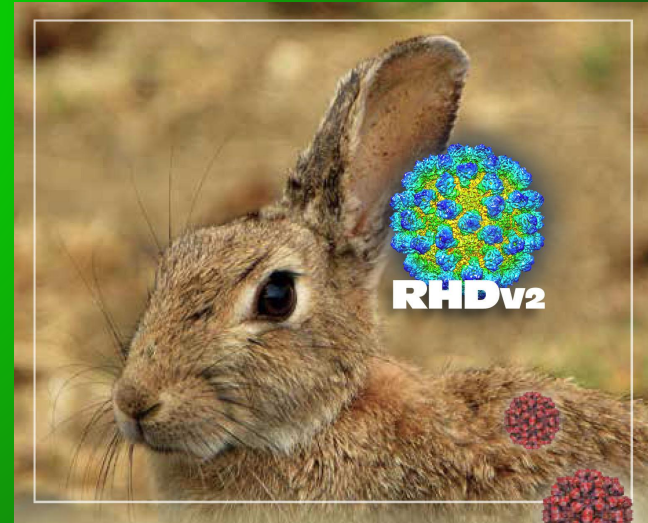
Beth Hayes

- 4-H & Youth Development Coordinator
- Background



# What is RHDV2?

- Foreign Animal Disease (FAD)
- RHDV2 is a new variant of rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus(RHDV)
- RHDV first known outbreak in 1984 in China.
  - Did not affect hares but mostly European rabbit species
- RHDV2 Virus causes rapid necrosis of the liver.
- Highly Contagious
- Very persistent

