WSAVA, Hill's Announce 2017 'Next Generation' Veterinary Award Winner

Judges praise commitment to raising standards of veterinary care in the Balkans

TOPEKA, Kan. (21 July 2017) – Dr. Luba Gancheva, a Bulgarian veterinarian who now lives and works in Romania, has been named by the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) and Hill's Pet Nutrition as the winner of the 2017 ‘Next Generation’ Veterinary Award. The award acknowledges the work of a veterinarian who graduated within the past ten years and who has contributed significantly to the betterment of companion animals, the veterinary profession and society at large.

"Millennial vets carry the future of the profession with them,” said Dr. Jolle Kirpensteijn, Chief Professional Relations Officer at Hill's Pet Nutrition. “Luba has demonstrated a strong commitment to improving the experiences and education of early-career veterinarians. She has also taken positive steps to connect these next-generation professionals with ones who are already established in the field.”

Dr. Gancheva will be presented with her award at the WSAVA World Congress 2017, which takes place Sept. 25-28 in Copenhagen, Denmark. She will also give a lecture entitled: ‘A high professional level of veterinary medicine is offered in the Balkans. True or false?’

The Balkan Peninsula extends from Central Europe to the Mediterranean Sea and includes the countries of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and the European part of Turkey.

Dr. Gancheva graduated from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Forestry in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 2010, and began working in a small animal practice in the city. She demonstrated her commitment to continuing education and received a Master of Science in Infectious Diseases from Triaka University in Bulgaria. She now lives in Bucharest, Romania, and works at the Cabinet Filip Veterinarul animal hospital.

Her PhD thesis, entitled ‘Clinical Manifestation of Brucellosis in Dogs, caused by Brucella Canis,’ was based on a study she conducted on the incidence of this disease in the Balkans. As a result of her thesis, Dr. Gancheva was invited to speak at two congresses in the Balkans, where she realized how enthusiastic her colleagues in the region were to continue their professional development.

In 2015, she launched an online veterinary journal called ‘Vets on the Balkans,’ with the goal of helping regional veterinarians work more collaboratively and share their experience and knowledge. The journal has presented more than 90 cases and has developed a strong readership. It has also built partnerships with many of the key companion animal veterinary associations in the region.

Building on this success, Dr. Gancheva in 2016 launched an initiative called ‘Learn and Travel with Vets in The Balkans’. The program enables veterinarians to increase their knowledge and experience by working in clinics in
nearby countries. The first placements were made earlier this year, and they were supported through sponsorships and donations from 12 participating practices in Bulgaria, Turkey, Romania, Belgium, Italy and Croatia.

Dr Käthi Brunner, Chair of the WSAVA’s Leadership and Nomination Committee, said: “Tackling the inequality of education and resources available to veterinarians depending on where in the world they are working is one of the key challenges facing the profession. Dr. Gancheva has taken some very practical steps to support the development of the profession in the Balkans, both through launching the journal and through the new ‘Learn and Travel’ scheme. We congratulate her and hope that both of these initiatives continue to prove successful. She is a great example of a Next Generation veterinarian who is showing a very personal commitment to raising standards of veterinary care.”

As the winner of the 2017 ‘Next Generation’ Veterinary Award, Dr. Gancheva will receive a monetary gift, an engraved plaque and a WSAVA certificate.

Dr. Gancheva said: “I would like to express my gratitude for the Award. It is the biggest honour of my life and I am excited to be part of WSAVA World Congress this year. During my lecture, I will present clinical reports from my journal from each country in the Balkans to show that, while we may have economic difficulties, our passion for knowledge and love for animals give us strength. When you cure an animal, you change the world for someone, so veterinarians change the world. Thank you WSAVA!”

Hill’s will fund Dr. Gancheva’s attendance at the 2017 WSAVA World Congress so that she can accept her award.

Candidates for the WSAVA, Hill’s Next Generation Award can come from any country and must meet the following criteria:
- Graduated within the past 10 years
- Active in continuing education
- Have a strong record in community service
- Working to bridge the gap between their generation and others

The WSAVA’s 101 member and affiliate associations represent more than 200,000 individual veterinarians from around the globe. They work together to advance the health and welfare of companion animals. Hill’s is the WSAVA’s most long-standing and significant industry partner.

Candidates for the 2018 Next Generation Award can nominate themselves by sending an email to yourwsava@wsava.org by Jan. 1, 2018. They should include a letter of intent, a CV and at least one reference letter. Further information can be found at www.wsava.org.

About Hill’s Pet Nutrition

Founded more than 75 years ago with an unwavering commitment to pet nutrition, Hill’s mission is to help enrich and lengthen the special relationships between people and their pets. The right nutrition, combined with the devotion of veterinary professionals can transform the lives of pets; and healthier and happier pets can transform the lives of pet parents. Hill’s is dedicated to pioneering research and ground-breaking nutrition for dogs and cats based on a scientific understanding of their specific needs. HILL’s® Prescription Diet® therapeutic pet foods, HILL’s® Science Diet® and HILL’s® Ideal Balance™ wellness pet foods are sold through veterinarians and pet speciality retailers worldwide. For more information about Hill’s, our products and our nutritional philosophy, visit us at HillsPet.com, HillsVet.com for Facebook, keywords “Hill’s Pet Nutrition.”