MOUNT BARKER
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Rabbit Control
Frequently Asked Questions

Does Council use Pindone or 1080 as baits?

We do not use Pindone or 1080 to control rabbits on any Council land to avoid causing potential unintended harm to wildlife, domestic pets and agricultural animals. We take animal protection very seriously.

Does Council distribute Pindone or 1080 to rural landholders?

Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu distributes baits to rural landholders across the district. Rural landholders must successfully complete an online course on the Landscape Hills and Fleurieu website to reduce the risk of unintended harm to other animals before they're given baits to put out on their properties.

What came first: Calicivirus (RHDV) or Myxomatosis?

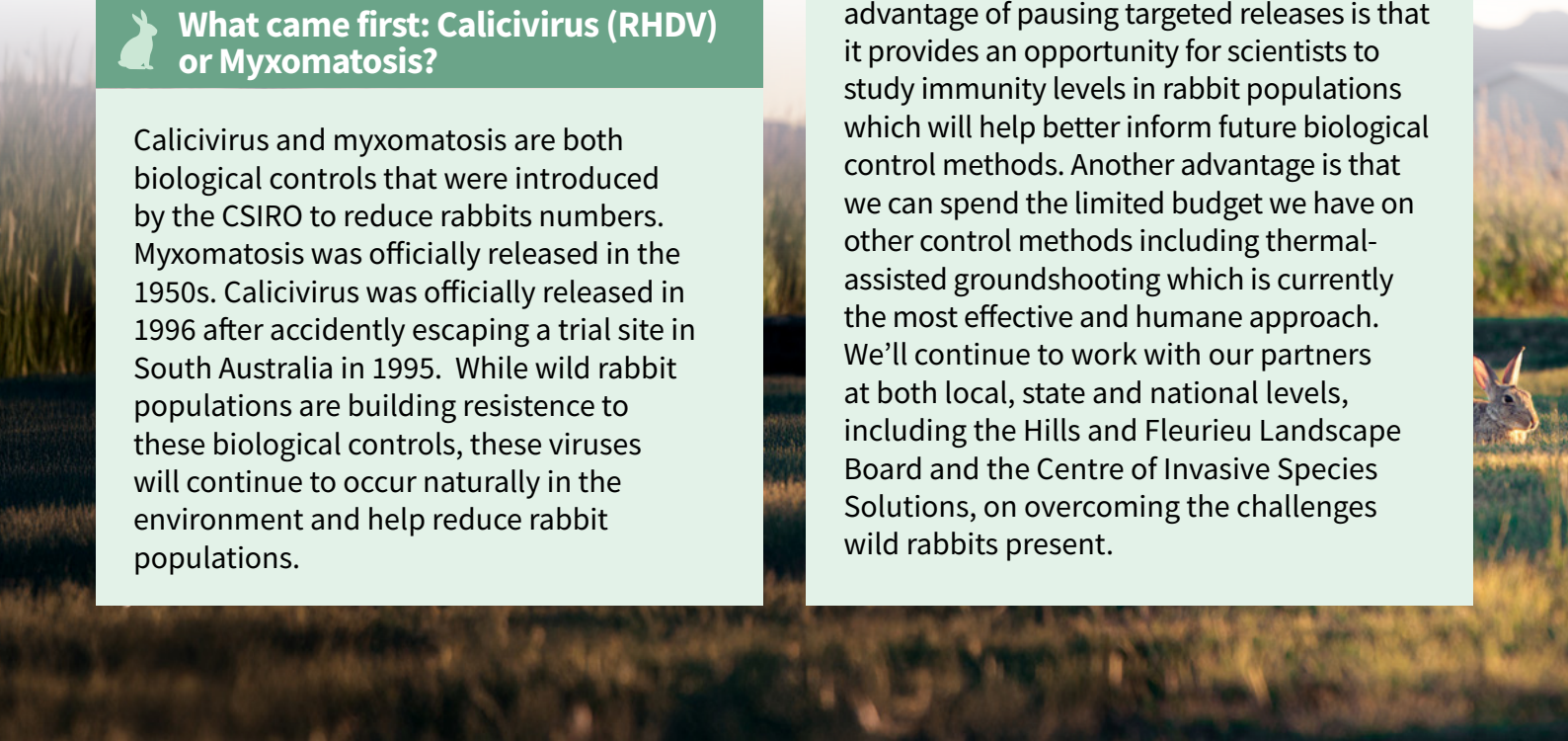
Calicivirus and myxomatosis are both biological controls that were introduced by the CSIRO to reduce rabbits numbers. Myxomatosis was officially released in the 1950s. Calicivirus was officially released in 1996 after accidently escaping a trial site in South Australia in 1995. While wild rabbit populations are building resistence to these biological controls, these viruses will continue to occur naturally in the environment and help reduce rabbit populations.

