



agriculture, forestry & fisheries

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Dog vaccination: the key to end dog-transmitted human rabies

The eradication of dog-transmitted human rabies is possible. We now have all the tools required to achieve this goal by middle of the XXIst century. Over 95% of human rabies cases are caused by dog bites. By vaccinating 70% of dog populations in areas where rabies is present, the number of human cases can rapidly drop to almost zero. The mass vaccination of dogs has been accepted by the international community as the most cost-effective means of eliminating rabies. Since 2012, the OIE Rabies Vaccine Bank has supported the implementation of dog vaccination campaigns in OIE Member Countries, providing them high quality vaccines at an affordable price. A number of these countries are now a step closer towards becoming “rabies free”. On occasion of World Rabies Day 2015, the OIE reaches out to the international community to continue all efforts towards meeting this realistic goal.

Paris, 28 September 2015 – *“Mass vaccination of dogs is the method of choice for eliminating dog-transmitted human rabies. It is the only real way to break the disease’s infectious cycle between animals and humans”* underlines Dr. Bernard Vallat, the Director General of the OIE. *“The global eradication of rabies is possible by vaccinating large populations of dogs in affected areas”*.

Some countries, notably in Europe, have already succeeded in eradicating rabies through the implementation of dog vaccination campaigns. Although undertaking vaccination campaigns can represent a financial challenge, the benefits of this approach immediately readdresses perspectives: around 10% of financial resources currently used to provide emergency treatment for human victims could cover the costs required for all national Veterinary Services globally to eradicate rabies in dogs through vaccination.

Through its World Animal Health and Welfare Fund, the OIE supports its Member Countries in their efforts to combat rabies and has taken various steps in this direction. Since its creation in 2012 and with the financial support of the European Union, Australia, Germany and France, the OIE established its Rabies Vaccine Bank; this mechanism has been deployed globally and has been used by some of the poorest countries in Asia and Africa.

The Philippines was one of the first countries to benefit from the OIE Vaccine Bank for Rabies. To date and since 2013, more than 3.5 million doses have been delivered to several provinces with the results proving, by and large, very promising. Acknowledging the importance of controlling rabies in dogs, the Philippines government has allocated additional fund to purchase rabies vaccines through WHO and the OIE Vaccine Bank. Through its continued commitment to this cause and with the support of the OIE, the Filipino government is effectively working towards eliminating rabies by

2020. Other ASEAN Member Countries are also accelerating towards the goal of a “Rabies-free ASEAN by 2020”.



Albay Province in southeastern Luzon Island (Philippines) had registered the highest number of human rabies nationally in 2011. With the help of the OIE Rabies Vaccine Bank, 80% of the Province’s dog population has been vaccinated and, in 2014, the number of dog-transmitted human cases of rabies was reduced tenfold.(Photos ©OIE/Cecilia Dy)



In 2014, the OIE Rabies Vaccine Bank also donated vaccines to Nias Island, an area at high risk of rabies located in North Sumatra (Indonesia). 30, 000 dogs were vaccinated, covering a total of 79% of the dog population in numerous villages. (Photo ©OIE/Cecilia Dy)

As of September 2015, almost 15 million rabies vaccines for dogs have been delivered worldwide by the OIE. Of these, 7 million have been delivered by the OIE to fourteen countries to support national vaccination programmes.

In the framework of the Tripartite Alliance on rabies control, WHO has decided to place its procurement orders for canine vaccines through the OIE Rabies Vaccine Bank. In 2015, 7.85 million doses of rabies vaccines were purchased by WHO through the OIE Rabies Vaccine Bank for delivery to the Philippines and to South Africa.

“The OIE Rabies Vaccine Bank is a timely instrument because when we need the vaccines, they come promptly. The Vaccine Bank is a reliable source of vaccines for us – we can go about our activities on schedule and it makes the communities happy because when we promise them that the vaccines will be coming, they are really coming. The vaccine bank helps us to focus our limited resources on high-

risk areas that need immediate intervention,” says Dr. Emelinda Lopez, National Project Coordinator of the OIE Rabies Project in the Philippines.

This vaccine bank mechanism guarantees the availability of high-quality vaccines complying with OIE intergovernmental standards. It also ensures their rapid delivery at a low price, following international competitive calls for tender between potential providers.



The OIE Vaccine Bank for Rabies has also contributed to the reduction of rabies cases in several of Vietnam’s high-risk provinces. The donation of 700,000 doses helped double vaccination coverage from 46% to 98% and led to a reduction of canine rabies by 25%, between 2012 and 2014. (Photo ©OIE/Cecilia Dy)

In addition to the vaccine doses, OIE Member Countries also need support in implementing vaccination campaigns. The OIE Animal Health and Welfare Fund also supports activities such as recruiting and training dog vaccinators, producing educational material and in conducting communication campaigns to raise awareness on the importance of responsible dog ownership.



The OIE, in collaboration with the FAO, developed leaflets, posters and other awareness raising material for the World Rabies Day events organised in the Philippines.(Photo ©FAO)

Today rabies continues to impact lives in most countries worldwide. This means that half of the world’s human population is at risk of contracting rabies. In areas where access to post-bite prophylaxis is limited or inexistent, infection by the disease will lead to death. Investment is necessary to help countries globally to implement national vaccination campaigns targeting canine rabies.

The WHO, OIE and FAO, with the support of GARC, have developed a *Rationale for investing in the global elimination of dog-mediated rabies*. The partners are convinced that the collaboration

between human and animal health sectors is essential to eradicate the disease and will hold a [global Conference](#) on this topic on 10-11 December 2015 in Geneva.

Related links

- [OIE Portal on rabies](#)
- [OIE infographics on rabies](#)
- [OIE vaccine banks](#)
- [Rationale for investing in dog-mediated human rabies](#)
- [Global Conference: Global elimination of dog-mediated human rabies - The Time Is Now!](#)