

For Immediate Release

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2009 World Rabies Day Spreads Awareness of Fatal Disease

Merial Commissions Survey to Reveal What Pet Owners Know about Rabies

Duluth, Ga., July 13, 2009 — International experts and Merial are partnering to provide rabies education and awareness through World Rabies Day on September 28, 2009. Findings from a recent, nationwide survey of pet owners support the need for continued educational efforts surrounding this fatal disease, like those inspired by World Rabies Day.

Conducted by WMS Marketing Services for Merial® Brand pet vaccines, the survey of U.S. dog and cat owners shows high compliance for rabies vaccination — 94 percent for canine and 75 percent for feline. However, about one-fourth of pet owners (24 percent for canine, 26 percent for feline) believe rabies is not typically fatal, even after clinical signs appear.¹ Considering rabies is 100 percent fatal in animals once clinical signs occur,² it is imperative that pet owners understand the risks and severity of rabies, and take action.

“Disease education and vaccination are the best lines of defense against rabies,” says Dr. Bob Menardi, Veterinary Spokesperson, Merial. “As the world leader in rabies prevention, World Rabies Day is a natural partnership for Merial. It is an opportunity to spread the word about rabies, risk factors and ways to help protect pets against a deadly disease, including vaccination.”

Other highlights from the survey include:

- 57% of cat owners and 37% of dog owners felt that a pet mainly indoors is not at risk of getting rabies.¹
- One-third of cat owners (33%) don’t consider rabies to be a high risk threat to cats.¹
- Only 15% of cat owners and 24% of dog owners indicated “it’s the law” as a reason for vaccinating their pet against rabies.¹

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Merial continues to be active in the fight against rabies with IMRAB[®] rabies vaccine, which is approved for use in six species³; PUREVAX[®] Feline Rabies Vaccine, the only non-adjuvanted feline rabies vaccine on the market⁴ and RABORAL V-RG[®], a specialized, safe, oral vaccine approved for immunization of raccoons and coyotes.

The company also supports additional rabies awareness and educational efforts including the sponsorship of nine rabies training seminars for Noah's Wish, an international nonprofit organization that rescues and cares for endangered animals during natural disasters; and sponsorship of the Student American Veterinary Medical Association (SAVMA). Through the SAVMA contest, one of 26 veterinary colleges across North America wins an on-site rabies symposium, sponsored by Merial.

Merial is a world-leading, innovation-driven animal health company, providing a comprehensive range of products to enhance the health, well-being and performance of a wide range of animals. Merial employs approximately 5,400 people and operates in more than 150 countries worldwide. Its 2008 sales were over \$2.6 billion. Merial Limited is a joint venture between Merck & Co., Inc. and sanofi-aventis. For more information, please see www.merial.com.

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¹WLS Marketing Services Survey. A total of 1,005 surveys were completed among pet owners nationwide. The online survey was conducted between January 5 and 9, 2009.

²Rupprecht CE. *Merck Veterinary Manual* 2007:1067-1071.

³IMRAB 3 product label.

⁴PUREVAX Feline Rabies product label.

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