



HARELINES



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Fall 2021

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Fact Sheet

By Christie Taylor, PhD in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease has been found in the Southwestern US in both domestic and wild rabbits and has the ability to spread quickly. Read on for vital information about this disease.

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHD) is a viral disease that affects all kinds of rabbits, including the domesticated European rabbits that we keep as pets. It is a deadly disease that kills 70-100% of rabbits who are infected with the virus. It is spread by contact between rabbits, by association with insects, and by "fomite". A fomite is any object that comes into contact with infectious material that then becomes contaminated itself.

Rabbits infected with the RHD virus usually die within 48 hours, and there is no known treatment. The most notable symptom of RHD is bleeding from the nose, mouth, anus, and urethra, but lethargy, anorexia, fever, difficulty breathing, and symptoms of pain might precede these.

The virus that causes RHD is durable in the environment and can survive three and a

half months in contaminated soil during hot weather and up to seven and a half months in soil during cool conditions. This means that you, the caregiver, have a significant task in protecting your rabbit(s) from RHD. We call these procedures "biosecurity".

In this issue

Changes at <i>Harelines</i>	2
A Note from the New Editor . . .	3
Vax & Biosecurity for RHD . . .	4
Chapter Manager's Corner . . .	5
Grieving the Loss of a Bunny. . .	6
Raffle/Willow Wreaths	8
Furthering Your Education. . .	9
Somebunny Needs YOU! . . .	10

Biosecurity is meant to reduce your rabbits' opportunities for exposure to the virus by preventing them from coming into contact with animals, insects, and fomites that may be contaminated with the RHD virus or by eliminating as much virus as possible from potentially contaminated objects and people.

Basic biosecurity measures include the following:

1. Wash your hands before interacting with your rabbits.
2. Keep your rabbits indoors at all times.

Continued on Page 3



There are ways to keep your rabbit safe from RHD.



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Visit the House Rabbit Society
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<http://www.ohare.org>

The Buckeye HRS Respects Your Privacy
We know our members value their privacy
and that's why we never, ever, sell our
mailing list or distribute it to any other
party. All of our members' information is
held in the strictest confidence.

Special Thanks to:

Angela White, for her kind gift in memory of Ralph the bunny.

Everyone who has chosen the Buckeye HRS as the charity recipient on Amazon Smile! You're making a big difference in the lives of our foster rabbits.

The following members, whose monetary and in-kind donations allow us to meet our ongoing fostering and educational goals:

Gary Savage, Nasike Carpenter, Irma Laszlo, Jim & Laura Gills, Rebecca Gibboney, Rob Lovicz, Doris Mastroguiseppe, Adriana Mastroguiseppe, James Reed, Bob Piekarczyk, Judy O'Neil, Norma Jeanne Mudry, Fidelity Charitable/Jane Winik, IBM Employee Services, Elizabeth Hamak, Lisa Blackledge, Carlton Grover, Kirsten Reading, Rob Welch, Renee Argento, Global Impact/Growfund, Suzanne Milewski, Liz Claytor, Mark & Robin Covert, Judy Smith, Mary Frances Backherms, Planet Art, Lisa Butler & Wayne Mallory, Junko Rogers, Linda Sigismondi, Blackbaud Giving Fund, Terry Hastings, Mary Litrico, Jonathan Grossman.

Our new and continuing Sanctuary Rabbit Sponsors! These special rabbits, who will spend the rest of their lives in foster care due to serious medical conditions, have you kind and generous people to thank!

As always, the **Monks Copy Shop of downtown Columbus**, for their discount on printing our newsletter.

Changes at *Harelines* By Herta Rodina

As many of you know, I've been editing Harelines since our very first issue in 1997. That role has been extremely rewarding, but after a quarter century, it's time for a change, right?! I'm excited to announce that Kristin Weis is taking over the editing. Alongside fine writing skills and a careful attention to detail, Kristin will bring fresh ideas and lots of energy to the newsletter. Kristin and I worked together on the Spring/Summer issue; this current one is her first as solo editor. Here's to the next 75 issues!

