



**WSAVA**  
One Health Committee



**GARC**  
rabiesalliance.org

## Press Information

### WSAVA and GARC Join Forces in Rabies Fight

The World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) and the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC) have joined forces to collaborate in the fight against canine rabies.

Following a Memorandum of Understanding signed at the recent WSAVA World Congress, the two organizations will work together to promote a humane response to rabies prevention and help improve health education in rabies-endemic countries.

A recent study by GARC and its Partners for Rabies Prevention group showed that an estimated 160 people die every day from the disease. In addition to the human tragedy, annual economic losses to rabies are around US\$8.6 billion, mostly because of premature deaths, but also because of spending on human vaccines and lost income. It is also estimated that more than 20,000,000 animals are culled every year in rabies-endemic countries in a futile attempt to stem rabies outbreaks, with the methods used often inhumane.

WSAVA and GARC will highlight humane and effective responses to the rabies threat as part of their joint venture. GARC already implements comprehensive rabies prevention programmes that include dog vaccinations - the single best way to prevent rabies - while the WSAVA's One Health Committee is working closely with the OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health) on a range of rabies control projects.

Working with together, they will target the increased involvement of veterinarians in rabies prevention efforts to end this fatal, but preventable, disease.

WSAVA and GARC also believe that more should be done to educate vulnerable communities about the risks of infection and the preventative measures that can be taken. GARC provides free

educational resources which effectively disseminate accurate information to at-risk communities. It believes that collaboration with the WSAVA will help rabies professionals reach more people with life-saving information.

Commenting on the partnership, Professor Michael Day, Chair of the WSAVA One Health Committee, said: "The signing of this agreement between WSAVA and GARC is an exciting step forward in the campaign for global elimination of canine rabies. The Memorandum defines a new alignment of the practising small companion animal veterinary community with the major international organizations spearheading global rabies control programs. We hope, through initiatives such as the online Rabies Educator Certificate, to involve the WSAVA membership directly in local and regional rabies control programmes."

Professor Louis Nel, Executive Director of GARC, added: "Small animal veterinarians have a vital role to play in ending rabies deaths, both in animals and humans. We welcome this partnership with the WSAVA to strengthen our One Health approach to rabies control, to support intersectoral collaboration in rabies-endemic countries and work together towards rabies elimination."

#### **Notes to Editors:**

The World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) is an umbrella organization representing 146,500 veterinarians globally through 97 member associations. The WSAVA One Health Committee works towards ensuring the prominence of the small companion animal–human interface in the global One Health agenda.

The Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC) is a leading non-profit organisation that works with governments, veterinary, public health and educational experts, and communities to eliminate rabies in areas hardest hit by the disease. GARC's mission is to eliminate human deaths from rabies and relieve the burden of rabies in animal populations, especially dogs.

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