



BRC STATEMENT ON CURRENT SUPPLY OF VACCINE FOR RABBIT DISEASES AND CURRENT SCOPING PROJECT BEING UNDERTAKEN BY THE BRC - 10/05/2021

The Governing body for several months now has as part of many aspects of its attempts to support and push the fancy forward, been looking at the situation relating to availability, cost and supply of vaccinations for diseases such as RHD1 & 2 and Myxomatosis. The Governing Body is extremely concerned that the costs associated with such vaccinations is sufficient to make some people consider giving up the hobby and therefore losing committed and passionate fanciers from the hobby.

We see all too often with our friends in Australia the impact and only so many hits a person can take from such diseases, and there they have no opportunity to vaccinate stock due to federal laws.

In the UK vaccination of rabbits is governed by the Veterinary Medicine Directorate (VMD) & this is why the BRC has previously been unable to obtain or help with vaccination costs. The GB has recently become aware of the scheme within the Royal Racing Pigeon Association (RRPA) in which authorized persons trained by vets obtain vaccine direct from the supplier with a veterinary prescription for the purposes of vaccinating their own stock. This is done at a considerably lesser cost than most vets would charge. However, this is done under a special arrangement between the RRPA and the (VMD).

It is important that members of the BRC understand that the BRC like the RRPA cannot purchase vaccine for members that is against the law, however like the RRPA the GB has asked our Animal Health and Welfare committee to work and discuss with the VMD the options of replicating a similar system within the UK for members of the BRC, with a view to trying to reduce the cost of vaccination and obtaining vaccines in a legally approved manner.

The urgency and priority this piece of work is receiving from the Governing body and Animal Health and Welfare committee cannot be underestimated. The spread and rise of these vile and ultimately fatal diseases is not pleasant for anybody to witness, and we are working tirelessly to come up with a solution and create our Vaccination strategy for the rabbit fancy.

At the same time however, we applaud the work of a Gloucestershire vet who has trained many fanciers to vaccinate their own stock with no consultation fee and then buying the vaccine in bulk (at cost price) for their own rabbits, within the limitations of legislation currently in place. We do recognize however that for some fanciers to travel to the south west is not feasible. But it is a great project that works well, and we are seeking to encourage other vets through the work with the VMD to do similar.

Our efforts on vaccine are at the same time combined with our Policy and Planning committee now lobbying parliament via the All Party Animal Welfare Working Group (APAWG) on the forthcoming proposed Rabbit Welfare Bill. The British Rabbit Council is ensuring its input and contribution is fully informing this, and we are also working with DEFRA to define an exhibition rabbit in any guidance similar to the guidance that exist and is available via gov.uk for keeping commercial rabbits.

We will continue to keep the fancy and members updated as we progress this work, but remain hopeful that we will soon have a similar position to that of the RRPA and other hobbies such as Budgerigars etc. We thank our colleagues in the Animal Health and Welfare sub committee for their work and negotiations so far.

The Governing Body of the British Rabbit Council.