Rabies outbreak in Gauteng: Muldersdrift and surrounds.
Rabies has been confirmed in the past month in 3 jackals and one unvaccinated domestic dog in the Muldersdrift/ Lanseria areas, Gauteng province. At least two human exposures have been reported and both persons received appropriate preventative treatment to prevent disease. While jackals play an important role in the ecosystem, jackal rabies is well documented in South Africa, periodic increases in cases are reported and in the past year jackal rabies has been reported from North West and KwaZulu Natal provinces. This current outbreak is concerning given the close proximity to higher density residential areas. An intensive dog vaccination campaign has been launched by the Dept of Agriculture and Rural Development in Gauteng. A similar incident occurred in 2009 when rabies was confirmed in a domestic dog in the Johannesburg suburb of Linden, with 42 domestic dogs subsequently contracting rabies in South Western Johannesburg. In 2015 three dog cases were diagnosed in the Helderkruin, Mindalore and Kloofendal areas. In the Pretoria area there were also three recent rabies incidents; a Honey badger at the end of April on the farm Doornkraal and a jackal at Boekenhoutkloof (both in the Cullinan/Nokeng Tsa Taemane district). Follow up vaccination campaigns have been launched there already. The most recent case was in a jackal at Kromdraai (Rust de winter).
While rabies in domestic animals in suburban areas of Johannesburg and Pretoria and surrounds is uncommon, these incidents are an important reminder that vaccination of domestic dogs and cats is required by law throughout South Africa and is the responsibility of the owners. Dogs and cats require to be vaccinated against rabies in the first year of life followed up with a booster within one year and then at least every three years. Rabies is uniformly fatal in animals and humans. Post exposure prevention can however prevent rabies disease developing in persons bitten or scratched by a potentially rabid animal if given timeously and correctly. While dog bites are common in Gauteng and usually relate to security incidents, a rabies risk must be considered in the following circumstances- bites or scratches or licks of mouth, eyes and nose from unusually tame wild animals, bites that would seem to be unprovoked, the animal is a stray, the animal is ill or an unusually aggressive domestic animal. Thorough wound cleaning is critical and post- exposure prophylaxis with a course of rabies vaccine and rabies immunoglobulin into the wound according to the national guidelines may be life-saving. The rabies-infected jackals have appeared unusually tame, and persons are warned not to approach or handle these animals.
Rabies vaccination of dogs and cats remains the most important and effective strategy to prevent rabies in humans.

For further information on rabies FAQ www.nicd.ac.za
Rabies guidelines for prevention of rabies in humans