

Pet Owners Contribute to Rabies Reduction in Africa

Theme of international campaign to eradicate disease is “Help Here. Change There.”

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Between now and Dec. 31, 2008, every dose of Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health’s Continuum canine or feline rabies vaccine given to U.S. pets can help reduce rabies in Africa.

Through the Afya Serengeti project, a dog or cat vaccinated against rabies in the United States also means that a dog in the Serengeti benefits from the 250,000 doses that the Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health research company has committed to the initiative. In its second year, the rabies-control project ensures widespread vaccination of domestic pets in regions where many people cannot afford an annual vaccine.

By controlling the disease in household pets, the project’s goal is to reduce rabies-related deaths in children. A vaccination zone has been set up around the Serengeti National Park with regular clinics where pet owners can register their animals, have them vaccinated and marked with a plastic collar to indicate their protection from the disease.

Pet owners are invited to contact their veterinary practice to ask about support for Afya Serengeti, which means “health for Serengeti” in Swahili, and was founded by Dr. Sarah Cleaveland, DVM. “This is a campaign that has let people get on with their everyday lives by helping to eradicate one of the everyday threats,” she said.