

Rabies Free Africa Newsletter | August 2020

## Be a Rabies Hero on World Rabies Day

Rabies In  
The News



[Grassroots vaccination campaigns support rabies eradication in Kenya](#)

World Rabies Day is going to look different this year for Rabies Free Africa.

Welcome  
New  
Partners

Instead of asking you to share information about our work in East Africa, we created a toolkit to provide an easy guide for veterinary hospitals to organize their own clinics.

We did this because we recognize that 2020 has been an unprecedented year and greatly impacted many veterinary businesses, families and clients. Our goal is to provide a tool to allow your clinic to generate revenue, help people in your community and prevent disease outbreaks.

Public health officials around the world are raising concerns about recommended vaccines that are being skipped for people and animals due to COVID-19.

***This September I am asking you to join us as a [Rabies Hero partner](#) - a national push to get pets updated on their recommended vaccines.***

We are encouraging veterinarians to host vaccination clinics to prevent outbreaks of diseases like parvovirus, distemper, and **most important rabies**.

It is easy to participate. We have an online toolkit available for you with suggestions of [types of clinics](#) and [marketing materials](#).

Clinic suggestions include options for various types of businesses and offer ideas for partnering with local shelters if your community includes many people who have been laid off and need support in keeping their pet healthy. We want your vaccination clinic to be successful. The more pets that are vaccinated, the less likely we are to have a secondary public health issue.

If you are interested in being part of the Rabies Hero campaign, let us know by [signing-up online](#) or emailing us at [rabiesfreeafrica@wsu.edu](mailto:rabiesfreeafrica@wsu.edu). We are printing special posters and flyers for the campaign that we will send along with a couple of Rabies Free Africa bandannas to use with marketing as part of the [photo submissions](#).



Over 100 veterinary clinics from around the US support the life-saving work and research of the Rabies Free Africa team. Thank you for your continued support, we couldn't do it without you!

To see a list of our supporters, visit us [online](#).

## Clinic Spotlight



## Spotlight: Lucy Mutunga



Meet Lucy Mutunga, a member of the Rabies Free Kenya team. Mutunga works on the team that investigates dog bite cases to identify other members of the community who may have been infected by rabies so they can receive post-exposure prophylactic (PEP) treatment.

### **What is your role in the program?**

*For the past six months, I have been working on methods to improve community detection of rabies in dogs and humans, to ensure persons at risk of rabies from dog bites receive PEP vaccines and avoid death due to rabies.*

*To do this, we are rolling out the Integrated Bite Case Management (IBCM) approach to risk assessment in one of the Counties implementing rabies elimination activities. In brief, we investigate bite cases that present to health facilities through contact-tracing investigations back in the community to identify and assess the status of the biting dogs. This way we can determine if the biting dog is likely rabid or not, by understanding the circumstances that led to the bite and where possible carrying out diagnostic tests for rabies.*

*The IBCM approach improves information sharing between the human health and veterinary sector. Good IBCM practice will help improve accessibility of PEP for persons at risk of contracting*

Steve Boharski and April Weber, both DVM alumni from WSU, have owned [Garland Animal Clinic](#) in Spokane, WA since 1999. In 2017, they started supporting Rabies Free Africa with a \$1 donation for each rabies vaccine administered at the clinic.

### ***Why is being involved with Rabies Free Africa important to you?***

It is important for us to give back to help with health issues across the world. We are blessed in this country to be able to do incredible medicine, surgery and preventative care on our pets. Our pets get better health care than many people in the world. Giving something back to the Rabies Free Africa is a small part of what we can do to improve health care throughout the world for pets and people.

### ***How is your clinic involved with the program?***

We give a direct contribution monthly depending on the number of rabies vaccines we give in the clinic. Each invoice has a note that a portion of the fee will be contributed to Rabies Free Africa. This helps engage client also.

*rabies, prevent wastage of the expensive human vaccine and improve human and dog case detection - which is key in validating and verifying the “Zero-by-30” goal of eliminating dog-mediated human rabies by 2030.*

#### **Why is it important to eliminate rabies?**

*Professionals should ensure that deaths from preventable diseases are avoided at all costs. Rabies is totally preventable so why is it still causing unnecessary deaths? Rabies, unlike any other diseases, kills on the onset of clinical signs which can easily go unnoticed and unreported. This is because rabies is a neglected acute zoonotic disease whose misdiagnosis with other diseases, gross under reporting and poor surveillance systems make it difficult for public health policy makers to notice and prioritize.*

