

HEALTHFORANIMALS SAY NOW IS THE TIME TO TAKE THE BITE OUT OF DEADLY RABIES

- **4th annual World Zoonosis Day – 6th July 2015**
- **Leading voices unite in call to work together to stop the preventable disease that causes 60,000 deaths annually**
- **New infographic highlights the increasing zoonosis threat and the need to take action now**

Brussels, 6th July 2015 – Rabies is a zoonotic disease meaning that it can be transmitted from infected animals to humans, e.g. through a bite from a dog or bat. It is found on all continents except for Antarctica but thanks to rabies vaccines, it is 100% preventable. Despite this, over 60,000 people still die from rabies each year making it one of the world's most deadly infectious diseases.

To mark the fourth annual World Zoonosis Day, the global animal medicines association HealthforAnimals has joined leading voices to highlight the economic paradox of the rabies crisis and call for urgent action to halt the spread of rabies and other zoonotic diseases once and for all.

Rabies costs global economies an estimated **\$124 billion annually**. Taking India as an example, post-bite immunisations cost the Indian economy over \$25 million a year alone, yet more people die of rabies in India than anywhere else in the world. However, a rabies vaccine costs as little as **£5 (\$8) to vaccinate 20 dogs** for one year.

Up to 75% of all known human diseases are zoonotic in origin, and currently there are over 200 identified zoonotic diseases that represent a clear threat to human health and to the welfare of animals. To mark World Zoonosis Day, HealthforAnimals are focusing on rabies as one zoonotic disease that can be eradicated.

HealthforAnimals Executive Director, Carel du Marchie Sarvaas said: "To address the global zoonotic threat, HealthforAnimals promote the use of preventive veterinary medicines and the widespread use and development of vaccines. These play an increasingly important role in the effective control of a variety of diseases.

"However there are often barriers to implementing these technologies and the animal health industry must urgently work closely with NGOs, inter-governmental bodies, governments and regulators around the world to encourage access to medicines, in order to overcome solvable disease challenges.

"Also important, is ensuring an environment that encourages continued innovation within the animal health industry, to ensure that we remain on top of the always shifting disease-scape, as pathogens themselves, and the environment in which they exist, continually change. Preventing rabies in dogs is widely regarded as one of the best options for reducing the number of deaths in humans."

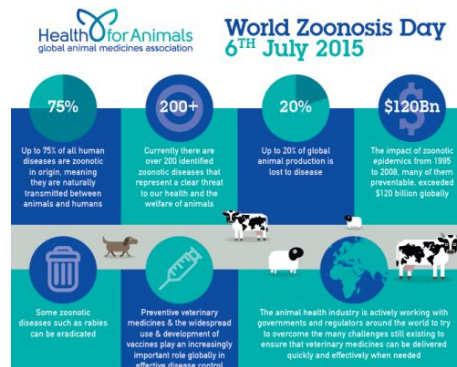
HealthforAnimals are supportive of the work that leading not for profit, industry body and government organisations, including the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC), WHO, OIE and the FAO, do to help not only raise awareness of the issue, but also improve disease surveillance and implement control strategies in at-risk areas.

Prof. Louis Nel, Executive Director of the Global Alliance for Rabies Control said:
 “Today marks the 130th anniversary of the successful application on a human by Louis Pasteur of a vaccine for rabies. On July 6th 1885, Pasteur used the vaccine on 9 year old Joseph Meister who was badly mauled by a rabid dog. Louis Pasteur was hailed a hero and the rabies vaccine paved the way for the development of other vaccines.

“We have come a long way since then and yet we still haven’t beaten rabies in some parts of the world. We can make rabies history if international institutions invested more in mass canine vaccinations. We know **we can beat canine rabies if we vaccinate 70% of dogs**. Canine vaccines are not only less expensive than injections for people; they are far less expensive than the critical care treatment of a human rabies case.

“To achieve this, the animal and human health industries need to align and secure increased support and funding from international institutions for in-country rabies control programmes. Only then can we achieve a world free of rabies.”

To help raise awareness of the growing risk zoonotic diseases, including rabies, pose to human life, and animal health and welfare, HealthforAnimals have created an infographic that highlights the economic impact and global threat:



For many zoonotic diseases that threaten animal and human health, animal medicine solutions already exist. The animal health industry is actively working with governments and regulators around the world to try to overcome the many challenges that still exist, to ensure that veterinary medicines can be delivered quickly and effectively when needed.

For more information about zoonotic disease and rabies specifically, visit the HealthforAnimals website at www.healthforanimals.org

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Notes for editors

Rabies - key facts

- Rabies is a vaccine-preventable viral disease which occurs in more than 150 countries and territories
- In 1885 a vaccine was famously developed by Louis Pasteur which has saved millions of lives
- This vaccine has been used to eliminate the disease in many parts of the developed world
- However, infection still causes tens of thousands of deaths every year, mostly in Asia and Africa
- 40% of people who are bitten by suspect rabid animals are children under 15 years of age– that’s over 100 children dying each day
- Dogs are the source of the vast majority of human rabies deaths– one estimate puts the world count of stray dogs at 375 million
- Immediate wound cleansing and immunisation within a few hours after contact with a suspect rabid animal can prevent the onset of development of disease and death
- Every year, more than 15 million people worldwide receive a post-exposure vaccination to prevent the disease– this is estimated to prevent hundreds of thousands of rabies deaths annually

HealthforAnimals

HealthforAnimals (formerly International Federation for Animal Health) is an organisation representing manufacturers of veterinary medicines, vaccines and other animal health products in both developed and developing countries across five continents. The mission of HealthforAnimals is to foster a greater understanding of animal health matters and promote a predictable, science-based regulatory environment that facilitates the supply of innovative and quality animal medicines, vaccines and other animal health products into a competitive market place. These products contribute to a healthy and safe food supply as well as a high standard of health and welfare for animals and people.

For further information on HealthforAnimals visit: www.healthforanimals.org

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