



## **Rabbit vaccines**

It is important to vaccinate your rabbit against Myxomatosis and Rabbit (Viral) Haemorrhagic Disease. Both Myxomatosis and RHD are viral diseases found throughout the UK and are sadly often fatal if contracted. All rabbits, both wild and tame, are at risk of these diseases.

### **MYXOMATOSIS**

This is a common viral disease.

**What are the symptoms?** The first signs of infection are puffy, fluid filled swellings around the head and face. Within a few days, these swellings can become severe and can cause blindness. Eating and drinking becomes more difficult, and death usually follows within a few days to weeks.

**How is it spread?** Myxomatosis is most commonly spread by the rabbit flea, but it can also spread between rabbits in close contact.

### **RABBIT VIRAL HAEMORRHAGIC DISEASE (RVHD)**

This is a viral disease with two strains RVHD 1 and RVHD 2.

**What are the symptoms?** Most affected rabbits will die suddenly without showing any previous signs. For those that survive longer, the signs can be quite varied but may include fever, convulsions, bloody discharge might be seen from the nose and coma.

**How is it spread?** The virus is shed in the urine, droppings and respiratory secretions of affected animals and readily spreads to other rabbits either by direct contact, or indirectly, either by biting insects or via contaminated clothing, hutches, feeding containers and other inanimate objects.

### **Prevention**

In previous years we have had to vaccinate rabbits twice annually with two different vaccines to provide protection against Myxo, RHD1 and RHD2.

However, there is now an all in one vaccination called Myxo-RHD PLUS. This can be given from 7 weeks of age and provides 12 months protection against Myxo, RHD1 and RHD2 so it only needs to be repeated once annually to maintain immunity. This means healthier rabbits with fewer stressful vet visits!