



***American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) &
Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA/ACMV) &
Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE)***

Joint Statement on

THE GLOBAL CONTROL OF CANINE RABIES

(Approved by the AVMA Board of Directors on 5 September 2014, FVE Board of Directors on 26 September 2014 and the CVMA Council)

The AVMA, CVMA, and FVE recognize that canine rabies presents a serious public health risk worldwide. Although multiple rabies virus variants are maintained in wild mammalian reservoir populations and can cause infection and death in humans, the canine variant serves as the source of infection in the vast majority of human rabies infections and deaths worldwide. According to the [World Health Organization](#), more than 55,000 people die of rabies every year, and 40% of people bitten by suspect rabid animals are children younger than 15 years of age. Given the role of dogs in transmission of the rabies virus to humans, vaccination of dogs against rabies is an effective means to protect children and adults from contracting this deadly disease.

The veterinary profession is uniquely poised to play a leading role in controlling and eradicating canine rabies. Indeed, in some countries canine rabies has been eliminated due, in large part, to the collaborative work of veterinarians, other public health practitioners, and legislators. This work has included administering mandatory canine vaccination/revaccination and centralized identification programs connected with post-rabies exposure treatment for humans and quarantine and/or euthanasia, as appropriate, for dogs.

To be effective, the AVMA, CVMA, and FVE believe that programs designed to eradicate canine rabies in a humane manner must include the following components:

- Public education regarding the serious nature of the disease, vaccination as a means to prevent transmission of the virus within dog populations, dog bite prevention, and acceptable approaches to management of canine populations that may serve as viral reservoirs.
- Mandatory vaccination and revaccination of both owned and non-owned dogs tied to centralized (at the local, state, regional, and/or national level) identification of vaccinated animals.
- Policies and protocols to regulate the movement of dogs within and across regions and for the quarantine and euthanasia of potentially infected and infected dogs, respectively.



- Sufficient resources to ensure effective and consistent enforcement of regulations designed to control and eventually eliminate canine rabies from a given region.
- Humane and effective control of free-roaming dog populations.

The AVMA, CVMA, and FVE also acknowledge and support existing resources from national, regional, and international organizations that are available to assist countries in controlling canine rabies and encourage those organizations to work collaboratively to more effectively establish canine rabies control and eradication programs. Available resources include, but are not limited to the following:

- [A Blueprint for Control of Rabies in Dog Populations](#), from the Partners for Rabies Prevention.
- [Developing a Stepwise Approach for Rabies Prevention and Control \(2012\)](#), from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Global Alliance for Rabies Control.
- [World Organization for Animal Health \(OIE\) Rabies Portal](#) and Chapters 5.11, 7.7, and 8.11 of the [Terrestrial Animal Health Code](#) (2013).
- [AVMA Model Rabies Control Ordinance](#).
- [Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control](#), from the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, Inc (2011).

The AVMA, CVMA, and FVE fully support the findings and recommendations outlined in the [World Organisation for Animal Health \(OIE\)-World Small Animal Veterinary Association \(WSAVA\) Joint Statement on Control of Canine Rabies \(2013\)](#) and the [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(FAO\), OIE and WHO Joint Statement](#) outlining the strong intersectoral commitment needed to eliminate human rabies and control the disease in animals.

The AVMA, CVMA and FVE firmly believe that canine rabies can be controlled and eliminated through collaboration among animal and public health workers, legislators, and governing bodies of existing and new control programs, with support from governmental and non-governmental organizations alike.

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