3. Install and/or maintain screens on windows and doors.

4. Don't wear outdoor shoes inside your home or vice versa – these are potential fomites for RHD.

5. Consider the sources of hay, pellets and vegetables that you feed your rabbits to ensure they don't come from areas affected by RHD. Because our area is not yet affected by RHD, consider buying greens and hay from a local farmer during the normal growing season for our region and wash them thoroughly.

6. Include in your regular cleaning routine steps for inactivating RHD virus that may have entered your home. Solutions of 1-10% bleach in water, 10% hydrogen peroxide in water, 60-70% ethanol in water and commercially available products like rescue cleaning solution by Virox are all capable of destroying the RHD virus. Cleaning floors, toys, exercise pens, and other surfaces your bunnies interact with should be done regularly anyway, so this part should be the easiest.

7. Avoid coming into contact with wild rabbits, friends' rabbits, rabbits at fairs or shows, and rabbits at pet stores, even if they appear to be healthy and especially if they're sick or injured. Notify your local authorities if you see sick wild rabbits or spot feral or stray rabbits!

Vaccinations

Unfortunately, vaccines for RHD are not currently available in our area. We will keep our adopters updated on when the vaccine is available locally.

Bibliography and Resources

1. APHIS/USDA Fact Sheet https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/fs-rhdv2.pdf?fbclid=IwAR09Ge1r7tO1iAUQQ5YmLclZ5qf-fH9JNBgpNQgibPJ2wncikXfvxQoZqSc

2. Fact Sheet for Veterinarians <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/veterinary-science-and-veterinary-medicine/rabbit-haemorrhagic-disease>

3. House Rabbit Society Pages on RHD <https://rabbit.org/deadly-rabbit-virus-threatens-pet-rabbits-across-country/>

A Note from the New Editor

By Kristin Weis

Hello! I am honored to take over as the editor of this newsletter. While I know these are big shoes to fill, I hope that I can contribute to the growth and success of this newsletter and the BHRS. I first became involved with the BHRS a few years ago when I sought out help in catching a few dumped rabbits in Cleveland. I quickly became more involved with the organization, and I am thankful that I found a group of likeminded "rabbit people."

I am originally from Grand Rapids, Michigan and moved to Ohio in 2014. My love of rabbits started in middle school, when I spent my lunch breaks playing with a science teacher's rabbit. In college, I got my first rabbit, Hegel, a lionhead with a lot of "buntitude." Caring for him these past nine years has made me more passionate about rabbits and that even inspired my partner and I to run a small

guinea pig and rabbit rescue operation out of our 1-bedroom apartment before we moved to Ohio.

I currently reside in Cleveland with my partner, Gregg, and our small zoo of animals – 6 cats, 3 rabbits, and a growing collection of tarantulas. I

dream of one day opening my own (official) small animal rescue. Until such time, however, I hope that I can contribute to the continued success and growth of the BHRS and, hopefully, help inspire more people to love rabbits as we do.



Kristin Weis

Vaccinations & Biosecurity for RHD

By Christie Taylor, PhD in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

Those of us currently monitoring the RHD outbreak in the Southwest US wish to be proactive and vaccinate our rabbits before it spreads to our area. While I very much wish to protect my family against this deadly disease, I want other bunny parents to know why I'm waiting to vaccinate and how this is a better option for caregivers and advocates in regions that aren't yet affected by RHD.

Currently, state veterinarians are the gatekeepers for the RHD vaccine in the USA. Without a documented case in our area or an adjacent region, state veterinarians are unlikely to allow local veterinarians to import the vaccine. The only available vaccines are imported from Europe and these manufacturers make enough vaccine for the UK and the EU. This limited availability means that rabbits who are in immediate danger of being infected with RHD in the Southwest might not get a dose of the vaccine. Waiting to have my bunnies vaccinated means bunnies who really need the vaccine are more likely to get it.

The imported vaccines, Filavac and Eravac, are both "liver based. This means that they're made by deliberately infecting laboratory rabbits and collecting their livers after they've died from the disease. These livers are the raw material used to make the vaccines and Eravac's quality control sheets indicate that at least 70 rabbits die for each batch of vaccine. Since the cost of the vaccine is measured in lives and my bunnies aren't in immediate danger, waiting to vaccinate can save laboratory bunnies' lives.

