

## IFAH CALLS FOR COMBINED INNOVATION STRATEGIES ON WORLD RABIES DAY

**Brussels, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2014 –**

On World Rabies Day 2014 (September 28<sup>th</sup>), the International Federation for Animal Health (IFAH) is calling for better coordination between governments, regulators, healthcare providers and the public to tackle the multidimensional impacts of rabies by ensuring that everyone has access to innovations available for its prevention and control.

Though well-controlled in Europe, rabies is still very much an immediate threat to human and animal populations in Africa and Asia, where 95% of all rabies deaths occur<sup>i</sup>. A 2012 IFAH white paper - '[Costs of animal diseases](#)' - drew attention to the 55,000 people who die of rabies infections each year<sup>i</sup>. This highlights the need for global collaboration.

The animal health sector plays an important role in preventing and controlling rabies. Through continued innovations in vaccination programmes, global action in disease surveillance, an increase in diagnostic capacities and the promotion of responsible dog-ownership, the threat and spread of rabies could be halted.

IFAH Executive Director, Carel du Marchie Sarvaas said: "Rabies is a good example of a zoonotic disease with very serious consequences for both animal and human populations - figures from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC) also respectively show that more than 55,000 people die of rabies every year, 40% of whom are children<sup>ii</sup>, while 20 million dogs are culled annually in attempts to fight the disease<sup>iii</sup>. It is imperative that a multi-disciplined approach is exercised across governments and both the animal and human health sectors to tackle this significant threat."

In an age where international travel is more common than before, it is IFAH's belief that if we are to protect people from the approximately 60%<sup>iiii</sup> of infections that are communicable between humans and animals, such as rabies, then a One Health approach needs to be adopted to optimise solutions and innovations across all species, across all regions. The UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) describe this approach as, "a collaborative, international, cross-sectoral, multidisciplinary mechanism to address threats and reduce risks of detrimental infectious diseases at the animal-human-ecosystem interface".

In recognition of the interdependence of human and animal health and the One Health approach to tackling diseases, the theme of this year's World Rabies Day is #TogetherAgainstRabies. World Rabies Day, an international campaign coordinated by GARC, plays a vital role in campaigning for the prevention and control of this disease among leaders and policymakers, especially in those countries faced with a large rabies threat.

Professor Louis Nel, Executive Director of GARC, said: "The hope of future rabies control is dependent on the execution of the One Health approach on global, regional, and national levels. Rabies programmes in South Africa and the Philippines have demonstrated that managing rabies in the developing world is possible, if there is close cooperation of the veterinary health and public health sectors. This year's theme of #TogetherAgainstRabies highlights the need for this unified approach to tackling rabies on a global scale."

**Join the discussion on Twitter by following @health4animals and by using the #TogetherAgainstRabies hashtag.**

**ENDS**



## Notes for editors

### IFAH

The International Federation for Animal Health (IFAH) 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 IFAH 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 IFAH, please visit [www.ifahsec.org](http://www.ifahsec.org)

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<sup>1</sup> IFAH White Paper: The Costs of Animal Disease - <http://www.ifahsec.org/white-papers/>

<sup>i1</sup> World Health Organisation, Rabies Fact Sheet - <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs099/en/>

<sup>iii</sup> Global Alliance for Rabies Control, Rabies' victims - <http://rabiesalliance.org/rabies/rabies-and-children>

<sup>iiii</sup> Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, Zoonotic Disease: When Humans and Animals Intersect - <http://www.cdc.gov/24-7/cdcfastfacts/zoonotic.html>