

VETERINARY SCHOOL OPENS



BRINGING AWARENESS: Agriculture MEC Msebenzi Zwane wants the people to be educated about rabies. Picture: Neo Mvubu

Free State MEC for agriculture and rural development Msebenzi Zwane partnered with the University of the Free State to commemorate World Rabies Day by opening a second veterinary school in the province.

The school is part of a collaborative effort to inform more people of the effects of rabies.

“Rabies is a dangerous disease carried mostly by dogs and is transmitted to humans through their saliva. It reportedly kills about 55000 people around the world every year,” he said.

According to Zwane, the disease continues to threaten the health of innocent people, particularly children, in the Free State despite the implementation of rabies control strategies.

“There is a need to intensify the awareness campaigns to improve preventive efforts and to reduce human deaths resulting from the disease,” he said.

Zwane said the partnership with the University of the Free State is in line with a call for the government to seek suitable partners to strengthen service delivery initiatives.

“The successes and failures of both the department and the university in relation to the disease will be tabled to open an opportunity for debate on their roles in the future,” he said.

World Rabies Day, which aims to encourage awareness about the scourge is a universal programme held annually to inform communities about the dangers and solutions to curb rabies.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), a bite or even a scratch from the teeth of an infected animal can cause illness and death. It is mostly untreatable.

WHO said that rabies occurs in 150 countries and kills 55000 people every year, mostly children below the age of 15.

Some of the symptoms of rabies include fever, a tingly or burning sensation and according to WHO, it often takes one to three months for the disease to be visible in the central nervous system. "It can also cause inflammation on the brain and the central nervous system of humans," they said.

WHO also said that poor people are mostly at risk of infection due to lack of information.

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