The last reason that I'm waiting to vaccinate is that the USDA and APHIS (the groups that regulate this kind of vaccination) are quite aware of the problem that RHD poses for wildlife and domesticated rabbits and they're interested in finding solutions. They want to see a vaccine that's produced domestically – this

eliminates potential issues with the supply chain and disruptions thereof and creates a market that benefits American companies and consumers. The other good news is that APHIS and the USDA want a vaccine that's "subunit based". This kind of vaccine would be made in a test tube instead of by using live rabbits and would eliminate the need for the suffering and death of live rabbits for each batch of vaccine. The subunit-based vaccine would still need to be tested in live rabbits to ensure safety and efficacy before it could be mass produced, but it's still better for the rabbits in the long run compared with liver-based vaccines. Rabbits must be vaccinated annually to maximize their immunity to RHD, so waiting until a domestically-produced, ethically-sourced vaccine is available through the USDA and APHIS will save laboratory rabbits' lives while protecting our companion bunnies.

Until vaccines are widely available, we must begin to cement good habits that ensure rabbits are protected from coming into contact with the virus that causes RHD. This is important even when rabbits are vaccinated because, based on data from the UK, about one in 10 rabbits who has been vaccinated still dies from the virus that causes RHD. This means that the vaccine isn't a substitute for good biosecurity; the redundancy of biosecurity for vaccinated rabbits creates a more robust protection against this deadly disease.

We are simultaneously caregivers and advocates for rabbits and this is a rare instance where these two roles seem at odds. We can do the most good for the most rabbits through careful consideration of our circumstances.

Editor's Note

The RHDV information contained in this newsletter is up to date with what we currently know about the disease. Outbreaks in 2020-2021 in the US have been in western and southern states. Though it is not currently in Ohio, RHDV is highly contagious, so it is imperative that we as rabbit caretakers remain vigilant. Vaccines in the US are not yet widely available, but there are some vets in outbreak areas that have obtained special permission to start importing vaccines. For further information, please consult the House Rabbit Society website (rabbit.org/rhdv/) or your veterinarian.

Chapter Manager's Corner

By Keith Zimmerman

We have a growing list of new volunteers who have applied since our last newsletter. If only the virus would let up enough for us to safely conduct education activities! Our newest team members are Maria Burns, Rosalyn Matthews, and Michelle Haverfield. They've all been accepted as Rabbit Helpers assisting licensed fosterers with over-flow housing and transportation. Although we tend to focus on our rabbits in foster care, an equally important part of what Buckeye HRS does is to offer many different educational sessions to the public. We've set up displays at many adoption events, conducted presentations at libraries, and have even held movie events. This is where our volunteer base is most active. The goal, of course, is to continue to spread the word about rabbits as indoor pets, even to people who have not adopted from us.

This year, the Midwest BunFest is scheduled to take place on October 23rd from 9:30a-5:00p in Columbus, and BHRs will have our booth with many cool bun-related items for sale to help fund our activities. If you've never been to BunFest, you're missing out on an unbelievable convention gathering of "rabbit people" from all across the US. Vendors offer tons of rabbit-safe treats, food, hay, toys, houses, gifts, and cool rabbit-themed knick-knacks. There are also excellent education classes on rabbit care. We always look forward to seeing all of our old friends and meeting new ones! More info is available at www.midwestbunfest.org.

In foster news, since our last writing, we've had a slew of new stray buns that have come in with serious health problems. In Fremont, we have had three serious tick infestations, bot fly larvae, infected battle wounds, and severe cases of malocclusion. In an effort to rescue several dumped buns in Bowling Green, only one of four captured strays survived long enough to make it to foster care. We also have six buns tied up in a cruelty case that have been in foster care for over a year, taking up valuable space for other fosters. We are, (as always), extremely grateful for the financial support of our contributors that helps us to both spread the word, save rabbits' lives, and publish this beautiful newsletter and our website ohare.org. Thank you!

Midwest BunFest 2021

Come join the Buckeye House Rabbit Society at BunFest and visit our booth!

- Saturday, October 23, 2021
- 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Northland Performing Arts Center
- 4411 Tamarack Blvd, Columbus OH

Fun for the whole family!
Socialize with other "bunny people."
Unique items for sale for bunnies and humans.

