

PROGRAM TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO NORTHERN COMMUNITIES FOR THE PROTECTION OF DOGS AGAINST RABIES

1. OBJECTIVES

Due to the endemic nature of rabies in Northern Québec and the absence of veterinarians in the Inuit, Cree and Naskapi Communities covered by the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement and the Northeastern Québec Agreement, the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ) wishes to provide Northern Québec Communities with technical and material assistance to protect local dog populations against rabies, thus reducing the risk of rabies transmission to humans.

This program is intended to ensure the vaccination of dogs over three months old against rabies in each of the eligible Northern Communities.

2. RESOURCES

The Faculté de médecine vétérinaire (FMV) de l'Université de Montréal is responsible for implementing the program, pursuant to an agreement between FMV and MAPAQ. FMV will:

- Inform residents of the Inuit, Cree, and Naskapi Communities of the main characteristics of rabies, and make dog vaccination recommendations to protect the public, in collaboration with concerned authorities.
- Train individuals, designated and paid by each community, to vaccinate dogs.
- Provide free of charge rabies vaccines, syringes, needles, and required forms.

3. ELIGIBILITY

The fourteen Inuit Communities, the nine Cree Communities, and the Naskapi Community of Kawawachikamach are eligible for the program.

4. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

To help Native communities protect their dogs against rabies, thus reducing the risk of rabies transmission to humans, FMV will:

- Provide community representatives with the additional information needed on the nature of rabies in dogs.
- Make appropriate recommendations for protecting residents from the disease.

- Assign a veterinarian to each community enrolled in the program to train the community's designated individuals. Training will cover the following:
 - how to vaccinate dogs;
 - the main characteristics of rabies in dogs;
 - proper use, storage, and expiry dates of the vaccines;
 - which dogs can be vaccinated;
 - obtaining permission from the dog's owner;
 - animal restraint and vaccination techniques;
 - identifying vaccinated animals, filling out vaccination certificates, managing the vaccination register, and knowing whom to provide with copies;
 - onset of immunity in vaccinated dogs, and probable duration;
 - the importance of controlling stray dogs.

5. PROGRAM CONDITIONS

To be eligible for the program, Northern Communities must apply to MAPAQ. The Communities must agree to:

- control stray dogs within their boundaries;
- designate and pay one or a few individuals to:
 - vaccinate the animals throughout the year;
 - help to monitor biting dogs or cats, to isolate cases of suspected rabies or potentially exposed animals, and to prepare and ship samples for rabies analysis;
 - be trained based on expectations.
- ensure that all dogs over three months old in the community be vaccinated against rabies.

Program implementation may be constrained due to a community's refusal to cooperate or weather conditions. In these exceptional circumstances, some communities may not be visited and technical assistance could be offered differently, as determined by MAPAQ.

6. PROGRAM TERMS

The program takes effect on April 01, 2020, and ends on March 31, 2023.