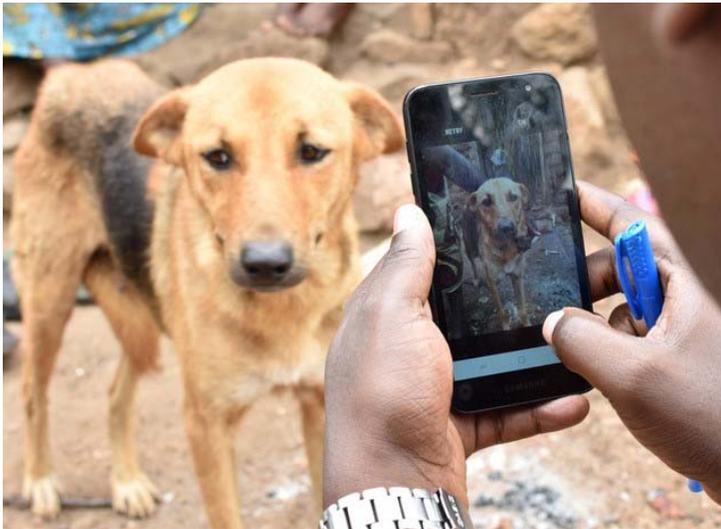


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Rabies Free Africa Newsletter | February 2020



**Rabies In
The News**

[Next Step in the Fight
Against Rabies](#)

Facial Recognition: The next step in the fight against rabies

By using facial recognition technology, researchers in Tanzania can now determine if a dog was vaccinated for the rabies virus with a cellphone camera image.

The research team, based out of Washington State University's Paul G. Allen School for Global Animal Health, is working with PiP My Pet, a company that developed a mobile application that uses facial recognition to reunite lost pets with their owners.

The only twist; rather than locate the lost, the company designed a new app to track which dogs were vaccinated for the rabies virus, and more importantly, which dogs still require the vaccine.

The app is currently being rolled out in a series of field trials as part of a vaccination trial in the Mara region of Tanzania being implemented by the government of Tanzania and WSU and funded by the National Institute of Health and MSD Animal Health.

The trial, which will provide the first mass dog vaccination against rabies in the region, began this

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Pioneer
Partner
Spotlight



McMonigle
Veterinary
Hospital, PLLC

year and is aiming to test the efficacy of two delivery strategies: the first, uses teams of vaccinators in vehicles to visit each village in turn, whilst the second uses village-based vaccinators to deliver mass vaccination of dogs.

“This technology means we don’t have to insert expensive microchips to identify each vaccinated dog,” explains Felix Lankester, director of WSU’s Rabies Free Tanzania program. “It saves us time and money, both very important commodities in our mission to eliminate human rabies in East Africa.”

Each microchip costs about \$1 US, which quickly adds up when you consider WSU’s rabies elimination campaign vaccinated more than 275,000 dogs in 2019 in Kenya and Tanzania. The effort is now nearing 2 million vaccinations.

According to the World Health Organization, rabies kills about 59,000 people every year, mostly in Africa and Asia, where 95 percent of human rabies cases occur. More than 99 percent of human rabies cases are due to transmission from rabid dogs.

“People in the West are often surprised to hear that in East Africa rabies kills so many people each year, most of whom are children,” Lankester said.



This year we would like to feature the clinics that helped get our Rabies Free Africa program off the ground! One of those first clinics was McMonigle Veterinary Hospital of Kent, Wash.

Rob McMonigle, a 1998 Cougar alumnus and owner of the hospital, joined Rabies Free Africa in 2016. Since that time, the clinic has donated \$1 for every rabies vaccination at the clinic, or about \$400 to \$500 every quarter when the vaccinations are tallied.

"It only takes about five minutes out of your practice manager's day to pull the numbers and post

“Because we no longer need to insert microchips into dogs, this technology speeds up our process so we can vaccinate more dogs at a lower cost, and, in turn, prevent lives from being lost.”

Philip Rooyakkers, CEO of PiP My Pet, said it took about a year of addressing challenges before the app could be rolled out. One of the biggest being a way for the app to backup data in the field, miles from internet capability.

Rooyakkers stands by his product and its accuracy. “Really early on we discovered that if we look at the current state of human facial recognition technology, you couldn’t use it for animals,” Rooyakkers said. “Human faces are oval, we know where the ears are, we know where the nose is, although someone may have glasses on, all that is relatively easy to overcome compared to dogs and cats whose faces vary so much in shape.”

something on social media,” McMonigle said. “It just makes sense. There’s no real hard work involved and you have the potential to save a life.”

In 2019, McMonigle Veterinary Hospital donated \$1,754 to eliminate rabies in East Africa.

“I can put myself in their shoes in an instant and know the problem shouldn’t exist,” McMonigle said. “Even though I haven’t seen rabies firsthand, it’s important to do something whether it’s in our backyard or theirs.”

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Effort to End Rabies by 2030 Continues



WSU's Rabies Free Africa program vaccinated more than 277,000 dogs in 2019. The Rabies Free Kenya program, led by Dr. Thumbi Mwangi, vaccinated about 145,000 dogs in Kenya. Another 132,000 were vaccinated in Tanzania, where our Rabies Free Tanzania program is led by Dr. Felix Lankester. The effort is now pushing toward 2 million total vaccinations since its inception.

Social Highlights

[Twitter](#)

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Top Tweet earned 1,578 impressions

1 of 2: How can you avoid the rabies virus? Vaccinate your pets, avoid animals displaying odd behavior, don't keep wild animals as pets, and avoid contact with wildlife, dead or alive. @CDCgov @CDCKenya #EliminateRabies pic.twitter.com/uJI2LgE1YQ



Rabies Free Africa
Published by Hootsuite [?] · January 23 at 7:15 AM · 🌐

WSU's Rabies Free Africa program vaccinated nearly 277,000 dogs in 2019. Our Rabies Free Kenya program vaccinated about 145,000 dogs in Kenya, while another 132,000 were vaccinated in Tanzania. Every dog vaccinated could save a life. #EliminateRabies



Top Tweet earned 1,210 impressions

We have all the tools to eliminate rabies, we just need to get those tools to where they are needed most. Join the life-saving effort! Support Rabies Free Tanzania today and help #EliminateRabies. pic.twitter.com/rjbXtvLalO



Rabies Free Kenya
Published by Josh Babcock [?] · January 7 at 8:30 AM · 🌐 Like Page ...

This year an estimated 59,000 people will die from rabies. About 22,000 of them will occur in Africa and almost half will be children under 15. Rabies Free Kenya is committed to a Rabies Free Africa and the World Health Organization (WHO) mission to zero rabies deaths by 2030. #EliminateRabies



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