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DOMESTIC ANIMAL HEALTH PROGRAMS TO PROTECT WILDLIFE

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The transmission of infectious diseases between domestic animals and wildlife populations has many implications for wildlife conservation and the management of wildlife-protected areas. Here we discuss these issues with reference to large rangeland ecosystems in Africa, exploring the role that domestic animal health programs may play in the development of integrated conservation strategies. Specifically, we examine how domestic animal health programs can influence and mitigate disease-related impacts on wildlife populations and natural resources, considering, as examples: (a) domestic animal diseases that are a direct cause of population declines in endangered species (e.g. rabies, canine distemper); (b) livestock diseases that have been a major factor shaping ecosystem dynamics (e.g. rinderpest); and (c) wildlife infections transmitted to livestock that impact on rural livelihoods and land-use policy (e.g. malignant catarrhal fever, trypanosomiasis, foot-and-mouth disease). We use these examples to explore key interactions affecting wildlife conservation and rural development, and the complex interface between domestic and wildlife health, delivery of ecosystem services, and human wellbeing.

