

## **Vaccinating your Rabbit**

Vaccinations are vital in providing your rabbit protection from 3 life threatening diseases: Myxomatosis, Rabbit Viral Haemorrhagic Disease 1 (RVHD1) and Rabbit Viral Haemorrhagic Disease 2 (RVHD2).

The vaccine we use (Nobivac Myxo-RHD Plus) provides protection against all 3 diseases in just 1 injection, which is administered by injection under the skin of the scruff. All rabbits should be vaccinated annually. In cases where your rabbit comes into contact with wild rabbits or in an event of a viral outbreak it may be necessary to vaccinate every 6 months.

### **Myxomatosis**

Myxomatosis is a highly contagious viral disease that is almost always fatal.

#### **How it is transmitted**

The main route of transmission is through insects, such as fleas and mosquitoes, that have previously bitten an infected rabbit.

Direct contact with infected rabbits is the second method of Myxomatosis transmission (particularly contact with an infected rabbit's respiratory secretions). This is a likely method of transmission in rural areas where wild rabbits can access an outdoor rabbit's enclosure.

#### **Symptoms**

Symptoms of Myxomatosis generally start with severe conjunctivitis, followed by swellings around the head and genital regions. Affected rabbits will then become increasingly weak, go blind and then eventually die.

### **Rabbit Viral Haemorrhagic Disease 1 & 2**

Rabbit Viral Haemorrhagic Disease (RVHD), also known as Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease (RHD), is an infectious virus that is almost always fatal.

It is important to understand that this is one disease, that currently has 2 strains. The two strains of the virus are RVHD1 & RVHD2. The latter is the newer strain and is becoming more and more prevalent. Therefore, it is so extremely important that rabbits are vaccinated against both strains.

RVHD causes massive internal bleeding quickly followed by death (usually within 1-2 days after contracting the disease).

### How it is transmitted

- Direct contact with infected rabbits
- Indirect contact with an infected rabbit's urine or faeces
- Other indirect methods of transmission include:
  - Hay that may have been in contact with infected wild rabbits as grass growing in the field
  - Birds or insects can transport the virus on their feet or in their droppings
  - The wind can carry the virus
  - You could bring the virus home on your feet, clothing or your pet's feet from being in contact with an infected wild rabbit's droppings

The virus can survive for months in the environment, so it really is so easy to unknowingly bring it home to your own rabbits.

### Symptoms

Symptoms of RVHD vary, some rabbits will bleed from their nose and back passage before death, others will die so quickly symptoms will not be seen.