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# Press Release

## Macon County Participates in Oral Rabies Vaccination Program

Macon County is part of the United States Department of Agriculture-Wildlife Services' and North Carolina Department of Health's oral rabies vaccine bait program for raccoons, foxes and coyotes. This bait-drop vaccine program has been shown effective in reducing the number of rabid raccoons and other animals. In the past 10 months, Macon County has had 14 confirmed cases of animals with rabies, which is a large increase from previous years.

The Wildlife Services' bait drop will occur in Macon County between October 4 – October 20, 2021 and will be delivered by airplane and ground vehicles across the county. The baits are plastic packets of oral vaccine coated with an oily, fish-scented substance to attract raccoons (photo attached). Once the packet is bitten, the raccoon ingests the vaccine and will develop antibodies against rabies.

The vaccine has been shown to be safe in over 60 different species of animals, including domestic dogs and cats. If your dog or cat eats a large quantity of these baits, it could cause a temporary upset stomach but does not pose any long-term health risk. The vaccine does not contain the live rabies virus.

It is recommended that anyone who finds a bait leave it alone to allow wildlife to find it. If the bait is on your lawn, driveway or other area unlikely to attract raccoons, you can wear a glove and move the bait to an area of thicker cover where raccoons are more likely to find it. If you come in contact with the liquid vaccine, you should wash the affected area with soap and water and call the USDA Wildlife Services Rabies Information Line at 1-866-487-3297.

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