Is any research being undertaken into new biological controls if wild rabbits are becoming immune to Calicivirus and Myxomatosis?

Scientists are actively researching and developing new biological controls. Rabbit Free Australia and the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions are working closely with the CSIRO to determine the effectiveness of future biological controls. It's likely any new biological control is still many years away as it's dependent on funding, testing and regulatory approval.

Is Council still conducting targeted releases of RDHC K5 Calicivirus?

We're temporarily pausing targeted releases of Calicivirus on Council-owned land because wild rabbits are developing immunity and the virus is becoming less effective. One advantage of pausing targeted releases is that it provides an opportunity for scientists to study immunity levels in rabbit populations which will help better inform future biological control methods. Another advantage is that we can spend the limited budget we have on other control methods including thermal-assisted groundshooting which is currently the most effective and humane approach. We'll continue to work with our partners at both local, state and national levels, including the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board and the Centre of Invasive Species Solutions, on overcoming the challenges wild rabbits present.



Is it safe to touch or be near rabbits with Calicivirus or Myxomatosis?

People cannot catch Calicivirus or Myxomatosis from rabbits because the viruses are species specific. This means they can only be transmitted from rabbit to rabbit. This also means pet rabbits are at risk of contracting the viruses. Pet rabbits can be vaccinated against calicivirus but there's no vaccine for myxomatosis. Speak with your vet if you own a pet rabbit and have any questions. Dogs and cats cannot be infected with calicivirus or myxomatosis.

What should I do if I see a dead rabbit on Council-owned land or a Council-managed road – should I remove it myself or call Council?

Please leave the dead rabbit where it is and make a report to Council by phoning 8391 7200 or emailing council@mountbarker.sa.gov.au

If the rabbit is on Council-owned land and appears to have had Myxomatosis, our staff will typically move it out of public view to a nearby location. This is because mosquitoes, and other biting insects like fleas, can help the disease spread naturally through wild rabbit populations especially during wet and humid weather.

If the dead rabbit is on a Council road, our Civil Maintenance team will remove it as part of their regular street cleaning program.

Are rabbit droppings safe to handle?

Rabbit droppings are typically safe for humans. If you touch rabbit droppings, it's important to practice good hygiene by washing your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based rub to get rid of any germs.

What should I do if I know or suspect my dog has eaten rabbit droppings?

Dogs commonly eat droppings left by other animals, including rabbits, and small amounts are usually harmless. Depending on the amount eaten, symptoms can range from mild stomach issues to vomiting and diarrhoea. As with any changes in your pet's health, get advice from your vet as soon as possible if your dog is unwell and you're concerned.

How long is it going to take to bring rabbit numbers under control?

Reducing rabbit numbers in the district is not a quick fix. It's a community-wide problem that requires everyone to play their part: councils, local Landscape Boards, state and federal governments as well as private property owners. While Council didn't create the rabbit problem, we'll manage it as best we can in the district with the resources we have until a solution is found.

Questions?

Please phone Council on 8391 7200 and ask to speak with a member of our Environment and Natural Assets Team.