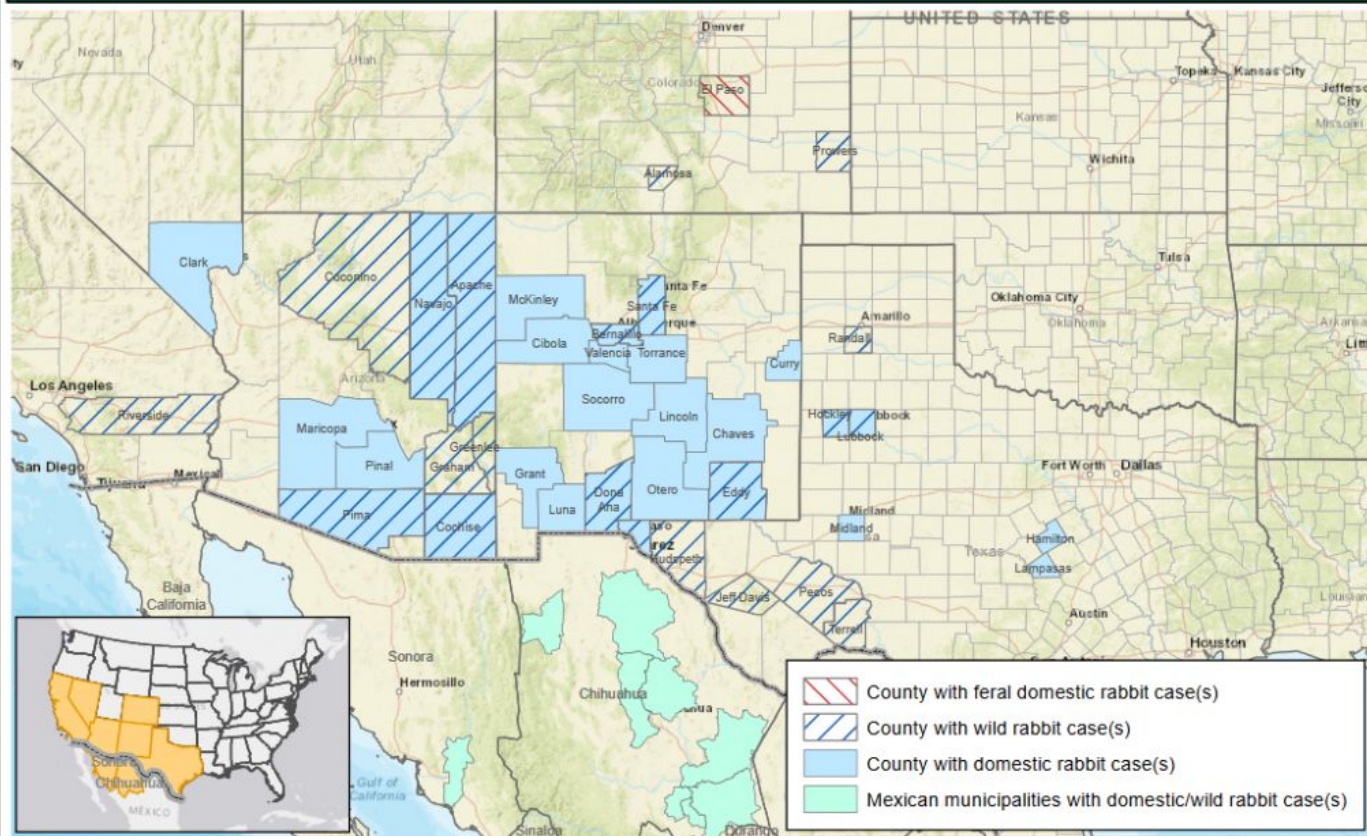


# Disease Origin

- China in the winter of 1983-84.
  - Spread from Angora Rabbits imported from Europe.
  - Killed 14 million domesticated rabbits in China in 9 months.
- Periodic outbreaks worldwide but rare.
- Sporadic cases in the US since 2000
- RHDV2 emerged in 2010 in Europe.
- March 2020 detected in wild and domestic rabbits in AZ, NM and TX.
- Confirmed in CO April 17, 2020 in Alamosa County.



### RHDV2 Affected Counties - Domestic, Wild, and Feral Rabbit Cases



USDA, APHIS, VS  
Center for Epidemiology and Animal Health  
2150 Centre Ave.  
Fort Collins, CO 80526  
Data Source:  
APHIS, USDA

0 10 Miles

0 100 200

Coordinate System: WGS 1984 Web Mercator Auxiliary Sphere

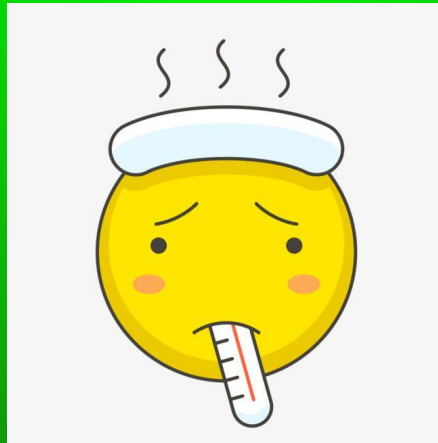
These data, and all the information contained therein, have been collected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), or by its cooperators on APHIS' behalf, for restricted government purposes only and is the sole property of APHIS. See full disclaimer here: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/help/mao-disclaimer>

# Transmission

- Spread through direct and indirect contact and contamination.
  - Infected rabbits
  - Meat
  - Fur
  - Food/water
  - Birds and scavengers
  - Insects
  - People
- Highly persistent in the environment.
  - Not affected by temperatures.
  - Can survive for long periods outside of the host.
  -

# Signs & Symptoms

- Sudden death!
- Possible blood stained nose caused by internal bleeding.
- May develop fever, loss of appetite, respiratory and nervous signs
  - Regular temperature 100-103.5 Fahrenheit
- Do not handle dead rabbits.
  - Multiple dead rabbits could also be caused by tularemia or plague (zoonotic.)



# Current Status

- Colorado: 3 Counties-Alamosa, El Paso and Prowers
  - All in wild populations
- Texas: 11 Counties
- New Mexico: 15 Counties
  - No longer testing wild rabbits
- Arizona: Multiple counties.
- These are the first states to see this disease in wild populations.



# Treatment

- NONE!
  - If a rabbit survives an infection it can then be a carrier.
  - All rabbits exposed should be depopulated to prevent further spread.



# Biosecurity

- Goal:
  - To limit the spread of the disease from infected animals to healthy ones
- **DO NOT TOUCH!**
  - Use gloves and double bag the bodies to dispose of them
  - Report suspected deceased domestic rabbits to the State Veterinarian
  - Report suspected deceased wild rabbits to the State Wildlife Manager
- Keep domesticated rabbits indoors
- Wash your hands
- Keep surfaces clean and disinfected
  - Keep surface wet with disinfectant for 10 minutes
  - Two disinfectants that are proven effective
    - 1% solution of Sodium hydroxide (also known as lye or caustic soda)
    - Formalin (1 2%) a solution of formaldehyde and water
  - NOTE: Quaternary ammonium compounds, chloroform, and trypsin **DO NOT** affect RHD



# Who do you call?

- Domestic Rabbit Deaths
  - Colorado State Veterinarian
  - Keith Roehr
  - (303) 869-9130
- Wild Rabbit Deaths
  - Pueblo Regional Parks & Wildlife Office
  - (719) 561-5300



# Online Resources

- Colorado Department of Agriculture
  - <https://www.colorado.gov/aganimals/rabbit-hemorrhagic-disease-virus-rhdv2>
  - <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/agmain/news/rabbit-hemorrhagic-disease-occurrences-must-be-reported-state-veterinarian>
- Colorado State University Veterinary Extension
  - <http://veterinaryextension.colostate.edu/>
  - Direct Line: 970-217-2051
- Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Website
  - <https://www.rhdv2.com/is-it-rhdv2>



**COLORADO**  
**Department of Agriculture**



**Colorado State University**  
**Extension**

# Questions, Comments or Concerns?

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