



**WSAVA**  
**One Health Committee**

## Press Information

### Human and Veterinary Healthcare Professionals Call for a 'One Health' Approach to Policy Discussions on Obesity

A vision of a world where regular activity, a balanced diet and healthy weight are part of every family's life was set out at a recent conference. Entitled '***Preventing Obesity in People and their Pets: A One Health Approach***,' it was hosted by the One Health Committee of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA), in collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and brought together speakers from human and veterinary medicine to discuss the problem of obesity in humans and companion animals. Convened and chaired by Professor Michael Day, Chair of the WSAVA One Health Committee, the Conference took place from 10-11 November 2016 in Atlanta, Georgia. It was attended by more than 100 delegates with diverse backgrounds in human and animal healthcare.

During the conference, speakers and delegates confirmed the importance of the One Health approach in control and prevention in obesity in people and their companion animals and called for the direct input of One Health proponents into the shaping of future public policy in this area. The essential role of physical activity in maintaining a healthy weight in people and pets was also discussed with the success of community walking programmes highlighted because of the motivational role that walking with dogs can bring to the individuals concerned.

At the conclusion of the conference, speakers and delegates drafted a consensus statement on the One Health approach to obesity. Proceedings from the meeting will be published as open-access manuscripts in the *Journal of Comparative Pathology*.

Professor Michael Day said: "This was a milestone event for One Health, showcasing the key role of the human–small companion animal bond and the value of comparative research into

spontaneously-arising companion animal disease states. We structured our discussions around three key themes - the biology of obesity and associated co-morbidities; the costs, behaviour and psychology of obesity; and One Health solutions to obesity.”

He added: “We paired human medical and veterinary speakers and asked them to review their assigned topic and lead a discussion with delegates. The enthusiasm with which both speakers and delegates tackled subjects that were often outside their comfort zone is what made this unique event so successful and it was inspiring to listen to medical doctors and veterinarians working collaboratively to develop solutions to this significant global challenge.”

Professor Day concluded: “We are particularly grateful for the support given to the meeting by our gold sponsors – Hill’s Pet Nutrition, Mars Petcare and Purina - and our silver sponsor - Merck Animal Health – as well as the educational partners that worked with us to promote the conference.”

The event was live-streamed via Facebook, which enabled the content to be accessed by a further 3,500 ‘virtual delegates’ watching in real-time. The videos can be accessed on the One Health Committee Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/onehealthonmedicine/>

The World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) is an umbrella organization representing almost 200,000 veterinarians globally through 101 member associations. The WSAVA's One Health Committee works to ensure the prominence of the small companion animal–human interface in the global One Health agenda.

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