

REPORT

WORLD RABIES DAY LAUNCH

SUNYANI WEST DISTRICT

SEPTEMBER 28, 2019



Executive Summary

The RIWAGh World Rabies day, 2019, under the theme “Vaccinate to Eliminate” was comenmorated in Odumase, Sunyani West District of the Bono Region of Ghana. The celebration this year as in other celebration witness nationwide education through both print and electronic media. Education materials where distributed to churches, mosque, hospitals and schools.

There was media discussion and publicity a month prior to WRD both on national and local media. The launch durbar was attended by over 500 dignitaries including traditional leaders including chiefs, Regional and Districts authorities including the regional minister, the District Chief Executive, and key stakeholders (Ghana Health Service, Veterinary Services). International participants included, United Nation Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and Communication department of the United State Agency for International Development (USAID).

Education and public awareness on rabies and responsible pet ownership was our key objectives for this year and, without a doubt, we can say that we achieved that. Our media coverage and exposure was substantially increased both nationally and locally and the school children in the District gained awareness through the rabies march through Odumase and the flyers that each took home from school...22,000 in all

RIWA GH is being recognized as the leader in rabies awareness and education in Ghana. RIWAGH efforts has seen many organisations, both government and private organize rabies education and free mass vaccinations across Ghana. Mission Rabies, an international NGO is supporting a district in the Ashante Region. RIWAGH is a member of the the Ghana One Health team that is championing the development of the Ghana rabies control strategic plan.

The launch of World Rabies Day 2019 was deemed a great success. This was due to the support and participation of World Animal Protection and the Sunyani West District Assembly and our other stakeholders namely USAID, VSD and Local Veterinary enterprises including Multivet.Gh Ltd.

RIWAG will make follow-up to develop a closer relation with the Sunyani West District assembly to ensure the execute the pledge of sustaining the mass annual vaccination within District.

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

It was in 2015 that RIWA Ghana initiated its first celebration of World Rabies Day in Accra with education and free vaccinations on that day September 28.

This was followed up with another celebration in 2016 in Accra and our hosting the RIWA conference in March 2016.

In 2017, with support of World Animal Protection (WAP) RIWAGH celebrated WRD, 2017 and launch a 3 year pilot project in Suhum. Suhum is a rabies endemic town in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The pilot project was to demonstrate the effectiveness combined One Health approach to rabies control.

In 2018 we launched WRD in Ehi, Ketu North District, Volta Region accompanied by free vaccinations. Our 2nd year in Suhum continued with education and free vaccinations.

We observed a drastic rabies reporting and support for mass vaccinations in all districts that benefited from the RIWAGH launch. Seeing the importance of awareness and education on rabies control and prevention, we again decided to expand and go to the north and the Sunyani West District in the newly created Bono Region of Ghana.

The Objectives of the Commemoration are:

1. To raise awareness on rabies and responsible pet ownership through the media, posters, flyers, banners and presentations to schools, churches and mosques.
2. To carry out free public vaccination of pets in selected locations in the Sunyani West District
3. To organize a durbar of various stakeholders for the launch of World Rabies Day

WORLD RABIES DAY 2019

World Rabies Day Official Launch

Publicity:

Over 50,000 assorted education materials were developed with messages focus on rabies prevention, responsible pet ownership. Banners, flyers and posters were printed for the schools and other targeted centers within the district. Below, **appendix 1**, provide copies of education materials developed for the commemoration

Television and Radio education

In the past 2 years, the media has been a crucial element in getting out the awareness and educational aspects of rabies to the public and in 2019, we made an extra effort to obtain as much media exposure as possible.

We started with both TV and radio live interviews and went up to WRD on September 28th.

To get more awareness in the media, RIWAG formed a media co-ordinating team lead by Dr. Benjamin Kissi Sasu. Below in **Appendix 2**. are pictures of some of the discussion at selected media houses visited. In all 6 National Television Stations and about 9 FM radio houses provided air time for discussion and advertisement of the occasion.



Pics.Above and in Appendix 1. TV and Radio discussions at various media house were held to educate Ghanaians about rabies and responsible pet ownership.

World Rabies Day launch in Odumase, Sunyani West District.

