

Alfred J. Mina, DVM

From a veterinarian's point of view, Snuffles is approached two ways. Herd management ==>> no antibiotics are used. Rabbits are isolated for 2 days, meaning far away and down-wind from general herd, and monitored. If clinical signs of sneezing with serous and purulent nasal discharge persist continuously for 2 days, the affected rabbit never returns to the rabbitry. Rabbit is culled from herd. For the pet rabbits that are seen, owners are told that there is no cure for this condition and treatment is only used to suppress symptoms and make them asymptomatic. Furthermore, treatment to suppress symptoms may be indicated throughout the rabbit's entire life. Culture and sensitivity is done to KNOW what specific organisms are already established in the herd. Snuffles are an upper respiratory infection that can be caused by *Pasteurella multocida* alone or in combination with the following bacteria: *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Bordetella bronchiseptica*, *Moraxella catarrhalis*, *Pseudomonis aeruginosa* and *Mycobacterium* species.

Also, *Pasteurella multocida* can present in other areas of the body, so if you are only concerned about sneezing rabbits, you may be missing other infected rabbits that can be carriers: sore hocks, abscesses (oral cavity, in or behind eyes, middle ear, lungs, joints, and reproductive tract). When consulting with rabbit breeders, sound genetics ==>> breed for disease resistance and cull sick animals and sick producing animals, such as the does that produce the sickly kits.

Rabbits may sneeze due to allergies, dusty environment, or poor ventilation. Also, eating behavior - some rabbits inhale their food when they eat pellets or dusty hay. Covering all grounds will at least give you peace of mind when you have to make a hard decision.

Most rabbits can carry *Pasteurella* as asymptomatic carriers and explode with clinical signs when immune system is challenged. I have learned about *Pasteurella* as a 4-Her back in the late 1980's. I was taught that this organism can reside elsewhere in the body and present in multiple ways as previously stated. The only way to eradicate this condition was to cull all animals that were suspected, produced it or showed clinical signs. Sound genetics and breeding for disease resistance was what I learned way before I became a veterinarian. As for culturing for this organism, it is hit or miss. Animals showing clinical signs can test negative while animals not showing clinical signs can test positive. Therefore, when in doubt cull it out.