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## PRESS RELEASE

### AFSCAN Announces First Research and Studentship Awards

The African Small Companion Animal Network (AFSCAN), run by the World Small Animal Veterinary Association's (WSAVA) Charitable Foundation, has announced the recipients of its first AFSCAN Research and Studentship Awards. Launched in 2015, the Awards aim to promote small animal clinical research relevant to the African continent and to support the training and development of veterinary students and academics working in Africa. The Awards are supported by organisations including Zoetis and the Petplan Charitable Trust.

#### The AFSCAN Research Award

The AFSCAN Research Award offers academics working at a veterinary school in Africa the opportunity to secure a grant to fund a locally relevant clinical research project of their devising. Eleven applications were received and independently assessed by members of the WSAVA Scientific Advisory Committee. Two projects have been selected for funding:

- Dr Temidayo Omobowale from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, has received funding for a project entitled 'Molecular Characterization of Canine Parvovirus-2 Viruses Circulating in Dogs in Nigeria.'
- Dr Abdul Katakweba from the Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania, has received funding for a project entitled 'Surveillance of Canine Leptospirosis and Associated Carrier Animals in Urban and Rural Dogs in Morogoro, Tanzania.'

## **The AFSCAN Studentship Award**

This Award enables a fourth or fifth year African undergraduate veterinary student to spend six to eight weeks participating in a research project related to disease or the welfare of companion animals of relevance to African society. One Award has been made this year to fourth year veterinary student Julius Luvanga from the Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania. He will be working on a project entitled 'Haematological Values of Apparently Healthy African Dogs in Tanzania.'

AFSCAN aims to advance standards of veterinary care across Africa through education and through facilitating the creation of a sustainable network of companion animal veterinarians, associations and specialist groups in Sub-Saharan Africa. Five countries are participating in the first phase - Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda. Zoetis is AFSCAN's major supporter but it is also supported by a range of other organisations which, together, form the AFSCAN Consortium.

It launched its Awards in April 2015 with the aim of increasing the knowledge base of diseases and welfare issues affecting companion animals in Africa and building links between African veterinary researchers and laboratories in the USA and Europe.

Commenting, Professor Michael Day, AFSCAN Board member and Vice-President of the WSAVA Foundation, said: "Our Scientific Research Awards address an unmet need for support for companion animal clinical research in Africa and we hope they will also inspire a new generation of veterinary researchers across the continent by highlighting the value of investigating diseases in these species."

Julius Luvanga, recipient of the Studentship Award, said: "The Award is a motivator for me to continue working hard, especially with small companion animals, which are my area of special interest. I am delighted to be able to undertake my research project and to help increase our knowledge on matters relating to small companion animals."

Dr Gabriel Varga, Chairman of the AFSCAN Board and Director of Business Operations for Zoetis North Europe region, added: "We hope that the AFSCAN Awards will drive advances in veterinary care for all species and, in so doing, improve the health and welfare of both animals and humans. We were delighted to see such a range of projects submitted for our consideration this year and wish all of the recipients good luck with their projects. I'd like to thank Zoetis, Petplan and all of our Consortium members for their generous support."

## **Notes to editors:**

### **About AFSCAN**

The AFSCAN project has been developed by the WSAVA Foundation with the backing of the global animal health company Zoetis and a Consortium of other supporters. Its Project Board is chaired by Dr Gabriel Varga, President of the WSAVA Foundation and Director at Zoetis and includes Professor Michael Day (University of Bristol, UK, and WSAVA Foundation); Dr Theo Kanellos (Zoetis); Dr Remo Lobetti (referral practitioner, South Africa) and Dr Alex Thiermann (OIE).

Other supporters and sponsors of AFSCAN include the OIE, the North American Veterinary Community (NAVC) and veterinary digital content provider Vetstream; veterinary charity Worldwide Veterinary Services and its Mission Rabies Project; global veterinary equipment supplier KRUUSE; healthcare advertising agency Circa Health; the University of Veterinary Medicine in Kosice; BSAVA; Pet Plan Charitable Trust and the WSAVA.

### **About Zoetis**

Zoetis (zô-EH-tis) is the leading animal health company, dedicated to supporting its customers and their businesses. Building on more than 60 years of experience in animal health, Zoetis discovers, develops, manufactures and markets veterinary vaccines and medicines, complemented by diagnostic products and genetic tests and supported by a range of services. In 2014, the company generated annual revenue of \$4.8 billion. With approximately 10,000 employees worldwide at the beginning of 2015, Zoetis serves veterinarians, livestock producers and people who raise and care for farm and companion animals with sales of its products in 120 countries. For more information, visit [www.zoetis.com](http://www.zoetis.com).

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### **For further information:**

Rebecca George, George PR, Tel: 01449 737281/07974 161108