Experts to discuss 'Domestic Violence as a One Health Issue’ at WSAVA Pre-Congress Workshop

Tuesday September 26 2023, Lisboa Conference Centre, Portugal

The WSAVA’s One Health Committee and Animal Wellness and Welfare Committee will host a joint one-day workshop ahead of this year’s WSAVA World Congress during which they will discuss domestic violence as a One Health issue and explore how veterinary teams can implement a community response plan in their towns and regions.

The event, free to WSAVA members, will be led by Dr Melinda Merck, a forensic veterinarian and global expert in this area. Other speakers include Madeline Bernstein, President of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Los Angeles, USA; Dr Paula Boyden, Veterinary Director of the UK’s Dogs Trust; Dra Eunice Marcelino, Prosecutor, Lisbon, Portugal; Dra Anabela Moreira, forensic veterinarian and toxicologist, Lisbon and Dr Mauro Paulino, Consultant Forensic Psychologist at the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences, Lisbon. During the workshop, the speakers will explore topics including:

- the links between animal cruelty and domestic violence
- the management of suspected animal cruelty cases and domestic violence in veterinary practice
- domestic violence pet response plans currently in use in the UK and the USA
- the forensic psychology of domestic violence and animal cruelty
- the role of industry in domestic violence programs

The session will conclude with a panel discussion.

Commenting, Dr Melinda Merck, a former Chair of the WSAVA Animal Wellness and Welfare Committee, said: “We hope that delegates will leave with a much stronger understanding of the risk factors to pets and people from domestic violence and that they will be equipped to recognize the signs and respond appropriately. In
regions where there is no domestic violence program in operation, we hope they will also be inspired to start a program using the roadmap we will give them.”

The full agenda for the workshop is available at [https://wsava-congress.org/one-health-domestic-violence-workshop/](https://wsava-congress.org/one-health-domestic-violence-workshop/)

Those interested are advised to register quickly as space is limited.

WSAVA World Congress takes place from 27-29 September 2023 at the Lisboa Conference Centre. Dr Paula Boyden received the 2023 Global One Health Award in recognition of her work to highlight the role of veterinary teams in spotting signs of animal and domestic abuse. She will deliver her Award Winner Lecture during the One Health Stream on Thursday 28 September.

The WSAVA represents more than 200,000 veterinarians worldwide through its 115 member associations and works to enhance standards of clinical care for companion animals. Its core activities include the development of WSAVA Global Guidelines in key areas of veterinary practice, including pain management, nutrition and vaccination, together with lobbying on important issues affecting companion animal care worldwide.

**For further information, please contact:**

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