There was massive media participation during the launch with about 13 media houses coordinated by the national broadcasting station in the region - TV3 & GTV who recorded most of the proceedings. The durbar was massively attended by School children and Teachers, Traditional and Opinion leaders (Chiefs, Christians and Moslem leaders, Assembly Members, and Heads of departments. The launch durbar was addressed by high regional government officials and International and Local stakeholders. They included the regional minister, Brono Region, The DCE, Sunyani West District, The Director of Veterinary Services, the regional Director, Ghana Health Services, FAO, USAID and RIWAG Chairman (Pictures below and in **Appendix 3**). The focus of the speeches was on the need to lobby policy for support to control and eliminate rabies from Ghana. FAO pledge her support to any rabies program from government and is strongly in support of the One Health approach. USAID pledge to

provide education materials to educate the populace on how to reducing dog bites and rabies.



Director, Veterinary Services, Ghana



Regional Minister, Bono Region.



District Chief Executive, Sunyani West



Dr. Moduga, WAP Rep.

2. Other RIWA GH Activities

Other activities of the launch included:

- School Children's Awareness

The department of Education received 22,000 2 sided flyers which were handed out to every student in basic schools in the District...22,000 students

Each student was required to take home and educate their family and friends on what is rabies and responsible pet ownership.

- School Children's March through Odumase

Three Hundred (300) school children started a rabies awareness walk through Odumase at 8am accompanied by a brass band and escorted by police.

Banners were carried, Posters displayed and educational flyers handed out to all the public on the march route.



3. FREE MASS RABIES VACCINATION

The free public vaccination was carried out on Friday the 27TH and Saturday the 28TH September, 2019 at 17 community vaccination locations within the district.

1. A total of one thousand, four hundred and eleven (1,411) pets were vaccinated during the two day period.
2. Majority of pets vaccinated were dogs
3. Majority of pets vaccinated were local dogs. A total of 1,121 local dogs were vaccinated
4. Data on when pets were vaccinated gave a total of 709 as pets receiving their first vaccination. This gives a percentage of 50.

Some owners could not provide accurate information on their pets. Also some locations did not capture data on age and the last vaccination dates. Pictures below capture some actions during the free pet immunization on the WRD, 2019.



Free Vaccination and Pet owner Education given to those in queue

4. CONCLUSION:

This 2019 World Rabies Day, under the theme, vaccinate to eliminate was successfully observed by RIWAG and partners in the Odumase, Sunyani West District. There was massive media publicity during the period. The Launch witness a huge attendance from Government and Private stakeholders.

The free public vaccination was largely successful. Out of a target of two thousand (2,000), one thousand, four hundred and eleven (1,411) were vaccinated giving an achievement of over 70%.

The high patronage is an indication that to effectively eliminate rabies in rural and semi-urban communities, pet ownership education on their responsibility and a policy of free public vaccination for the next five years would have to be instituted.

Appendix 1. LAUNCH EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY MATERIALS

1. OFFICIAL LAUNCH BANNER (10)

 **WORLD RABIES DAY LAUNCH**
"Harmonizing Stakeholders & Tools for the Prevention & Control of Rabies & Responsible Pet Ownership"



Dates: SEPTEMBER 28, 2019
Time: 10:00am
Venue: FORECOURT SUNYANI WEST DISTRICT ASSEMBLY

Bring ALL your Pets for FREE Vaccination to designated venues September 27-28
Rabies - Vaccinate to Eliminate

     




2. CHILDREN'S MARCH BANNER (4)

 **WORLD RABIES DAY**
SEPTEMBER 28



RABIES  **KILLS** 

Bring ALL your Pets for FREE Vaccination to designated venues September 27-28
Rabies - Vaccinate to Eliminate

     



3. TWO (2) SIDED FLYER (26,000 Copies)



RABIES

WHAT IS RABIES?

Rabies is a fatal disease of warm blooded animals and is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected animal. 99% of all rabies cases results from the bite of an infected dog.



CAN RABIES BE TREATED?

We must try to prevent rabies with vaccination.

There are 4 simple steps to prevent rabies:

1. Avoid getting bitten by an animal
2. If bitten wash the wound immediately with running water and soap for 15 minutes.
3. Tell an adult or a friend you have been bitten, because they must take you to a clinic or hospital for a rabies treatment.
4. Be a responsible pet owner & vaccinate your pets each year to prevent rabies infection.

  



RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP

It is Your Responsibility to Ensure Each Pet has...



