



सत्यमेव जयते



भारतीय जीव जन्तु कल्याण बोर्ड  
**ANIMAL WELFARE BOARD OF INDIA**

भारत सरकार  
मत्स्यपालन, पशुपालन और डेयरी मंत्रालय  
(पशुपालन और डेयरी विभाग)

Government of India  
Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying  
(Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying)

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**MESSAGE**

World Rabies Day is observed on September 28<sup>th</sup> every year which is a global event to create awareness about the burden of rabies and to highlight its preventive measures. Thousands of individuals, animals welfare activists, animal lovers, animal welfare organizations all over the world including the experts from health sector and Animal Husbandry participate to sensitize the public on the issues related to control of Rabies and responsible pet ownership through regular animal anti-rabies vaccination for pet dogs and mass anti-rabies vaccination for stray dogs. This is the right time for all of us to help the "Man's Best Friend".

Rabies is a fatal disease which is transmitted by rabid dog bites especially to children as they are easy targets of rabid dogs. The World Health Organization has reported that a sizeable number of human beings and livestock die in India due to rabies causing large financial burden. Rabies is transmitted mainly by rabid dogs bite, but exposure may also occur through contamination of broken skin or mucous membranes with saliva from an infected animal. Once neurological symptoms of the disease develop, rabies is fatal to both animals and humans. The good news is that rabies is fully preventable. "Mass Vaccination of all dogs is a crucial part of control of Rabies, and is the single most important factor as well as the most cost-effective method in rabies prevention". Timely administration of post exposure I/d vaccine and immunoglobulin provides full protection to human beings from Rabies in Rabies endemic countries. However, the high costs of preventive measures exert a substantial economic burden on individuals and societies in developing countries, and particularly affects those who can least afford it.

Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) is nodal agency of the Govt. of India for facilitating the Animal Birth Control (ABC) / Anti-Rabies Vaccination (ARV) programme all over the country through its registered animal welfare organizations and civic bodies. During the last five years, the AWBI has sterilized and vaccinated more than 3 lakhs stray dogs in the country. Several municipal corporations and civic bodies have come forward to support and implement the ABC/ARV programme on participatory basis with AWBI in their respective areas. The AWBI has brought out a manual on "Standard Operating Procedures for Sterilization of Stray Dogs under the Animal Birth Control Programme and their Anti-Rabies vaccination", which needs to be strictly followed by all AWO's implementing ABC programme.

Stray dog population in India is growing by the day and we need to evolve a strategy to control Rabies in India. There is an urgent need to tackle the stray dog population with a more effective municipal licensing of pet dogs and awareness campaigns for better and responsible dog care and management practices are needed. This is where dog owners, civic societies, animal welfare and non-government organizations can play a proactive role. The sheer magnitude and logistics of catching, neutering and releasing of such a huge number of stray dogs is a big challenge for the successful outcome of the ABC programme. The burden of rabies can be decreased by promoting and implementing Animal Birth Control / Anti Rabies Programme, mass anti rabies vaccination and education programmes.

It is therefore requested that all the animal lovers, animal welfare activists, NGOs and AWOs to spread the message "Rabies Free India" in a befitting manner by ensuring that maximum number of stray dogs / owned dogs are sterilized / neutered and mass anti-rabies vaccination drive of stray / pet dogs is organized in your respective locality / town and public awareness is created in the Society about prevention of Rabies on the occasion of World Rabies Day. Please do provide us with press clippings, Photos, videos of your activities of observance of World Rabies Day on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021 so as to highlight them in publications of Animal Welfare Board of India.

(Dr. O.P. Chaudhary)

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