Press Information

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World Small Animal Veterinary Association Says Collaboration is Key in Global Rabies Fight

On World Rabies Day 2015, Monday 28 September, the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) has confirmed its commitment to collaboration as key to success in the fight against the disease. The Association is mobilizing its global veterinary community of 146,500 practising small animal veterinarians to work alongside major international organizations spearheading global rabies control with the target of eliminating rabies by 2030.

Professor Michael Day chairs the WSAVA’s One Health and Vaccination Guidelines Committees, both active in rabies control. He explains: "The scale of human and animal suffering caused by this canine vaccine-preventable infection should not be tolerated in the 21st century and we believe that working hand in hand with international organizations, human health healthcare providers and charities is the most effective way to defeat it."

"The WSAVA's work on rabies control is delivered through our Committees, which are engaged in high level global discussions and the production of educational resources for veterinarians. It is also delivered through our member associations, many of which are in rabies-endemic countries and which are actively involved with regional rabies control programs. They include the Philippines Animal Hospital Association, which is working with the government and a number of voluntary organizations; the Society of Companion Animal Practitioners in Sri Lanka through its work with the Blue Paw Trust; the Veterinary Practitioners' Association of Nepal, which works with the One Health
Alliance in Nepal and the Veterinary Practitioners' Association of Thailand through its involvement with the Responsible Pet Owner project."

"Our charitable WSAVA Foundation and its African Small Companion Animal Network (AFSCAN) project are also playing a strong role, particularly in Africa, working closely with Mission Rabies, a charity doing much to encourage the vaccination of dogs and to increase awareness and understanding of rabies around the world."

Michael Day continued: "At a global level we are delighted to be working closely with the OIE, World Animal Protection, the International Companion Animal Management Coalition and the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC) on rabies control projects and initiatives to help improve health education in rabies-endemic countries. We are, for instance encouraging our members to undertake GARC’s Rabies Educator Certificate, a free online course which supports the dissemination of accurate, life-saving information regarding rabies to at-risk communities throughout the world."

He concluded: "World Rabies Day 2015 is an opportunity to reflect on great progress made this year through teamwork and partnership, but to recognize the scale of the task ahead. Rabies still causes up to 59,000 human deaths every year and the vaccination of dogs remains the most cost-effective single intervention to protect humans from contracting the disease. The WSAVA’s global community of veterinarians is committed to playing its part, together with our partners, to continue the fight against this dreadful disease."

The World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) is an umbrella organization representing 146,500 veterinarians globally through 96 member associations.

For further information:

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