



World Rabies Day: A Collaborative Initiative to “Make Rabies History”

Cathleen Hanlon^{1,2}, Deborah J. Briggs^{1,2,3}, Peter J. Costa^{2,3}, Abigail Tumpey⁴, Sarah Cleveland^{3,5}, Kim Doyle¹, & the World Rabies Day Team

¹Kansas State University, College of Veterinary Medicine, KS, USA, ²Global Alliance for Rabies Control, US,

³Alliance for Rabies Control, UK, ⁴Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA, US, ⁵Edinburgh University, UK



Background

Although the word alone evokes a highly charged response, rabies remains a severely neglected disease. The continuing loss of lives to rabies infection is directly related to population-level risk factors.

Methods

The World Rabies Day initiative arose from a group of rabies prevention professionals who built partnerships with the World Health Organization, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the Pasteur Institute, Canadian Food and Inspection Agency, World Society for the Protection of Animals, World Veterinary Association, and many veterinary medical organizations and student veterinary medical associations. The World Rabies Day initiative advocates for improving the health of the whole population, human and animal, - a “One Medicine Approach” - by raising awareness about the need to control rabies in the main global animal reservoir, the domestic dog, and prevent human rabies through education and appropriate medical prophylaxis – a need that arises primarily from economic and educational disparity.



Photo credit to World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA)

Objectives

- The goal of World Rabies Day is to build the political will necessary to end rabies
- World Rabies Day has three objectives that should collectively contribute to a long-term shift in political will:
 - To raise global awareness as to the devastating toll of rabies and how the disease can be prevented
 - To mobilize resources to support local rabies prevention programs
 - To inform and educate people in developing countries, especially children and young people, about rabies and its control and prevention

World Rabies Day Web Site



Results

During the inaugural year, at least 74 countries participated through a wide variety of events including: vaccination clinics, lectures and educational seminars, media outreach, museum and zoo exhibits, parades, festivals, dances, puppet shows, marches, runs, and dog walks. Numerous countries, including Mexico and Brazil, had events in every state.

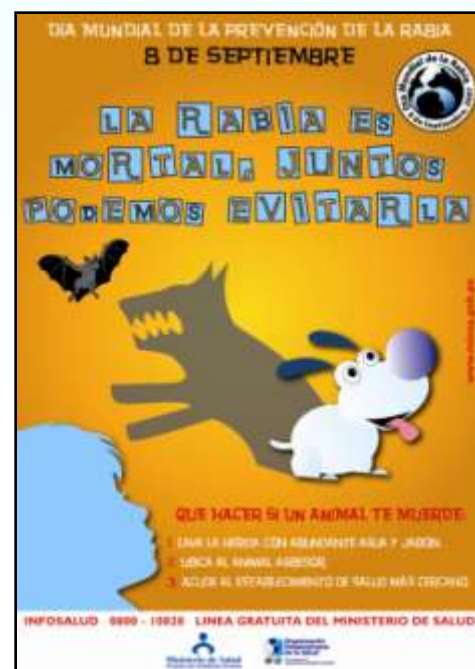


Dog Vaccinations in Jordan



Vet Students in the Philippines conducting animal vaccinations.

Although based on preliminary data from 15% of participants, more than 1.2 million people were educated through World Rabies Day events and outreach and over 600,000 animal vaccinations were administered. In some countries, rabies experts convened to discuss goals and plans for rabies prevention and control, with several countries initiating a national Rabies Control Program in honor of this event. Veterinary colleges around the world joined forces towards this effort, with activities at 24 in the US, 15 in India, 5 in Indonesia, and several in Mexico and the Philippines.



Example of materials developed in Peru.



Veterinary Students at University of Tennessee, 1 of 24 Colleges of Veterinary Medicine who participated in the US

Conclusions

The first World Rabies Day was a major achievement for the rabies prevention community. These efforts are envisioned to be part of comprehensive human and animal health delivery that would develop and augment public health and veterinary infrastructure in regions of greatest need. Now is the time is for “Working Together to Make Rabies History!”



Parade in Pakistan. Photo Credit: Dr. Naseem Salahuddin.



Education of Students in Hisar, India. Photo Credit: Dr. Garg.

Outcome Metrics

- 74 countries mobilized
- At least 150 events held
- 400,000 people engaged
- 600,000 animal vaccinations administered
- Over 54 million educated by outreach
- 50 veterinary schools participated worldwide
- WRD logos created in over 25 languages
- Customizable veterinary and media toolkits developed
- Event planning and educational resources developed
- World Rabies Day specialty merchandise developed
- WRD Outcomes Brochure and Video
- Over 38,000 visits to worldrabiesday.org



Parade in Sri Lanka.



Bike ride in Bangkok, Thailand. One of numerous events to raise awareness in association with World Rabies Day.