THE TICK STORY

This is a **Healthy Happy Dogs** message from Roper Gulf Regional Council Animal Management Program.

Introduction of interviewer and interviewee who will be having a conversation about ticks.

We all know the feeling of the wet season building and the ticks coming out. Dogs get covered in ticks and they are climbing the walls in our houses. Well today we are talking about how to fix a tick problem in your house.

What is the problem with ticks?

- ✓ Too many ticks make a **dogs blood weak** and can even kill a young dog. Ticks also make a dog feel depressed. If a dog has ticks it will often miss out on love from it's family. Children don't want to play with the dog and people **don't want it inside** the house.

- ✓ Too many ticks on a dog are also an **animal welfare problem**. It is actually breaking the animal welfare law to have a dog covered in ticks and not do anything about them.

- ✓ But ticks are not just a problem for dogs. They can **carry sicknesses** that can get into people's blood. Tick bites can also make infected itchy sores on people and stop people getting a good night's sleep.

Why are there so many ticks around our houses?

To understand how ticks become such a problem we need to look at how they breed.

- ✓ Each big fat grey tick we see on a dog is a breeding female full of eggs. Once the tick fills up with blood she drops off the dog and lays her eggs. The problem is that she lays an amazing **4000 eggs in one go**.

- ✓ The female lays her eggs in small cracks around the house where we can't clean. The eggs are too small to see.

- ✓ These **eggs can last 18 months in the cracks** before they hatch. They just sit and wait for the right time to hatch, and we all know the feeling when those tiny ticks hatch and start moving around driving us and our dogs crazy.

How do we stop the ticks?

People may remember the **yard sprays and dip** washes to get rid of ticks. These chemicals work a bit but they are also strong poisons to spread around the environment.

These days there are some **much better medicines** available from the vets or in stores.

If there is a vet program in community the vet or ranger probably gives the dogs tick **medicine on bread**. This medicine will only kill the ticks that are on the dog at the time. It **doesn't kill the new ticks that come one the dog**.

You can also buy **flea collars** from the shops. If you are using flea collars it is important the dog doesn't go swimming a lot. It is also important that little children are not allowed to touch the collars a lot.

There are now some new tablets that we can give our dogs every month called **Nexgard.** Nexgard tablets cost a bit but they work so well. They keep ticks off a dog for one full month. Any tick that gets on a dog in the month after it has eaten the Nexgard will die. This means we quickly stop ticks breeding up in the yard. Nexgard also works for fleas, scabies and hookworm.

These tablets taste a bit like beef so most dogs will eat them up without too much fuss. If the dog won't eat it, you can hide it in a bit of Fritz or butter and they will.

Vets, pet shops and some community stores have Nexgard on the shelf. Talk to your community store, the vet, rangers or a pet shop about the best way to get Nexgard.

When should we give these tick tablets?

It is best if the tablets are given at the same time every month. If we do that we really won't have any problems with ticks. But that gets pretty expensive if you have a lot of dogs.

If it is too expensive to get the medicine every month we can use it when it will work the best.

- ✓ If you know a heap of baby ticks have just hatched out treat your dogs then. Sometimes these tiny ticks look like tiny specks of dirt on your dog's belly. Or
- ✓ If you have ticks climbing up the walls of your house it is time to treat your dogs Or
- ✓ If you see one fat breeding female on a dog, treat the dogs. This will stop the female laying her eggs.

With ticks it is a case of treat early to treat less. Stop them building up in your yard in the first place by giving the medicine when you first notice them.