For more details, visit the website at midwestbunfest.org.

See you there!





Grieving the Loss of a Bunny

By Robert Lovicz

Losing your pet rabbit is losing an intimate family member and just as sorrowful. Many times, you do not see it coming. These blessed little creatures hide their illnesses so well that one day they look fine and the next they are in the throes of deadly GI stasis or some other malady.

Most importantly, don't blame yourself for the death of your bunny. Rabbits can die so suddenly sometimes that people wonder if they did something wrong or should have been more vigilant. The

answer is no – you did nothing wrong; stop beating yourself up.

I once had a rabbit, Eddie. He was our first bunny back in the mid-90s. We found Eddie through an article in the newspaper from a family who kept him in a small cage in the garage. It was so great to watch Eddie feel the freedom of release from that cage. We had to lift him out of the cage to make him feel it was perfectly ok, and once he found that freedom, he was a binky maniac. We started feeding him right with hay, greens, and pellets. Eddie was the only rabbit I ever had who liked celery. He ate it like we eat corn on the cob from one end to the other. What was so unfair was that two weeks later he died suddenly of GI stasis. We were inconsolable and blamed ourselves for being new owners and not being bright enough to heed warning signs.

Looking back, though, there were no warning signs. After surgery, we found that because Eddie lived in solitude for months in a cold garage with only his water and pellets for company, he developed

a furball in his stomach. When we introduced a proper diet, that furball broke up; however, part of it was too large and constricted the movement of food through the gut, and he died shortly after. The vet did what he could, but Eddie was too weak.

It is okay to grieve however you like. Your bunny was a member of the family, and you can deal with their loss any way that feels right to you. If you have other pets in the house, they will also go through a grieving process, so be sure to shower them with love and attention as they will miss their friend.

If you find you cannot overcome your grief and want to seek support, many veterinary services and humane societies maintain lists of specific support groups to help you in your time of sorrow.

With a bonded pair of rabbits, although it may seem gruesome or unnecessary, give the surviving



Unfortunately we sometimes get little warning before a rabbit passes.



Just like humans, rabbits can and do grieve.

bunny some time with the body. This will give them a chance to understand that their partner has

passed on and is not coming back. Otherwise, they may feel confused.

Signs of a grieving bunny:

1. They drink more than usual. Their behavior may seem normal, but over-drinking can be a sign of stress in a rabbit.

2. Increased troublesome behaviors such as digging or chewing could be a sign your rabbit is showing their pent-up frustrations.

3. Fur-chewing or excessive grooming may indicate a stressed-out or lonely rabbit.

I like to have memorials for my rabbits. When my buns die, I have them cremated. We put their little urns in our house, and I will say hi to each of them occasionally. There are many other ways to set up a memorial. This can be anything from a family ceremony to a paw print or a lock of fur.

Grieving is not a cheerful topic, but once in a while, we all need a little reminder that you don't have to be alone in your grief and that how you deal with the loss of a beloved pet is perfectly normal. Remember, don't be too hard on yourself. You gave your bun a wonderful life and they loved you very much; you will meet again

on the Rainbow Bridge.

Find the Buckeye HRS on Facebook and Twitter!



**Search for:
Buckeye House
Rabbit Society**



**Search for:
@BuckeyeHRS**

Holiday Raffle to Benefit Buckeye HRS Foster Rabbits!

For our sixteenth annual holiday raffle, we proudly present a brown and tan rabbit handbag generously donated by Linda Gardner.

Features:

- Synthetic leather with handles and an adjustable cross body strap
- Gold toned hardware, including “feet”
- 1 zipped interior pocket and 2 additional pockets
- Dimensions: Bottom 11.5” x 4.75”, Height 9”, Width at widest part 14.75”

All proceeds will go directly to our foster program and will ensure that needy bunnies have a safe and happy holiday season while they await the ultimate

gift: A permanent home.

You can order tickets by mail or on our website at www.ohare.org/wordpress/our-raffle (minimum 5 ticket purchase if purchasing on the website). Tickets cost \$1 each and you may buy as many as you wish. If you are sending by mail, all entries must be postmarked no later than December 6, 2021. Please include your phone number and email (if available) with your check or money order and indicate it's for the raffle. Mail your request to: Buckeye HRS, P.O. Box 61, Vickery, OH 43464.

