

**UNDERSTANDING THE NEED AND PRODUCTS COULD MEET THAT NEED:
A PERSPECTIVE FROM NAIROBI, KENYA**

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In Kenya there exists a situation both in the rural and urban areas countrywide, but more so in the urban zones (due to unavailability of space), where large numbers of dogs coexist and closely interact with humans. Socioeconomic circumstances and the cultural background of communities in Kenya leads to dog-keeping practices allowing development and thriving of huge numbers of truly stray and largely free-living community dogs.

This canine population is largely uncared for with little or no input from the “owners” or authorities. This in turn poses a serious hazard to the human communities living with free roaming dogs. For example, we have had all too frequent fatal attacks on humans by packs of free-roaming dogs; we also have a high incidence of canine and consequently fatal human rabies epidemics in the country. The authorities, having few or no tools for managing free roaming dogs, often resort to indiscriminate and wholesale inhumane culling of dogs using strychnine baiting. This would normally be in an effort to contain canine rabies outbreaks or destroy packs of dogs known to attack people.

We also have a significant population of truly owned dogs reasonably and acceptably cared for. There are more than 50 active veterinary clinics in the country serving this population of dogs. EsterilSol and/or a similar product would provide these privately practicing veterinarians with a welcome alternative tool for neutering male dogs in addition to the traditional surgical neuter given its shortcomings.

Appropriately deployed in an organized and strategic manner for canine overpopulation control, EsterilSol has the potential to be an effective and acceptable tool to the authorities and animal welfare organizations thus serving to improve the welfare of both the human and canine populations. Acceptability to communities is extremely important given the mounting resistance authorities are faced with whenever they carryout culling campaigns using strychnine baiting.

EsterilSol as-is would find ready acceptance in the practicing veterinary community in the country and would be commercially viable, as mentioned above. In an EsterilSol based campaign I carried out in the Dagoretti district of Nairobi, EsterilSol was extremely well-received by the community and, due to ease of use compared to surgical neuter, a larger number of dogs was sterilized and with less effort and over a much shorter period of time. For effective, countrywide, and sustainable canine overpopulation control based on my field experiences with EsterilSol use I would suggest the following characteristics of a non-surgical sterilant:

- Route of administration: an orally administered drug that can be laced into an appropriate canine food (e.g., meat) would tremendously increase the reach of a veterinarian.
- It is also extremely important to link the product to anti-rabies vaccine so that an animal consuming the product would simultaneously be immunized and sterilized.
- There is also need for product stability under a wide variety of circumstances such as high temperatures and significant contamination.