

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

World Rabies Day

Rabies Awareness Campaign

Hon. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, MP

28/09/2011

- Directors of Ceremonies, Dr. Cleophas Bamhare,
- Honourable John Mutorwa, Minister of Agriculture, Water and Forestry,
- Representatives of the Ministry of Health and Social Services,
- Representatives of the Ministry of Education,
- Representatives of the World Health Organization,
- Representatives of the other government offices and agencies,
- Members of the public,
- Esteemed members of the media,
- Ladies and gentlemen.

We are here today to learn about, and become aware of, a disease known as rabies. The word rabies comes from the Latin for “madness”. The disease was called this because it causes an inflammation of the brain in warm-blooded animals which results in a very marked change in the behaviour of the animal, ultimately resulting in its death.

Rabies is an endemic disease in Namibia affecting both man, domestic as well as wild animals. The classical rabies virus can be split into two distinct types, one affecting canids including jackals, the other affecting mongoose.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In Namibia there is also an unusual form affecting kudu, which first appeared in 1975 near Windhoek. This outbreak caused very large losses

to the kudu population, with between 30 000 and 50,000 kudu having died by 1985. This amounted to about 20% of the national kudu population. In 2002/3 another outbreak near Omaruru and Wilhelmstal resulted in an estimated 2,500 kudu deaths, and since that time kudu are regularly found in many parts of Namibia to be rabid and to succumb to the disease.

When wildlife such as Jackals and Kudus suffer from Rabies, they become friendly to people and that is dangerous. For the Jackals can become aggressive and bite. Should one see those animals become closer to people and friendly, you will be required to report immediately to the nearest Government office, in particular Ministry of Environment and Tourism and Ministry of Agriculture. Should one decide to put them down there must be no contact with them and the carcass must be burnt.

Director of ceremonies,

Kudu make up a large part of the game farming trade in Namibia, and therefore rabies is a potential threat to both the consumer and the hunter. Additionally many visitors come to Namibia to experience our wildlife including the kudu. It is for these reasons that the Ministry of Environment and Tourism is concerned about the potential impact that Rabies may have on our wildlife, and the knock on effect on the livelihood and welfare of the Namibian people. To this end my Ministry is exploring ways in which to mitigate the impact of rabies on wildlife, and there is a project proposal on the table being discussed looking at a public private partnership aimed at investigating the possibility of developing an oral vaccine suitable for the use in kudu.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Through the combined effort of all Namibians together with the Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Education and the Environment it should be possible to minimize the impact that this lethal disease can have on people and animals alike. I urge you all to be aware of this potentially fatal disease.

To ensure that your dogs are vaccinated against rabies, and if any of you, your family or friends are bitten by a dog or jackal then go immediately to the nearest medical facility and seek qualified help.

I thank you, for your attention.

***** **THE END** *****