

A good day for dog lovers

Anti-rabies jabs for strays finally begin in Penang

PENANG

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AFTER a long wait since stray dogs in Penang were being culled to keep rabies at bay in September, animal lovers can finally rejoice.

The first round of anti-rabies vaccinations for stray dogs in the state has begun.

A team of about 20 people rounded up 30 dogs in Tanjung Bungah and injected them with the vaccine on Thursday.

The strays were lured with dog food to a small godown off Jalan Permai and after getting the jab, each animal was fitted with a collar chain and red tag.

"The tag is for people, particularly from the authorities, to identify the vaccinated dogs. They are immune to rabies now," said Save our Strays Neutering Society (SOS) founder April Sham.

She said the volunteers hoped to vaccinate at least 100 dogs around Tanjung Bungah and Batu Ferringhi over the next few days.

"It will be an arduous task as most of us are working and the authorities cannot accommodate our request for manpower all the time," said Sham.

She also said she was disheartened by the

"total lack of support from the state government"

"There is no manpower or financial aid from the state. We have to rely on sponsors for this campaign," she said.

The vaccination team comprised SOS volunteers, Veterinary Services Department and Malaysian Small Animal Veterinary Association.

Sham said SOS had 500 vaccines donated by the Stop Killing Start Vaccinating community group and would need to buy the vaccines from the department once the stock was exhausted.

"Despite our financial constraints, we are determined to vaccinate a large number of stray dogs because it is the only solution to curb rabies.

"If this exercise is done regularly, we may have 70% of all Penang dogs vaccinated to create a strong immunity belt against the disease," added Sham.

More than 2,000 stray dogs were culled in Penang between September and October as a strategy to curb rabies.

Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng scrapped the culling order in mid-October when no new rabies cases were reported since Sept 21.

Perlis had 20 rabid dogs and Kedah 18 while Penang had four when the disease spread in early September.



Volunteers giving an anti-rabies jab to a stray dog during the campaign.