*Data is key in the fight towards rabies elimination. Improving data capture enhances information availability for decision making and policy development. Provision of data leads to proof and justification of disease burden, and to measure progress of elimination activities.*

*While policy guides how things should be done, practice more often than not shows otherwise and ends up creating gaps. Through this work we hope to address these gaps and lead to risk-based planning and prioritization. This very important especially now that Kenya is scaling up to nationwide rabies elimination campaigns. I am fortunate to be working on this important public health problem as my master of science research work collaboratively with the Washington State University and the University of Nairobi.*

#### **Can you see the program having an impact?**

*Yes, this program is very timely given the recent commitment by GAVI – the global vaccine alliance – to invest in the anti-rabies vaccine (PEP) to improve accessibility of the rabies vaccines for bite patients in low-income settings. The GAVI investments requires that there is judicious use of PEP through appropriate risk assessments, and that countries invest in mass dog vaccinations to achieve elimination status. Rabies being a zoonotic disease is not a one man show, it demands that both veterinary sector and human health sector work together. Our IBCM work addresses these requirements, by strengthening inter-sectoral collaborations,*

#### ***What do you do when you are not at the clinic?***

I enjoy almost all things outdoors in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. Spending time with my family at the lake, skiing, fly fishing, hiking, bird hunting and travelling.

#### ***Anything else you would like to share?***

If each of us find a way to give a little back, we will make the world a better, safer, and healthier place. Giving time, talent or treasure lets each of us contribute in some way. Programs like Rabies Free Africa allow us to affect lives across the world.

**Become a Partner**

**Give to Rabies Free Africa**

*improving surveillance and providing data to guide interventions and the elimination campaign.*

**What do you do when you aren't fighting rabies?**

*Travelling, playing hockey and reading fictional novels.*

## Beyond Vaccination



**Meet the new dean for the WSU College of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Dori Borjesson.**

Rabies Free Africa is a program of the Paul G. Allen School for Global Animal Health at Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine. The college welcomed Dr. Dori Borjesson as the first female dean in its history.

What is most surprising to the new dean is how much it means to the women around her.

*"I didn't anticipate it, but this means a lot to a lot of people," Borjesson said. "It speaks to the fact that if you don't see anyone like you or see anyone that has traveled paths similar to yours in leadership positions, it's hard to believe you can accomplish those goals."*

You can read more about Dr. Borjesson [online](#).

**Social Highlights**

## Twitter

**RabiesFreeKenya**  
@RabiesFreeKenya

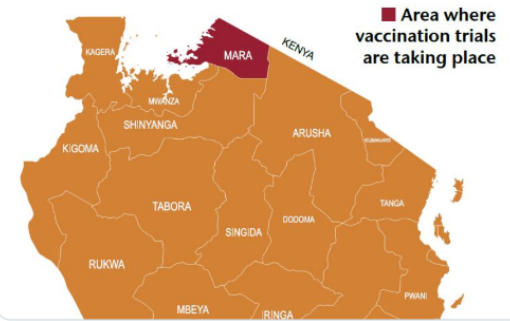
Due to **#COVID19**, our mass-dog vaccinations remain on hold to avoid the spread of the **#virus**. We can't wait to get back to our work in the field!



6:15 AM · Jul 27, 2020 · Hootsuite Inc.

**Rabies Free Tanzania**  
@RabiesFreeTZA

So far, our team has trained community members in four of the nine districts that make up the Mara Region, but we are considering circling back to the first four districts - Serengeti, Butiama, Tarime DC, and Tarime TC - due to the long hiatus from **#COVID19**.



6:05 AM · Jul 23, 2020 · Hootsuite Inc.

## Facebook

**Rabies Free Kenya**  
Published by Josh Babcock [?] · July 12 · 🌐

How long has rabies been a problem? Since about 2000 B.C. when it was referenced in the Mesopotamia's Codex of Eshnunna, or book of laws. Even thousands of years ago the ancient civilization knew how to identify rabid animals. It's been too long. It's time to **#EliminateRabies**



**Rabies Free Africa**  
Published by Josh Babcock [?] · July 1 · 🌐

Cattle rarely contract rabies, but some states have reported cases this year —including one each in Minnesota and Texas, and two in Oklahoma. The cases in Oklahoma are concerning, according to the Oklahoma Department of Health, as the state had already confirmed 20 cases of rabies by early June, nearly equaling the total 24 cases the state confirmed in 2019.

Read the full story: <https://www.bovinevetonline.com/.../3-states-report-rabies-ca...>



BOVINEVETONLINE.COM  
**3 States Report Rabies In Cattle**  
Several cases of rabies in cattle, including dairy and beef animals, have...