A Bath Regularly to Kill Ticks, Fleas etc

A Vaccination Against Rabies Every Year

Frequent Walks on a Leash & is Prevented from Roaming

  

4. VACCINATION BANNERS (17)



WORLD RABIES DAY
VACCINATE ALL YOUR PETS

FREE RABIES VACCINATION STATION
SEPTEMBER 27 - SEPTEMBER 28
7:30am - 5:00 pm Daily

    

5. 5 STEPS POSTERS

5 tips to prevent dog bites



Dogs can be your best friends, but sometimes when we are angry or scared we might bite. Let's learn to live together responsibly and safely to prevent being bitten.

1



Don't disturb me or frighten me, particularly when I am eating or tied up.

• Don't disturb me when I am with my toys, my puppies, in a car, behind a fence or when I am asleep or ill.

2



Keep away from me when I am angry or scared.

• When I am angry, I will show my teeth.
• When I am scared, my tail will be between my legs and I will try to run away.

3



Don't move if I approach you when I am not on a lead.

• Stand still like a tree trunk.
• If you fall over, curl up and stay as still and heavy as a rock.

4



Approach me slowly and quietly.

• Ask my owner or your parents/guardian's permission before you touch me. Let me sniff your hand before you touch me. When you stroke me, stroke my back first.

5



If a dog bites you act quickly. Wash the wound with soap and water and look for a first aid centre.

• Remember to tell your parents that you were bitten. Tell them which dog it was and where you were when it bit you.

Rabies is a disease that kills people and dogs. If a dog has rabies and it bites you it can give you the disease. If you are bitten remembering what the dog that bit you looked like and getting medical help can save your life. Don't disturb, mistreat or kill the dog.

Remind your parents, teachers, friends and everyone you know that the best way to stop rabies is to make sure all dogs are vaccinated against it every year.



6. WHAT IS RABIES POSTERS (300)



RABIES



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3. Tell an adult or a friend you have been bitten, because they must take you to a clinic or hospital for a rabies treatment.
4. Vaccinate your dog each year to prevent rabies infection.



Appendix 2. PRE & WRD LAUNCH MEDIA AWARENESS



Discussion at TV Africa (August 26) and UTV on September 5th, 2019 - B. Sasu & Dr. J. Amakye-anim



1. GTV Breakfast Show – September 25 – Dr. R. Suu-Ire & Dr. E. Moduga



2. METRO TV 9am – September 25 – Dr. B. Guri & Dr. B. Sasu



3. GHONE TV – September 26 – Dr. B. Sasu & President Knust Veterinary Medicals Students Association



4. TV3 New Day Morning Show – September 26



5. 3FM Radio – September 26

6. JLife FM, Sunyani – 4 live interviews with Dr. Quist, Raphael Antwi September 10-23
7. ABC News GH – September 27
8. JLife FM – September 27 Russell Coombs, Raphael Antwi Asibi GBC



9. Moonlite FM – September 27 Russell Coombs, Dr. C. Quist



10. JLife FM- September 27 – Dr. Mudoga



11. JLife FM September 28 – Dr. B. Guri & Dr. B. Sasu



12. ARK FM September 28 – Dr. B. Sasu, Dr. B. Guri



13. Moonlite FM – September 28

14. Sunshine FM – September 28

15. JLife FM - September 28

APPENDIX 3. WRD LAUNCH, ODUMASE, BONO REGION, GHANA



c) Official Launch

(i) Program



FAO with RIWA GH Execs



Opening Prayer



Chairman's Remarks



Remarks by Hon. District Chief Executive



RIWA Organizing Secretary



Director of Veterinary Services Directorate



Chairman RIWA GH



Dr. E. Mudoga, WAP



Education in Twi Language by RIWA GH



Chairman's Closing Remarks



Hon DCE Vaccinating Dog



Closing Pray by Chief Imam



Refreshments for VIP participants

Appendix 4. FREE RABIES VACCINATION AT VARIOUS POINT IN THE SUNYANI WEST DISTRICT.





POST WRD

A

Health Meeting

On October 16th, RIWAGH attended the meeting as outlined below.

Fourth Risk Communication and Social Mobilization Technical Working Group Meeting

Dr. Benjamin Sasu, the RIWA Media Co-ordinator attended and gave a power point presentation on the recent launch of WRD in Odumase.



B

One Health Partners Newsletter November Issue

Excerpt from the Newsletter

September the Month for Reenergizing Rabies Control

What is Rabies?

