

CANINE RABIES CHALLENGE STUDIES BEGIN! One of the most important vaccine research studies in veterinary medicine is underway at the University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine in Madison. Dr. Ronald Schultz, a leading authority on veterinary vaccines and Chair of the Department of Pathobiological Sciences, has begun concurrent 5 and 7 year challenge studies to determine the long-term duration of immunity of the canine rabies vaccine, with the goal of extending the state-mandated interval for boosters. These will be the first long-term challenge studies on the canine rabies vaccine to be published in the United States.

Dr. Schultz comments that: *"We are all very excited to start this study that will hopefully demonstrate that rabies vaccines can provide a minimum of 7 years of immunity."*

This research is being financed by The Rabies Challenge Fund, a charitable trust founded by pet vaccine disclosure advocate Kris L. Christine of Maine, who serves as Co-Trustee with world-renowned veterinary research scientist and practicing clinician, Dr. W. Jean Dodds of Hemopet in California. The Rabies Challenge Fund recently met its goal of \$177,000 to fund the studies' first year budget with contributions from dog owners, canine groups, trainers, veterinarians, and small businesses. Annual budget goals of \$150,000 for the studies must be met in the future.

Dr. Jean Dodds, DVM states: *"This is the first time in my 43 years of involvement in veterinary issues that what started as a grass-roots effort to change an outmoded regulation affecting animals will be addressed scientifically by an acknowledged expert to benefit all canines in the future."*

Scientific data published in 1992 by Michel Aubert and his research team demonstrated that dogs were immune to a rabies challenge 5 years after vaccination, while Dr. Schultz's serological studies documented antibody titer counts at levels known to confer immunity to rabies 7 years post-vaccination. This data strongly suggests that state laws requiring annual or triennial rabies boosters for dogs are redundant. Because the rabies vaccine is the most potent of the veterinary vaccines and associated with significant adverse reactions, it should not be given more often than is necessary to maintain immunity. Adverse reactions such as autoimmune diseases affecting the thyroid, joints, blood, eyes, skin, kidney, liver, bowel and central nervous system; anaphylactic shock; aggression; seizures; epilepsy; and fibrosarcomas at injection sites are linked to rabies vaccinations.

Study co-trustee Kris Christine adds: "Because the USDA does not require vaccine manufacturers to provide long-term duration of immunity studies documenting maximum effectiveness when licensing their products, concerned dog owners have contributed the money to fund this research themselves. We want to ensure that rabies immunization laws are based upon independent, long-term scientific data."

More information and regular updates on The Rabies Challenge Fund and the concurrent 5 and 7 year challenge studies it is financing can be found at the fund's website at: www.RabiesChallengeFund.org.