



## DESEXING EXERCISE AT MUANIVATU SETTLEMENT



Dr. Keresi Lomata during the desexing procedure.

The stray dog population along Muaniatu settlement in Vatuwaga is set to curb following a two-day spaying and de-sexing exercise conducted at the settlement.

These are parts of ongoing efforts by the Ministry of Agriculture to control the stray dog population nationwide which saw the Animal Health & Production Division conducting the two-day de-sexing exercise at the settlement from 24 -25 September.

This program was organized in collaboration with the Suva City Council following several complaints received from the residents of Muaniatu Settlement, whereby stray dogs had become a nuisance to the public.

A survey was done to collate details of residents in the area and dog owners within the settlement, with awareness on the spaying and de-sexing exercise being conducted at Muaniatu.

Permanent Secretary for Agriculture Ritesh Dass said the program was undertaken based on complaints received from the public, and that the hotspots where a majority of complaints received

on issues like dogs attacking people and scattering rubbish were targeted.

The public is being urged that dogs are also living beings and if you choose to be a dog owner, there are certain responsibilities, some of which include making sure dogs are kept within their compounds and ensuring the dogs are licensed annually.

"Dog owners can also get preventative medicines for their dogs like deworming tablets and vaccinations which are available either at the Ministry of Agriculture veterinary clinics or Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) and private clinics," said Mr. Dass. He further added that the public have an equally important role to play in preventing the issue in the first place, and that responsible dog ownership can significantly reduce the numbers of stray dogs and the incidence of potential zoonotic diseases.

Dog owners are advised to license their dogs, which is \$13.20 per dog and can be purchased from the Ministry of Agriculture offices and SPCA. This license is

valid from January 1st to December 31st for each calendar year and is to be renewed on an annual basis.

As part of the stray animal control program, the Ministry of Agriculture will continue to have more de-sexing programs in the future in collaboration with SPCA and other charity organizations.

Meanwhile, Sailosi Naituva of Muaniatu settlement who also brought his three year old dog for desexing shared his appreciation towards the Ministry for conducting the exercise.

Mr. Naituva said they could not sleep well at night due to the noise from dogs barking in the area and spreading rubbish around as well as attacking residents in the area; "The dog population in the settlement has increased in the past three years and this exercise was a much needed one for the settlement."

If there are stray dog problems in an area, members of the public are advised to bring this to the attention of their nearest Agriculture office.

## DOG OWNERSHIP



2010 Agriculture Show Pet competition

### Dog Ownership

Any person in whose custody, charge or possession or in whose house or premises any dog be found or seen, unless the contrary is provided, be deemed to be the owner of the dog.

### Dog License

All dog owners must license their dogs. Dog license is \$13.20 per year paid on yearly basis. Any owner who keeps a dog more than 6 months old without holding a license in respect of such dog shall be guilty of an offence and be liable for conviction or fine.

### Dog Licensing Authority

The dog License can be purchased from Agriculture Offices and from SPCA for Suva area. Dog license is valid until 31st of December each year and is not transferrable.

Dog owners are required to provide details such as the name, address and description of the dog and number of dogs owned. Any person(s) who has dog license

must produce it on demand to the Inspector or Police Officer. Failure to produce dog license on demand is an offence and the person shall be liable for conviction or fine.

### Collars and Registration labels to be worn by Licensed dogs.

Dog license owners shall at his or her own expense be responsible for affixing a collar with registration label at all times.

Any owner of a dog who fails to comply shall be liable for conviction or fine. Owner liable in Damages for injury by dog

The owner of every dog shall be liable in damages for any unprovoked injury done by his or her dog.

### Penalty for NOT muzzling dangerous dogs

Any owner who permits a dog which he or she knows to be dangerous or to have injured any person or livestock or any kind of domestic animal without being

properly muzzled shall be guilty of an offence and liable for conviction or fine.

Any person who sees a dog being at large attacking any person(s) or attacked by such dog may destroy the same without being answerable to the owner of the dog.

### Seizure of Stray dogs

Any dog not wearing a collar which is not being in charge or controlled, suffering from disease or neglect may be seized and handed over to the Licensing Officer.

Any dog which has been seized under the provisions of this Act will be detained for 12 daylight hours for Owners to claim with the necessary charges.

### Magistrate may order destruction or control of dangerous dog.

If it appears to the Magistrate that such dog is dangerous, he or she may make an order directing either that the dog be destroyed in a manner to cause little pain as possible or it be kept under proper control by the owner.

### Important Message:

Ensure to have your dogs licensed as keeping dogs without license is an offence.

Dogs to be kept or confined to owners compound with proper feeding and shelter.

Proper disposal of household rubbish so that it does not attract dogs. A dog owner must keep a minimum number of dogs that he/she can take care of.



A dog with its owner in Savusavu