

## IMPACT OF ANIMAL RABIES ON LOCAL ECONOMY PART I: ON LIVESTOCK AND WORKING ANIMALS

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In countries where rabies is present, livestock and other working animals can become infected with the rabies virus. Livestock is an important source of food and income globally and working animals contribute to livelihoods particularly of livestock dependent poor in many parts of the world. Working animals are not limited to cattle, buffaloes, horses, donkeys and camels for plowing the fields and transportation of people and goods as dogs are used for hunting, herding livestock, assisting military and police forces and guarding property. Moreover in some cultures, the consumption of dogs is a common practice.

Deficient surveillance and the lack of reliable data on the number of rabies cases is a major constraint to assessing the economic impact of rabies on the local economies when livestock and working animals die due to rabies or infect humans. In addition, the need to pay for transport and expensive post-exposure prophylaxis for rabies exposed family or community members can lead to the unplanned sale of production animals and livelihoods assets, further impacting food and economic security.

The epidemiology of rabies in livestock and working animals varies geographically. Changing land use and reforestation has led to the expansion of areas where livestock have increased contact with rabies infected bats and wildlife. Vampire bat rabies especially impacts livestock production in Latin America while in Eastern Europe and Asia, livestock and working animals are more readily infected by other wildlife such as foxes, jackals and wolves. In Africa, dogs appear to play an important role in the transmission of the disease to transport animals especially in urban and peri-urban areas. Improved surveillance and a clear picture of the economic and public health impacts of rabies on the national and local economies would contribute to more appropriate allocation of resources and the urgently needed political will.

