



MAAIF
Ministry of Agriculture
Animal Industry and Fisheries

PRESS RELEASE

BY

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY
AND FISHERIES (ANIMAL INDUSTRY) TO COMMEMORATE
THE WORLD RABIES DAY (WRD) SLATED FOR 28TH SEPTEMBER,
2022.**

2022 WRD THEME: "RABIES: ONE HEALTH, ZERO DEATHS"

Ladies and gentlemen, the general public, all protocol observed.

Uganda always annually joins the rest of the world to commemorate the World Rabies Day. The World Rabies Day is a global observance commemorated annually on the 28th of September in memory the life of Dr. Louis Pasteur, the first person to successfully create a vaccine against rabies and to raise awareness about rabies, its prevention and to highlight the progress in defeating this horrifying disease.

Rabies is a fatal viral disease that affects both humans and animals, 99% of the human cases are due to bites from infected dogs. The most vulnerable are children since they are commonly in touch with dogs and tend to provoke them. The disease leads to death in unvaccinated animals and humans. The World Health Organization estimates that approximately 50,000 people die of rabies annually, particularly in developing countries in Asia and Africa. The victim bitten by an infected dog usually shows signs of the disease after 1-3 months, becomes paralyzed and dies within 7-10 days after showing the signs.

Annually, the Global Alliance for Rabies Control sets a theme to mark the day, and this year, 2022, the World Rabies Day theme is **“Rabies: One Health, zero deaths.”** One Health is an arrangement through which different disciplines work together to control and prevent diseases. Zero deaths implies that there will be zero human deaths from dog mediated rabies by the year 2030. Rabies is well known as a neglected tropical disease yet very fatal and has caused significant economic losses to the country through loss of productivity and pre-mature deaths.

Burden of rabies in Uganda

Rabies is endemic in Uganda and has been reported in almost all the districts in Uganda. The disease has caused enormous losses in terms of loss of human lives, livestock, and disability from bites and procurement of vaccines and rabies vaccines for humans. On average, 32 people die of rabies annually and the number could be bigger but the reporting levels are still low. In the past one year,

Rabies is an economically important disease and losses mainly result from loss of human lives, livestock, disability from bites and procurement of vaccines and post exposure prophylaxis (PEP).

Uganda spends over 7 billion Uganda shillings annually on the procurement of ant-rabies treatment for humans and over 1 billion shillings every year in the procurement of rabies vaccines for animals.

Government interventions in rabies control

- The government of Uganda through the National Medical Stores procures human anti-rabies vaccines annually. The government also procures 700,000 doses of rabies vaccines for mainly dogs and cats every year.
- The government has the National Laboratory-National Animal Disease Diagnostic and Epidemiology Centre (NADDEC) that conducts confirmatory diagnosis for rabies. There are also regional and district veterinary laboratories which conduct rapid diagnostic tests for rabies and refer samples for confirmation. This facilitates fast and accurate treatment to save lives.
- Training of laboratory personnel at the National Animal Disease Diagnostics and Epidemiology Centre (NADDEC), district and regional veterinary laboratories,
- Procurement of laboratory equipment and consumables
- Conducting mass awareness campaigns on the rabies disease and advocate for social behavior change practices such as; responsible pet ownership (having dogs and cats vaccinated annually and not straying from home), good sanitation practices that keep away stray dogs among others
- The government has legal framework on the control of rabies; Rabies Act, prevention of cruelty to animals, Animal Disease Act, Straying animal act.
- The Government of Uganda has developed the **National Rabies Elimination Strategy (2022-2030)** which will guide the country in the control efforts against rabies and eventual elimination by 2030. The strategy is premised on the following pillars;
 - Mass vaccination of animals especially dogs and cats, and humans at risk

- Vaccination of veterinary and public health professionals at risk
- Mass awareness creation among different stakeholder
- Enhancing rabies surveillance for both animal and public health and database that can guide decisions on rabies control.
- Advocacy to ensure commitment of resources to this noble cause of ending rabies by 2030

Activities to commemorate the World Rabies Day 2022

The World Rabies Day offers an opportunity to highlight advocacy for rabies control and stakeholder mobilization. The host district for World Rabies Day 2022 is Tororo district, which is a well-known hotspot for rabies. Activities will be conducted from 24th to 28th September, 2022 and these include;

- Mass vaccination of dogs and cats
- Vaccination of humans at risk of rabies; the veterinary staff, clinical year students and health professionals
- Awareness creation through radio and television talk shows both at national and local levels
- Provision of information through distribution of awareness materials
- Dissemination of information through print media
- Spaying and castration of dogs and cats as a method of managing the dog population.
- School outreach activities- sensitization of pupils

The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries will provide rabies vaccines to all districts on request to conduct vaccinations during the commemoration of World Rabies Day 2022.

Information to dog owners on how to prevent dog bites

- Develop a lifetime training program for your dog and always adhere to it.
- Allow your dog a chance to interact with all categories of people conducive environments.
- Dogs should be exposed to a variety of situations such as fellow dogs, loud noises, large machines and so forth.
- Discourage training dogs through violent, physical or aggressive means. Encourage rewards, positive reinforcement and treats.
- Always keep your dogs enclosed and release only when necessary.

- Make an effort to vaccinate your dog against rabies and other vaccine preventable diseases and keep the vaccination certificates safe for future references.

What to do when bitten by a dog

- Immediately wash the wound with soap and water
- Report to the nearest veterinary office to investigate whether the dog could have rabies and to be referred for Post Exposure Prophylaxis at a government referral Hospital

The general public is encouraged to be vigilant and cooperate in the control of rabies by doing the following;

- Presenting dogs and cats for vaccination
- Do not let cats and dogs loiter
- Proper disposal of food refuse
- Get help to remove stray animals
- Contribute to population control through presenting cats and dogs for spaying and castration.


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