

## World Rabies Day Events Set

**Wide participation expected for the day, which helps raise resources and awareness about the disease.**

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Vaccination is a crucial part of managing the outbreak of rabies, experts say. World Rabies Day will take place Sept. 28 in an effort to raise awareness and resources in support of human rabies prevention and animal rabies control.

Eighty-five countries participated in last year's observance, according to the Alliance for Rabies Control, a United Kingdom charity that helped spearhead the effort with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The group expects to exceed that number this year.

The campaign seeks to reinforce the message that rabies is a preventable disease, yet it kills 55,000 people each year, about one person every 10 minutes, according to the organization.

Rabies can be transmitted to animals and humans. The disease is transmitted mainly by bite, but exposure may also occur through contamination of broken skin or mucous membranes with saliva from an infected animal. Once neurological symptoms of the disease develop, rabies is fatal to both animals and humans. However, rabies is preventable.

"Vaccination prior to possible exposure is a crucial part of health management of domestic animals, and is the single most important factor in rabies prevention," said Peter Costa, global communications coordinator for the Alliance for Rabies Control.

Rabies prevention starts with the animal owner, according to the Alliance for Rabies Control. Prevention measures include vaccinating pets and avoiding stray animals and wildlife.

If a person is bitten, they should wash the bite wounds with soap and water and seek medical attention immediately. If a pet is bitten, consult a veterinarian immediately. Prompt and appropriate treatment after being bitten and before the disease develops can stop rabies infection and/or prevent the disease in humans and animals, according to the Alliance for Rabies Control.

A variety of events are scheduled this year, including vaccination clinics, lectures and educational seminars. Among them: Sept. 19: Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine will host the 2009 World Rabies Day Symposium. The venue will bring together a One Health audience comprised of veterinary and medical students, faculty and practicing veterinarians and will focus on the importance of rabies prevention and control. Sept. 26: There will be a free pet-shot clinic at the International Independent Showmen's Association in Tampa, Fla. Rabies licenses will be available and free if the resident is in zip code 33579, 33547 or 33598. Sept. 28: The George Baer Memorial Rabies Symposium will take place in Atlanta. The CDC symposium will focus on the importance of rabies prevention and control at the global and national levels, as well as human and animal rabies epidemiology, diagnosis and surveillance issues. Oct. 19-23: The 20th International Conference on Rabies in the Americas will be held in Quebec, Canada.