

HealthforAnimals position on Rabies Eradication: Rabies can and must be eradicated.

Background

Rabies is a zoonotic disease, meaning it can be transmitted from infected animals to other animals and humans, e.g. through a bite from a dog or bat. It is found on all continents, except Antarctica, but thanks to rabies vaccines (for people and animals), it is 100% preventable. Despite this, over 70,000¹ people still die from rabies every year, making it one of the world's most deadly infectious diseases.

HealthforAnimals fully supports the eradication of rabies in people and animals

Human and animal rabies are inextricably linked. The most effective way to eliminate human rabies is by eradicating it in animals through animal vaccination. Rabies control requires a "One Health" approach including dog vaccination, human medical care (vaccination and post-bite treatment) and educating the public.

The role of the animal health industry: The animal health industry fully supports the work and engagement from organisations and bodies such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the UN (FAO) and the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC) in the drive to eradicate rabies. As an industry we recognise that we have a significant role in the fight against rabies, and we fully support the eradication of this disease.

Each company that is a member of HealthforAnimals will define its own level and manner of engagement. It is important that all partners involved understand that the veterinary medicines industry works differently from the human medicines sector. It is about 2-3% the size of the human medicines sector and it has limitations which the human medicines sector does not have. In consequence, the way the animal health industry operates in terms of production capacity, management, predictability and flexibility is different. An overview of how the two sectors differ can be found on [our website](#).

However, those limitations can be overcome in many instances through appropriate communication and planning. In order to find joint strategies for rabies eradication, open discussions on expected needs, both at global and local level are welcome.

What does the animal health industry provide and what is still needed to help its contribution towards the eradication of rabies?

1. We know our dog rabies vaccines will help towards the eradication of rabies, as they are a valuable and powerful tool with proven success. Their safety and efficacy are objectively recognised through marketing authorisations by well-respected regulatory agencies such as the EMA or USDA following a careful scientific review process.
2. Any actions undertaken by the animal health industry/vaccine providers would benefit greatly from the creation of a framework in which these vaccines would ultimately operate and be used. Ideally any dog vaccine campaigns would be conducted in-country with the involvement and support of local authorities and local government and with a true "One Health" approach. A clear cooperation between public health officials, doctors, veterinarians, animal health workers, paramedics and vaccine

¹ <http://www.oie.int/infographic/rabies/index.html>

providers is prerequisite for success. Experience shows that if vaccination campaigns are not planned and executed in such a holistic manner, the results can be disappointing.

3. Successful animal vaccination programmes against rabies require local governments to develop not only in-country awareness campaigns on rabies, but also short, medium and long term goals, including plans of vaccine use. Only by having this framework in place the use of vaccines will achieve success towards rabies eradication.
4. From an industry perspective there are certain overall pre-requisites needed for companies which supply dog rabies vaccines. The animal health industry is committed to delivering top quality products where OIE could help with certification. The pre-requisites include:
 - planning: medium to long-term forecasting needs (with vaccine providers included from the start)
 - predictability from the countries requiring the vaccines
 - the setting and acceptance of minimum quality criteria for the vaccines has to be provided. Pre-qualification of vaccine producers might be needed to ensure appropriate vaccine quality. Good quality vaccines, fitting to different climatic and infrastructural prerequisites are needed to ensure appropriate level and duration of immunity in dogs of varying age and health under all conditions
 - assurance that adequate storage facilities are in place in-country (including ensuring the cold chain) to adequately stock the vaccines.
 - shared strategy between countries and manufacturers regarding the opportunity for vaccine and/or antigen banks, including financing structure and well-defined quality requirements

Partnerships

HealthforAnimals, as the global animal medicines association, strongly believes that partnerships – Public Private Partnerships – between industry, governments, inter-governmental bodies, charities, NGO's etc. are the most effective way to handle the elimination of human and animal rabies.

Significant experience of the different animal health companies who are a member of HealthforAnimals in the area of vaccine development and production, awareness raising activities, partnerships, etc. exists and could be included in any future activity.

As an industry body, HealthforAnimals is fully dedicated to partner with WHO, OIE, FAO and GARC in working towards the full eradication of animal rabies, and ultimately human rabies.