

# Rabies Free Africa celebrates World Rabies Day by hitting 2.5 million dogs vaccinated

ARUSHA, TANZANIA, September 26, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Washington State University's Paul G. Allen School for Global Health announced today that the [Rabies Free Africa](#) (RFA) program has reached a milestone of 2.5 million rabies vaccines distributed.

World Rabies Day reminds the global community that rabies, a fully preventable disease, continues to kill over 50,000 people, mostly children, each year. Since 2003, RFA has worked with African governments to build on local partnerships and has made tremendous progress toward the elimination of rabies as a human health threat.

The program is structured on mass dog vaccination campaigns that eliminate rabies not only in dogs but in humans, livestock, and wildlife. Since the program began, there have been zero cases of canine rabies in endangered wildlife species in Serengeti National Park. Prior to these efforts, wildlife outbreaks occurred regularly.

"Our ability to do this crucial work is because of the excellent working relationship with the Tanzanian Government. RFA works in coordination with the district veterinary offices of the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, and all vaccination efforts are done in partnership with central and local government authorities," said Dr. Felix Lankester, director of [Rabies Free Tanzania](#). "Along with facilitating vaccinations in more than 220 villages each year, RFA educates thousands of people about the dangers of rabies and how it can be prevented, saving hundreds of human lives since the program began."



Boys attending vaccination clinic in Tanzania with their dogs.

A critical component of this 2.5 million vaccination effort was the determination that the Nobivac® rabies vaccine is thermotolerant. As a result, it can be stored outside of the cold chain at temperatures up to 30 C for three months without losing potency. This realization led to the development of locally made passive cooling devices, known as Zeepots, in which several hundred doses of rabies vaccines can be stored and kept cool without the need for electricity.

“None of this would be possible without the donation of 2.5 million Nobivac® Rabies vaccine doses by MSD Animal Health,” Lankester said. “MSD Animal Health and the Tanzanian government are essential partners in the program. Working together, we are moving closer to the World Health Organization’s goal of [Zero by 30](#), the global strategic plan to end human deaths from dog-mediated rabies by 2030.”

Tanzania, like other areas of Africa where rabies is endemic, is comprised of many different communities and landscapes. As a result, these can’t be a ‘one size fits all’ approach to the elimination of rabies. In response, RFA will continue these successful dog vaccination campaigns, while investigating new cost-effective delivery models to increase the reach of mass dog vaccination in countries where rabies remains endemic.

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**RABIES FREE**  
*Africa*

“World Rabies Day is a great opportunity to remind the world that **dog rabies continues to kill people** and that **it can be controlled through mass dog vaccination**. It’s a simple message but it needs repeating.”

-Felix Lankester,  
Director of Rabies Free Tanzania

Dr. Felix Lankester, Director of Rabies Free Tanzania

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