

POSITION STATEMENT
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF WILDLIFE VETERINARIANS
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AAWV Position Statement Regarding the Use of Oral Rabies Vaccination

The proof-of-concept work for the use of modified-live oral rabies virus vaccines started during the late 1970s in North America. An oral recombinant vaccinia-rabies glycoprotein vaccine was developed during the late 1980s. Today, additional biologics including recombinant vaccines based upon adeno- and rabies virus vectors are available.

The possible risks of using these oral vaccines have been studied extensively in both the laboratory and in the field by academic scientists, industrial producers and government regulatory officials. To date, these products have outstanding safety records when used according to international standards. Besides the red fox, such vaccines have been tested for use in gray foxes, raccoons, raccoon dogs and other mesocarnivores.

The strategy of oral rabies vaccination of wildlife has been employed with measurable success in Europe, North America, South Korea and parts of the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. Vaccines have been deployed to target primarily coyotes, jackals, raccoons, raccoon dogs, skunks and both red and gray foxes in these regions.

Lesser developed countries have the major burden of canine rabies, with significant spillover infections to humans, other domestic animals and wildlife, including other canids such as coyotes, jackals, gray wolves, and highly endangered species, such as African wild dogs and Ethiopian wolves.

The American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians (AAWV) strongly supports the use of oral rabies immunization of free-ranging wildlife in affected areas in Africa, the Americas and Eurasia, as a safe, efficacious, cost-effective and evidence-based approach to long term rabies prevention and control.

BE IT RESOLVED: The AAWV supports the reasonable and rational development of modern, next-generation oral rabies vaccines for relevant wildlife taxa when the vaccines have been subjected to equivalent safety testing and regulatory review.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: The AAWV supports the applied concept of the mass vaccination of domestic dogs against rabies, including the use of oral rabies vaccines, in lesser developed countries to achieve substantial benefits to global public health, agriculture and conservation biology within a One Health context.