



MEDIA RELEASE

PEOPLE ARE THE 'HEROES' IN NEW PROGRAM FOR RABIES CONTROL

24 March 2017 DENPASAR, Bali: At the launch today of a world-first pilot program that is reducing the threat of rabies in humans and dogs, the residents of 28 participating banjars (Bali sub-villages) were described as the “real heroes” of the ground-breaking initiative.

“The people are the real heroes in this community outreach program which uses community education and empowerment plus robust vaccination of dogs to present a win-win-solution to rabies in Bali,” said Bali Animal Welfare Association (BAWA) director Janice Girardi.

BAWA is a key partner in the newly-launched Program Dharma* which applies One Health principles and shows that successful rabies intervention must target both dogs and their owners. Other key partners are Udayana University, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and Yayasan Kerti Praja (YKP).

“Program Dharma presents a blueprint for effective, sustainable, cost-effective and humane rabies control and eradication in Bali,” said Girardi. By using the existing resource of the powerful banjar structure, demand for government resources to control rabies was reduced, she said.

“Program Dharma empowers banjars and their people to ensure that their dogs, and therefore their families and neighbours, do not get rabies,” said Girardi. “Communities become educated and pro-active. They become safer and healthier for people and animals. There are fewer rabies cases and deaths, and therefore a reduced call on government resources.”

Girardi said the banjar was the all-important conduit linking community / government / and rabies control.

Bali has struggled to control rabies since the deadly disease was first identified in the province in 2008. Girardi and BAWA have a post-2008 history of significant contribution to rabies reduction in humans and animals through mass vaccination of dogs.

“There is simply no alternative to gaining community protection by creating herd immunity to rabies through a tightly planned, controlled and documented system that achieves a minimum of 70% vaccination of all dogs in a population,” she said.

“The overwhelming benefit of the Program Dharma model is that it locks into the existing resource of the banjar system; empowers the people to control rabies; reduces demand on government resources; and saves lives.”

After a year of planning, training and set up, Program Dharma commenced work in the 28 banjars in Sanur nearly 12 months ago. Inclusivity and thoroughness, plus use of specially-developed technology, have contributed to its outstanding success. In just one year Program Dharma is showing a logical way forward for rabies control & eradication in Bali.

“Program Dharma’s work to date presents a most exciting, tenable and viable win-win solution to rabies in Bali,” said Girardi. “Everyone wins ... the people; the government; and the animals.”

Girardi thanked all partners and participants in Program Dharma for their involvement and commitment to the program’s future.

***Program Dharma is a world-first pilot program in 28 banjars (sub villages) within 3 semi-urban communities in Sanur, Bali, where it is reducing the threat of rabies in humans and dogs. It is a community outreach / One Health program to eradicate rabies. Program Dharma is an innovative public sector / NGO partnership between:**

- Udayana University, Public Health Department & Veterinary Science Faculty
- Yayasan Bali Animal Welfare Association (BAWA)
- International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)
- Yayasan Kerti Praja (YKP)

Achieved:

- Census: More than 5500 dogs in 3 villages
- One on One Education: More than 2000 dog owners
- Community Health Days: 29, including 220 sterilisations
- Vaccination: More than 800 dogs.

Results:

- Improved vaccination coverage in Sanur Kaja village from 61.5% at July 2016 to 81.2% at March 2017
- Zero suspected cases of rabies in the 3 Program Dharma villages
- Improved dog health. eg in Sanur Kaja the 13% of dogs that were very thin or emaciated has reduced to 4%
- Fewer dogs on the streets.

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