

# WVA FACT SHEET

## Owned and Unowned Free-Roaming Dogs

### The problem

- There are over 200,000,000 owned and unowned free-roaming dogs globally
- This includes escaped or lost companion animals, owned dogs that are left intentionally to roam, and feral dogs



### Why is it a problem?

Free-roaming dogs can act as a public nuisance as well as creating a One Health<sup>1</sup> problem

#### HUMAN ISSUES



- Tens of millions of people are bitten by dogs each year (>40% of bites in children less 15 years of age)
- Each year >59,000 people die of rabies transmitted by dog bites & 15 million individuals receive post-exposure treatment at a cost of \$2.1 billion
- 95% of human rabies fatalities occur in Africa and Asia
- Post-traumatic stress is significant in children bitten & mauled by dogs

#### ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES



- Dogs can spread disease to wildlife
- Dogs may harass and kill wildlife and livestock, and compete for resources

#### ANIMAL ISSUES



- Free-roaming dogs may suffer from starvation, malnutrition, and parasitic and other diseases, poisoning, and other forms of abuse
- Inhumane culling methods may be used for population control

### How can this problem be addressed?

- ❖ Dog-mediated human rabies is an entirely preventable disease with appropriate dog vaccination
- ❖ Responsible pet ownership education
- ❖ Dog safety awareness education for school aged children
- ❖ Use of humane population control methods

#### How can you help?

Support the global **End Rabies Now** campaign  
[www.endrabiesnow.org](http://www.endrabiesnow.org)

<sup>1</sup> WVA Position on One Health:

[http://www.worldvet.org/uploads/docs/wva\\_position\\_on\\_one\\_health.pdf](http://www.worldvet.org/uploads/docs/wva_position_on_one_health.pdf)

Resources

<http://www.oie.int/animal-health-in-the-world/rabies-portal/>

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs099/en/> Young, JK, et al. 2011. Is Wildlife Going to the Dogs? Impacts of Feral and Free-roaming Dogs on Wildlife Populations.

BioScience. 61(2):125-132