

Have you found a dead rabbit?

A burst in rabbit numbers in many parts of Australia has been accompanied by reports of a surge in calicivirus (RHDV) and myxomatosis. Researchers monitoring both diseases are urging anyone finding a dead rabbit to provide a tissue sample to help monitor how the viruses are evolving in different regions of Australia.

‘Land managers can be of tremendous assistance in the fight to stay ahead of rabbits’, said Wayne Meyer, Chair of Rabbit-Free Australia.

‘By reporting sightings of rabbits and submitting tissue samples they help track the distribution of rabbits and biocontrols and enable us to continually scan for emergent strains of viruses that may prove superior to those now in general circulation’.

Two research projects currently underway are being conducted by Dr Kandarp Patel (University of Adelaide, examining myxomatosis) and Nina Huang (CSIRO, examining RHDV). Anyone finding a dead rabbit can order a tissue sampling kit direct from [CSIRO](http://research.csiro.au/rhdv/testing) (at research.csiro.au/rhdv/testing) or by reporting the find using [RabbitScan](http://www.feralscan.org.au/rabbitscan/) (at www.feralscan.org.au/rabbitscan/).

Different sampling kits and tissue samples are required for RHDV and myxomatosis. RHDV testing uses liver samples, while myxomatosis uses eyelids.

‘Rabbit carcasses usually have some tell-tale signs of what caused death’, said Ina Smith, Senior Research Scientist with CSIRO.

‘Calicivirus often results in rabbits dying suddenly with some rabbits found to still have food in their mouth at the time of death, while myxomatosis results in ulcer-like lesions to the face’ she said. ‘If people are unsure what may have caused a rabbit death they can obtain both sampling kits from CSIRO’.

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Tissue Testing: A simple brochure with information about tissue sampling is available [here](#).