Rabies is a viral disease that causes inflammation of the brain in humans and other mammals.^[1] Early symptoms can include fever and tingling at the site of exposure.^[1] These symptoms are followed by one or more of the following symptoms: violent movements, uncontrolled excitement, fear of water, an inability to move parts of the body, confusion, and loss of consciousness.^[1] Once symptoms appear, the result is nearly always death.^{[1] [5]} <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabies>. Rabies is a neglected zoonotic disease of poor and vulnerable populations whose deaths are rarely reported. The disease is endemic in Ghana with over 75 human deaths recorded annually with approximately 75% being children.

Rabies Control Activities in Ghana

Since 2015, Rabies in West Africa, Ghana (RIWAGH) a voluntary organization that seeks to help in the control and elimination of rabies has been in the forefront of fighting rabies in Ghana. It led the commemoration of World Rabies Day in Ghana at Osu, Accra that year and in the same year hosted the 3rd. International Conference on Rabies in West Africa in Accra under the theme, "Harmonizing stakeholders and tools for the prevention and control of rabies." Over 100

participants from all over the world attended this conference. In September 2017, with support from World Animal Protection (WAP), RIWAGH lunched a three year pilot program of rabies control at Suhum, an endemic rabies area in the Eastern Region. In a period of two years, (2017 and 2018) over 6000 pets were vaccinated and widespread schools and community rabies awareness and educational activities were undertaken in the Suhum project area. These activities included educational posters, flyers, classroom education with full teaching aids on pen drives and classroom manuals from WAP and flash cards for primary students. In 2018, RIWAG expanded its program coverage in Ghana by launching that year's World Rabies Day commemoration at Ehi in the Ketu District of the Volta Region where over 1000 pets were vaccinated. <http://www.riwaghana.org/>

September 2019 World Rabies Day (WRD) Commemoration

The 2019 WRD commemoration took place on two theaters; a press briefing in Accra and a community event and mass vaccination campaign in the Sunyani West District of the Bono Region.

Press Briefing in Accra

The press briefing brought together key officials from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ministry of Environment, Science and Innovation, WHO, FAO, NADMO and other stakeholders. In a statement, the WHO Country Representative Dr, Owen Kaluwa called on all stakeholders to hold unto the multi sectoral One Health approach to strengthen collaboration among sector ministries, NGOs and research institutions for effective management of zoonotic diseases such as rabies. On his part, the Asst. Director General and FAO Country Representative Dr, Abebe Haile Gabriel cautioned that, rabies is 99.9% fatal but 100% preventable and the only way to prevent this fatal disease is to vaccinate all dogs to stop its transmission to people. [Ghana \(Web\)](#)

Community Durbar and Vaccination of Dogs

RIWAGH supported by other One Health partners led the community durbar and dog vaccination campaign under the theme, “Vaccinate to Eliminate”. The goal was to promote public education on rabies prevention and vaccinate as many dogs as possible in the communities.

Speaking at the durbar of chiefs, queen mothers, faith-based and civil society organisations, School children, and other community members at Odumasi in the Sunyani West District, the Bono Regional Director of the GHS, Dr.Kofi Issah lamented the high incidence of dog bites (70) in 2018 and (42) recorded in the district in 8 months this year, ie. January to August 2019. He therefore called on dog owners to behave more responsibly by ensuring their dogs are vaccinated, caged and properly cared for. RIWAGH and its partners such as USAID/Breakthrough Action Project and the GHS/ Health Promotion Division produced thousands of behaviour change communication materials – posters and leaflets on rabies prevention which were distributed in the communities and also used in conducting community education activities. Over 1,500 dogs were vaccinated in the Sunyani West District as a result of the 2019 WRD vaccination campaign.

Our 3rd year in Suhum continues with vaccination and education.



“Vaccinate my puppy too!” boy cries at Bambofokrom. Photo: Dr. Suu-Ire.

RIWAGH



Education of dog owners at Banfokrom
Photo by Vivian Abiwii. JHU-CCP BA

Way Forward for Year 2020

The Risk Communication and Social Mobilization Technical Working Group, at its 4th monthly meeting this year, on October 16, 2019, suggests One Health partners in 2020 work with the Veterinary Services Department and RIWAGH to plan a comprehensive program which will enable all districts in the country to be actively involved in the WRD commemoration activities, especially the community education against rabies and mass dog vaccination campaigns. This is because rabies is an all Ghana health challenge.

