

News on the Fight-2 Project

News nº 1



8th January 2019

First Formal Meeting of the FIGHT-2 Project, on the January 7th 2019, INIAV, Oeiras

The first formal meeting of Project **FIGHT-2** entitled “Development of an edible vaccine for the control of viral hemorrhagic disease (RHDV2) in wild rabbits” took place on January 7th 2019, at INIAV in Oeiras. The project funding was approved by The Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) within the scope of the call N^o 02 / SAICT / 2017.

The **FIGHT-2** project started in October 2018. Currently, a doctorate is being recruited and hired under Decree Law No. 57/2016, of 29th of August.

The **FIGHT-2** Project, is coordinated by the National Institute for Agricultural and Veterinary Research (INIAV I.P.), and involves three other beneficiary institutions, namely the Institute of Experimental and Technological Biology (iBET), the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Lisbon (FMV) and the University of Évora (UÉ), thus bringing together competences in different areas of Virology, Immunology, Pathogenesis, Molecular Biology, Phylogenetics, Molecular Epidemiology, Animal Experimentation, Biology, Game Management, Biodiversity, Biotechnology and Vaccine Development.



Fight-two project logo

The development of an oral vaccine, suitable for the immunization of wild rabbit populations is a (long-term) measure foreseen in the “Research Program” Axis of the Action Plan for the Control of Viral Hemorrhagic Disease in Rabbits (known by the acronym + Coelho), created by Dispatch 4757/17 of May 31st of MAFDR.

Fight-Two Project – Development of an edible vaccine for the control of viral hemorrhagic disease (RHDV2) in wild rabbits

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The **FIGHT-2** Project will finance the early stages of vaccine development.

Most of the short and medium term measures identified in the “Good Management Practices” and “Sanitary Control Measures” of the Action Plan, have been carried out through an annual financing by the Fundo Florestal Permanente (FFP) from MAFDR.

Beneficiary Institutions and the FIGHT-2 Project Team



+ COELHO2 PROJECT AXIS OF INTERVENTION

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In the first meeting of the **FIGHT-2** Project were present members from the four beneficiary institutions (INIAV, iBET, FMV and EU, described above), and several partners from the + Coelho Project, namely:

-The 1st level Hunting Sector Organizations (OSC), represented by João Carvalho (General Secretary of ANPC) and Jacinto Amaro (President of FENCAÇA);

-The General Directorate of Food and Veterinary, (DGAV) national authority on veterinary health and veterinary medicines (Decree-Law no. 18/2014, 4 February, Art. 9, no. 1), represented by Patrícia Tavares Santos (Directorate of Animal Protection Services, Epidemiology and Animal Health Division) and Maria João Fradinho (Directorate of Nutrition and Food Services, Animal Feed Division).

-The National Institute for Nature and Forest Conservation (ICNF), authority in the Management of Game Resources (Decree-Law no. 135/2012, of 29 June), represented by Gonçalo Lopes and Ana Hora (Game and Game Resources Management Division).

-The Portuguese Association of Compound Animal Feed Manufacturers (IACA), represented by Ana Cristina Monteiro (IACA Technical Advisor).

The **FIGHT 2** Project will be developed in close articulation with these other institutions and organizations, therefore considered Partners, given the particularities of the project scientific areas, namely the production of a prophylactic tool directed at a wild species, to be conveyed in suitable feed for the wild rabbit populations.

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During the meeting, Margarida Duarte (PI of the Project, INIAV I.P., Virology Laboratory) contextualized the challenges underlying the fundamental objective of the Project - the recovery of the subspecies *Oryctolagus cuniculus algerius* given its ecological and socio-economic dimension in Portugal and the Iberian Peninsula.

Other entities involved in the Fight 2 Project.

If successful, this vaccine will be an important tool for the management of the wild rabbit populations, namely in the context of the control of Viral Hemorrhagic Disease in Rabbits. It will be used only in affected areas. Given the characteristics of the disease and of the virus, namely its easy spread by mechanical vectors and high environmental resistance, this disease is not eradicable.



Margarida Duarte and António Roldão (co-PI of the Project, iBET), presented and discussed with the group the eight activities foreseen in the Project.

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