

Releasing K5 rabbit virus

A quick guide

K5 is a strain of rabbit haemorrhagic disease virus (RHDV). This guide will assist South Australian landholders to time virus release to control wild European rabbits. The virus should only be released during autumn and early summer.

1. Pre-release planning

Order K5

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Store virus in your refrigerator. Follow label Directions For Use and the PestSMART procedure.

Timing is critical – release during autumn and early summer

The virus is most effective when the temperature is not too hot and when there are lots of flies around.

Release the virus during:

- autumn – high proportion of adult rabbits
- early summer – high proportion of young rabbits >12 weeks (>900g) of age.

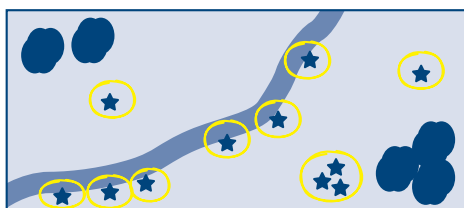
Confirm rabbit hotspots and density with spotlight

- location of rabbit hotspots and active warrens
- rabbit density before K5 release (low, medium, high).



Create a property map

Map where you plan to lay free feed and K5 treated bait.



2. Steps to release the virus

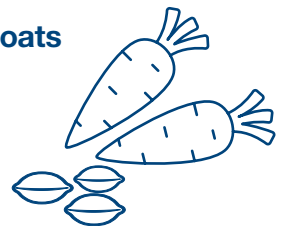
Choose your bait – carrots or oats

Treated carrots (cubed):

- one K5 vial per 10kg

Treated oats (with husk):

- one K5 vial per 5kg



Choose your dispersal method

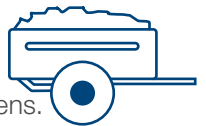
Hand trail for:

- small areas
- difficult to reach areas.



Bait layer for:

- large areas
- high density of rabbits and active warrens.



Calculate how much bait you need

Estimate bait required:

- 5-10kg per kilometre trail of carrots
- 2-5kg per kilometre trail of oats.



Free feeding trail

Lay a trail of untreated bait:

- three consecutive evenings (dusk) around active warrens
- around 10-20m from warren entrance.

Following morning:

- remove any uneaten bait
- if all free feed was eaten increase amount
- if bait not eaten, reduce free feed amount until about 10% remains the following morning
- this helps you estimate the amount of bait needed for the virus release night.

3. Virus suspension

Use personal protective gear (clothes, gloves, and glasses) and wash your hands and clothes after handling the virus suspension.

Follow steps 1-3 to prepare virus suspension:



1. Mix 10ml water with one K5 vial.



2. Mix solution with 90ml water.



3. Use within 24 hours.

Mix virus with bait and release

- mix virus solution with your freshly cut carrots or oats in an enclosed container
- lay a trail of treated bait around active warrens at same places where you did free feeding
- deep bury any remaining bait after 24 hours.

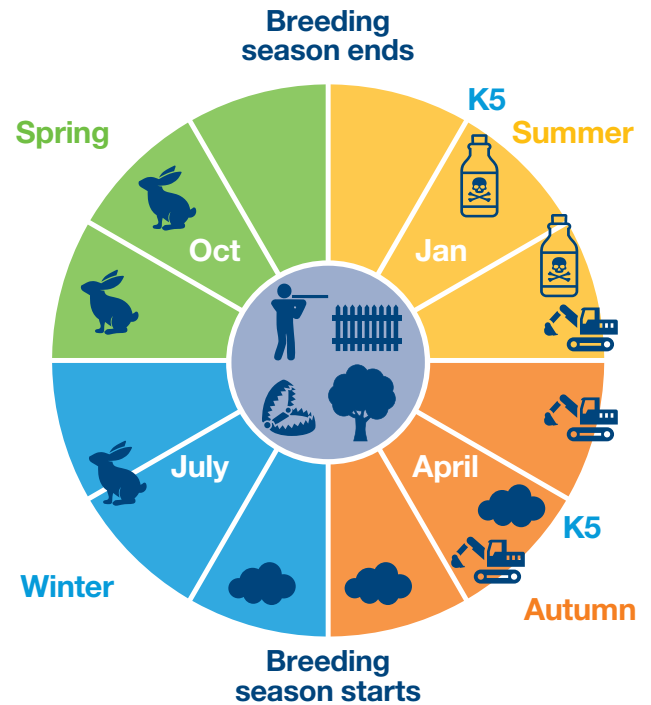
Use dead rabbits to spread the virus

- most infected adult rabbits die within 3 days of RHDV K5 infection
- cut open a rabbit carcass and put it down a warren so flies help spread the virus.

4. Follow up

Two weeks after the virus is laid:

- count rabbits again to confirm rabbit density
- send a liver or a leg bone sample from a dead rabbit to RabbitScan
- continue with your rabbit control program, ideally with baiting program
- warren ripping and fumigation are recommended to prevent re-habitation
- consult PestSMART for more information pestsmart.org.au/toolkits/european-rabbits



	High rabbit numbers		Warren fumigation		Harbour removal
K5	K5 Virus release		Warren destruction		Shooting
	Poison baits - Pindone or 1080		Exclusion fencing		Trapping

For more information:

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