The lucky winner will be notified mid-December and will receive the prize in time for holiday gift-giving.

Willow Wreaths

For Sale Locally in Cleveland - To be picked up in Cleveland.

**Shipping is additional & available for larger orders.

Fresh local willow wreaths crafted by hand. This is a limited run while supplies last. Wreaths (weights varying from 1.1 oz to 1.9 oz) are \$3.50. 100% of the proceeds will be donated to the foster rabbits with the Buckeye House Rabbit Society.

If you live in or will be in the Cleveland area and would like to purchase a willow treat for your favorite rabbit(s), please contact Stephanie Lodge via text or call 216-571-1088 or email bhrs-stephanie@ohare.org (Replies will come from sfalodge@gmail.com).

When the willow wreaths sell out, we will post a notice on www.ohare.org.



Furthering Your Bunny Education

By Kristin Weis

While Rabbit.org, the official website of the House Rabbit Society, offers great information on the care and keeping of rabbits, there are plenty of other great resources online as well. Below is a curated list of some of the resources that helped me when I got my first rabbit and to which I continue to refer today. Best of all, many of these resources allow for interaction with other people, which means that there are plenty of veteran bunny owners willing to assist and give you personalized advice.

BinkyBunny (www.binkybunny.com)

BinkyBunny has everything you could want in a rabbit website: cute photos, videos, rabbit care information, a list of helpful links and resources, and a blog. There is even a forum where you can post questions about care, get tips from veterans about bonding, follow updates on rabbit rescue efforts, and much more.

RabbitsOnline (www.rabbitsonline.net)

This forum boasts over 19,000 members, and it's easy to see why. There are so many different topics such as showing off your rabbit's home, veterinarian recommendations, rabbit toy ideas, and rabbit-themed news.

r/Rabbits (www.reddit.com/r/Rabbits)

If you're familiar with Reddit, then you know that there are subreddits for pretty much everything. Rabbits are no exception. There are over 200,000 members of

this subreddit. Posts are varied, from asking about rabbit care to just posting updates and pictures of bunnies. This subreddit community also started the WabbitWiki (www.wabbitwiki.com), a place to get and share information about rabbits.

House Rabbit Society Facebook Group

There are over 35,000 members of this Facebook group. While posts vary in topic, many people give and ask for advice on rabbit care here.

Rabbit Bonding Advice! Facebook Group

In need of some advice on how to bond your bunnies, but you don't know where to start? This group has a lot of great information on how to get started, as well as information on different bonding techniques, how to understand rabbit behavior, and even how to go about bonding more than two bunnies together.

101Rabbits on YouTube

This is a rabbit education channel, and it has a lot of videos on all the basics: nutrition, veterinary care, bonding, socialization, housing, and more.

Lennon the Bunny

Lorelei, the owner of the channel, creates a lot of videos aimed at rabbit care basics, in addition to some fun and entertaining videos detailing her life with Lennon. One of the more interesting series that she creates is rabbit home makeovers in which she helps a bunny owner redo their rabbit setup.



The internet is full of great resources for rabbit owners.



10

Somebunny Needs YOU!



Leda found herself homeless in the Parma metro parks after being dumped. Fortunately, an animal lover noticed and rescued her immediately. Leda is an energetic and outgoing young Lionhead. She enjoys digging cardboard and has quite an appetite for life. **Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.**



Toasty is a man who has come a long way. His name was given to him affectionately to reflect his difficult past. He is an explorer that will keep you on your toes. Since he is still a teenager, he has a hard time sitting still for pets, but once he settles down, he's a lover.

Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.



Quinn was taken in as a stray after he and his sibling were saved from the streets in Ashland. He has everything – handsome looks, great personality and neat litter box habits. What more could anyone ask for?!

Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.



Meet **Henry**! Henry is a special guy and a survivor. He was found as a stray in the February blizzard. His eye needed medical attention right away, but despite our best efforts, Henry lost his eye in March. Having only one good eye hasn't slowed dear Henry down one bit. He is super sweet and is searching for his forever home.

Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.

