

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – September 20, 2012

Nassau County Department of Health Continues Rabies Baiting Program *Raccoon Rabies Vaccine to be distributed by Truck*

Uniondale, NY - Continuing the effort to maintain a successful raccoon rabies program in Nassau County, Nassau County Department of Health and Cornell University will again distribute raccoon rabies vaccine bait to protect residents from rabies. Rabies vaccine baits will be distributed in the northwestern portion of the county in response to the most recent case of rabies reported in Queens.

What: Rabies bait*, which is attractive to raccoons and includes a vaccine packet, will be distributed in raccoon habitats which include woods, bushes, streambeds and sewers.

*There is a label that clearly identifies the bait packet: "Rabies Vaccine Live Vaccinia Vector. Do Not Disturb, Merial, Inc Us Vet Lic. No. 298 1-877-722-6725."

When: Weather permitting, truck distribution will be from September 24th through October 19th.

Where: The baiting area will cover the following towns and villages;

Town of Hempstead

Bellerose, Bellerose Terrace, East Garden City, Elmont, Floral Park, Franklin Square, Garden City, Garden City South, Hempstead, Lakeview, Lynbrook, Malverne, Malverne Oaks, New Hyde Park, North Lynbrook, North Valley Stream, Rockville Centre, South Floral Park, South Hempstead, Stewart Manor, Valley Stream, and West Hempstead.

Town of North Hempstead

Albertson, Baxter Estates, Carle Place, East Hills, East Williston, Floral Park, Flower Hill, Garden City Park, Glenwood Landing, Great Neck, Great Neck, Great Neck Estates, Great Neck Gardens, Great Neck Plaza, Greenvale, Harbor Hills, Herricks, Kensington, Kings Point, Lake Success, Manhasset, Manhasset Hills, Manorhaven, Mineola, Munsey Park, New Hyde Park, North Hills, North New Hyde Park, Old Westbury, Plandome, Plandome Heights, Plandome Manor, Port Washington, Port Washington North, Roslyn, Roslyn Estates, Roslyn Harbor, Roslyn Heights, Russell Gardens, Saddle Rock, Saddle Rock Estates, Sands Point, Searingtown, Thomaston, University Gardens, Westbury, and Williston Park.

Town of Oyster Bay

Brookville, East Hills, Glen Cove, Glen Head, Glenwood Landing, Greenvale, Matinecock, Old Brookville, Old Westbury, Roslyn Harbor, Sea Cliff, and Upper Brookville.

Why: Although Nassau County has not seen raccoon rabies since 2007, rabies has been reported to Nassau County in the past, with 67 raccoons confirmed to be infected since 2004. Because of

the threat to wildlife and domestic animals from terrestrial rabies, action needs to be continued to prevent rabies from becoming endemic here in Nassau County.

How: Raccoons are attracted by the scent of the bait and are immunized when they eat the contents of the vaccine packet.

Recommendations: The Nassau County Department of Health recommends:

- To avoid inadvertent contact with the baits, supervise children's outdoor activities both during and for approximately one week following the bait distribution.
- Call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 immediately in the unlikely event that a child bites through the packet and ingests the liquid, or if there is any human contact with the bait.
- Wash hands immediately before calling to report the exposure if anyone comes in bare-hand contact with the bait (even if the bait is intact.) The bait packet itself will not harm anyone.
- Keep all dogs and cats indoors or on leashes during the oral bait distribution and for about a week afterwards. This will allow raccoons to eat the vaccine-laden baits and become immunized and will decrease the chance of pets eating the baits. Call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 if you have seen your pet with bait in its mouth.
- The baits are not harmful to dogs or cats, but a pet may vomit if they eat a large number of them. Do not try to remove a packet from an animal's mouth.
- **Remember that it is not possible to get rabies from the vaccine.** The vaccine does not contain the rabies virus. It does contain attenuated vaccinia virus, a weakened version of the virus.
- If residents find bait near their homes, but not in the open, leave it alone. The bait packets have a strong fishmeal smell that is not attractive to people or to most other animals.
- If the bait is intact and out in the open where pets or children are more likely to encounter it, toss it into deeper cover under trees or bushes while wearing gloves or using a plastic bag.
- Residents who see raccoons should NOT try to trap the raccoons themselves. Call a licensed trapper.

General Information: Rabies is a viral infection that affects the nervous system of raccoons and other mammals, including humans. The disease is essentially always fatal once clinical signs of infection occur. Vaccination will greatly decrease the chance of human and domestic animal contact with rabid raccoons. Rabies is transmitted by the bite of a rabid animal. However, the

virus may also be transmitted when the saliva of a rabid animal comes into contact with cut or scratched skin lesions.

For additional information regarding rabies and baiting, call Nassau County Department of Health at (516) 227-9663 weekdays from 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM or visit the department website at <http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/health/rabies.html> or the state website at www.health.state.ny.us/diseases/communicable/zoonoses/rabies.

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