



JABATAN PERKHIDMATAN VETERINAR MALAYSIA

LAPORAN LIPUTAN MEDIA

4 Februari 2018

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BAHAGIAN PERANCANGAN
JABATAN PERKHIDMATAN VETERINAR MALAYSIA**

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All dogs in Sarawak to be vaccinated

Deputy Chief Minister: State declaring new war to curb the spread of rabies

By SHARON LING
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KUCHING: All dogs in Sarawak will be vaccinated against rabies as the state declared another round of war to curb the spread of the disease.

"I have given instructions that all dogs, within affected and non-affected areas, must be vaccinated," Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah said.

The need to expand the vaccination programme to non-affected areas in Sarawak became more pressing after a dog sample from Julau in Sarikei division tested positive for rabies at the end of last year.

Furthermore, a 59-year-old man from Jalan Batu Kawa-Matang here was confirmed on Jan 26 as the seventh rabies victim since the disease appeared here seven months ago.

"We are now going into another phase of the war against rabies,

"We have tried to contain the disease so far and the furthest area where we have a positive test is up to Julau.

"We pray it stops there. That's why it is very critical that all dogs in Sarawak must be vaccinated," he told reporters at a vaccination exercise at MJC Batu Kawa yesterday.

To date, 29 areas in Serian, Sri Aman, Kuching, Samarahan and Sarikei divisions have been declared rabies-infected (there are 12 divisions in the state).

Uggah said the state Veterinary Services Department would spearhead the vaccination programme in other areas such as Bintulu, Miri, Kapit, Sarikei, Limbang and Lawas, while private veterinary clinics will be given the required licence to buy and administer the vaccine.

Efforts will also be made to vaccinate animals in rural and interior areas, especially along the border

with Kalimantan, Indonesia.

The cost to vaccinate each animal is estimated between RM2 and RM5. Vaccinated dogs are issued a certificate with the owner's particulars and serial number.

Uggah said the vaccination programme would be intensified in Kuching.

"We want to make sure that by the middle of next month, the majority, if not all dogs in Kuching are vaccinated."

"At the same time, we will also continue to control stray dogs. There are too many of them in Kuching, especially within the infected areas," he said.

To prevent any further spread of rabies to humans, Uggah said the state Health Department would be directed to track and monitor the progress of all those reported to have been bitten by dogs.

He reminded private clinics to

immediately refer dog bite cases to government hospitals, where there are standard operating procedures on treatment.

"According to the World Health Organisation, it might take us two to three years before we can declare Sarawak as rabies-free. That is our target," he said.

Statistics from the state Veterinary Services Department showed that 47,189 animals comprising 39,154 dogs, 7,990 cats and 45 other animals had been vaccinated as of yesterday.

Since the outbreak began in July last year, samples from 73 dogs and six cats have tested positive for rabies.

"If your pet shows signs of behaviour change such as becoming aggressive, biting anything that moves, hydrophobia and excessive drooling, report it immediately to us," the department said.

Under the state's Veterinary Public

Health Ordinance, it is an offence to let pet dogs roam freely in rabies-infected areas or to bring them out from such areas without written permission from the state veterinary authority.

Those found guilty can be fined up to RM5,000 or jailed up to three months.

The state Health Department reported 39 new dog bite cases yesterday.

Kuching recorded the highest number with 29, followed by Serian and Sri Aman (four each) and Sarikei (two).

This brought the cumulative number of dog bite cases since last April to 6,423, of which 2,566 were given anti-rabies vaccination.

Watch the video
thestar.com



Rabies immune belt to be ready by June, says vet dept

By YUEN MEIKENG
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PUTRAJAYA: Plans to set up a rabies immune belt along a Sarawak-Indonesian border will be ready by June.

This is a programme where authorities are on constant alert for cases while pet dogs in the area are required to be vaccinated and stray populations controlled.

The zone in the Sarawak-Kalimantan border is the second of its kind in Malaysia, apart from the current area in the northern peninsula, set up since 1955 along the Thai border.

The need for it became more pressing in view of the latest case - a 59-year-old man from Kuching who was confirmed to have rabies following medical lab results on Jan 26.