This is little **Shmoo**. He is a fun loving and curious little dude. He loves adventures and is very friendly. He is tolerant of holding but feels more comfortable with his feet on the ground. He loves attention, head pets and kisses on the nose. Shmoo was a stray in the Cleveland area who was rescued by a wonderful team of volunteers. **Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.**





Lionel has a lot of personality for such a small bunny. He growls at food, begs for treats, and always does the best binkies. Lionel will bring lots of laughs to his forever home with his small bun shenanigans. He likes to test his limits squeezing into small spaces, and he loves to climb. Lionel seems very apprehensive of masculine energy and would like a home where he can be the boss. **Please contact Stephanie Lodge (bhrrs-stephanie@ohare.org) 216-571-1088.**



Pearl is a young female with a heart of gold. She was found outside in the blistering cold weather and even survived the February snow storm. Pearl needs love and patience as she is learning to trust humans. She may do well with another bunny friend or as a single bun where she is the center of attention.

Please contact Sue Zimmerman (bhrrs-sue@ohare.org) 419-355-8433.



This very playful young man is **Merlin**. He is working his magic on cleaning up his discolored tootsies as he didn't come from the cleanest home previously. He has a sweet disposition, and he's good with his litter box. **Please contact Maggie Reading (bhrrs-maggie@ohare.org) 216-509-9715.**

Adopted!

Chewy has found her happily ever after! From now on, she will never be lacking in the cuddle department. Her new mom, Emily, couldn't be happier with her choice of bunnies. ♥ **Flash** has waited quite awhile for his forever home. His wait paid off when Beccy Gibboney and her son Johnny fell head over heels for him. He has an amazing life and a super cool pen setup in their living room so he can be a part of everything. ♥ **Maurice**, now Luca, not only has found a new home, but he also acquired a bunny wife named Eleanore. Ashley and Nicole (human moms) couldn't be happier with their two love bunnies. ♥ **Murdock**, now Ogun (named after an African god), has at long last found his forever home with Everett in Painesville. His new dad even plans to learn rabbit massage! LUCKY bunny! ♥ **Simba** has been adopted by the Marple family and even has his own bedroom to claim as his kingdom. ♥ **Smudge and Lola** were adopted by bunny lover Todd Nissen. The two are inseparable thanks to Todd's persistence with bonding. Smudge was one of several bunnies that was left to fend for himself in the winter in Valley City, near Medina. Happy to say, he has the life of Riley now. ♥ **Murphy**, now Narc, has bonded with his girlfriend Echo. Life cannot get any sweeter when you live with 24/7 bunny love. Congratulations to Narc on his new home! ♥ **Dixie** is one lucky lady. She found her forever home with Connie Truesch in Copley. She even has her own room! ♥ **Hudson**, now Jarvis AKA Stan Lee, found his forever home with a wonderful family. Congrats to Dr. Rob Nathan, Karen, and Nora! Jarvis even has his own in-house vet. He is one lucky man. ♥ **McCoy**, now named Monty, found his permanent home with Lily and Michelle Switka in Streetsboro. He is an absolute "prairie dog" king in his new castle. ♥ **Lucky**, now named Danny Boy, has been adopted by Cathy Daly who knew he would be a perfect fit in her home. Her other buns are already getting used to having him around, and Cathy hopes they will all bond.



Buckeye House Rabbit Society
P.O. Box 61
Vickery, Ohio 43464



Buy a bunny a little time...

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Your \$35.00 annual membership in the Buckeye HRS includes:

- Local membership (\$15.00) and issues of Harelines

New Policy: National membership is now FREE with a local donation of \$20 more. You'll receive a code to sign up directly with national HRS.

☐ I would like to donate \$_____ to help a foster rabbit (vet care, supplies)

☐ I would like to donate \$_____ in memory of _____.

The grieving family receives an acknowledgment of your gracious gesture.

I would like to volunteer to:

☐ Distribute information to vets

☐ Assist with mailing

☐ Help at Buckeye HRS booth at Pet Expos and fairs

☐ Other _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ Phone _____

E-mail address _____

Bunnies' names and special dates _____

**Please make checks
payable to:**

**Buckeye
House Rabbit Society**

**P.O. Box 61
Vickery, Ohio 43464**

**All donations are
tax-deductible.**