

Uggah: S'wak hopes to achieve zero rabies fatality by 2021, be rabies-free by 2025

BY JOASH KONG ON DECEMBER 23, 2019, MONDAY AT 9:37 AMNEWS, SARAWAK



Uggah (centre) takes one for the album with those present at the Ops Rabies 2020 Mandate ceremony held on Sunday night at BCCK. — Photo by Muhammad Rais Sanusi.

KUCHING: Sarawak hopes to achieve zero fatality due to rabies by 2021 and be free of the disease by 2025, says Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas.

Uggah, who is also the Sarawak Disaster Management Committee (SDMC) chairman, said that with those objectives in mind, the SDMC had formulated their future action plans which would be presented to the Sarawak Cabinet in due course.

“During the Ops Rabies 2020 Plan of Action Workshop that was held on Dec 20 and Dec 21, those two objectives were fixed alongside other programmes that will be carried out during Ops Rabies 2020.

“I will present it to the cabinet for endorsement because in January, which is only one week away, we will move on to the next phase of operations,” Uggah said in his speech at the Ops Rabies 2020 Mandate ceremony at the Borneo Convention Centre Kuching (BCCK) last night.

Aside from those objectives, Uggah said that they were looking into maintaining an immune belt along the Sarawak-West Kalimantan border.

“An immune belt in those areas is very critical, so we will look into forming a Community Emergency Response Team as well as a special team under the state Security and Enforcement Unit to work with the state Department of Veterinary Services (DVS) and Health Ministry and members of the community in those areas,” he added.

Through Ops Rabies 2020, Uggah said that they hoped to achieve 100 per cent vaccination for dogs, and the state government would assist the people with vaccination programmes for the next few years, as the vaccination is effective for a year.

Meanwhile, Uggah divulged that there was a reduction in rabies positive cases in Kuching since Ops Rabies 2019.

“We hope that the decline in rabies positive cases shows the success of Ops Rabies. Through this operation, there has also not been any new areas declared as rabies-affected; the last one being declared in July 2019,” he stated.

To date, 63 areas in Sarawak were gazetted as rabies-affected areas, with the Serian division having the most with 22 rabies-affected areas, followed by Kuching (seven), Sri Aman (five), Miri (six), Sarikei (five), Samarahan (four), Mukah (four), Betong (four), Sibu (two) and Kapit (one).

Since its detection in 2017, rabies has taken the lives of 20 casualties.

Also present at the ceremony were Deputy State Secretary Datu Ik Pahon Joyik, DVS Sarawak director Dr Adrian Susin Ambud, Sarawak Deputy Police Commissioner Datuk Dev Kumar and Kuching North City Council (DBKU) Datuk Bandar Datu Junaidi Reduan.