This is Sarawak's seventh rabies case since the disease broke out about seven months ago. The outbreak in the state has claimed five lives so far.

The Veterinary Services Department (DVS) will finalise by June the structure of the rabies immune belt including its size, and identify the resources needed to set it up.

At the same time, dogs in the state that were vaccinated a year ago when the disease broke out, will be given another round of shots to strengthen the fight against the disease.

"We have discussed with the Sarawak authorities and are trying to define the area to be covered in the immune belt.

"To cover the whole 1,000km stretch of the border will be very difficult. This requires strategic planning.

"We have to determine areas where the animal population is high and places which are vulnerable," DVS director-general Datuk Dr Quaza Nizamuddin Hassan Nizam told *Sunday Star*.

He said the DVS was doing everything necessary to combat the disease, with over 5,000 vaccination programmes done and counting.

About 40,000 doses of vaccines are in the DVS bank, which he said was sufficient for now.

He said the detection of rabies-positive areas was a good sign that the monitoring system was working.

"It's an indication that we are moving in the right direction," Dr Quaza Nizamuddin said.

However, the challenge is to control the stray population and changing the attitude of owners who allow their pets to roam free.

"Owners have to ensure their pets remain in their compound to avoid contact with infected strays. This will help curb the disease," he added.



Ensuring safety: Veterinary officers giving an anti-rabies jab to a dog at MJC Batu Kawa in Kuching.

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All dogs in Sarawak to be vaccinated against rabies

By Sulok Tawie
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KUCHING — The Sarawak government has directed the state veterinary services department to vaccinate all dogs here to contain a recent outbreak of rabies, Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Douglas Uggah said yesterday.

Uggah said he had signed the Anti-Rabies Vaccination Order in his capacity as chairman of the state disaster management committee yesterday, for dogs in both rabies-infected and non-infected areas to be vaccinated under the second phase of the war against rabies.

During the first phase, only dogs in the infected areas were required to be vaccinated, but under the second phase, all dogs will be vaccinated.

"Dogs in the remote parts of Sarawak, either accessible by roads or otherwise, will also be vaccinated," he told reporters after visiting a dog vaccination programme in Batu Kawah, near here. He said dogs in the villages along

the stretch of the Sarawak-Kalimantan border will also be vaccinated.

"We are working closely with the Kalimantan authorities to curb the movement of animals, especially dogs, from either side," he said.

Uggah said the state steering committee on the rabies outbreak will meet again on Monday to evaluate its ongoing anti-rabies programmes and how it can be improved.

He said he will direct the state health department to track reported cases of dog bites.

"It is important to track the cases so we know their progress and if there is any suspicion, we will bring them for treatment at the government hospitals," he said, adding that families must bring dog bite victims to government hospitals if their conditions deteriorate.

A total of 6,384 cases of dog bites have been reported while 38,953 dogs and 7,990 cats have been vaccinated for rabies since June last year.

Since the June outbreak, five people have died while another two are still being treated at the Sarawak General Hospital.



Veterinary Services Department officers during a rabies vaccination exercise in Sarawak last June. — Picture by Bernama

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Taking care of an animal bite

TENS of millions of people are bitten by dogs every year, according to the World Health Organisation, and an estimated 55,000 people die every year as a result of preventable infections.

If you get bitten by any kind of animal, be it a cat or a monkey, it's always best to get the wound checked by a doctor before it has a chance to swell up, even if you think it might just be a scratch.

Any animal bite lesions should first be cleaned with tap water, and then covered with a sterile dressing or plaster, according to casualty surgeon Dr Josef Mischo.

If it hurts, locally cooling the area may help.

It's also important for anyone who has suffered a bite to check whether their tetanus vaccine is up to date, otherwise it could lead to a nasty infection and require serious treatment.

A doctor will also be able to say if a rabies vaccination is necessary.

You should generally not underestimate bites, even those that cause apparently minor wounds, Dr Mischo notes.

It is difficult to assess tissue damage without proper medical training.

"Cat bites in particular are usually deep, and are therefore, more likely to cause a subsequent infection," the expert explains.

— dpa

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