WSAVA Targets Animal Welfare at 2014 World Congress

The World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) has targeted global improvements in animal welfare as a key priority, announcing a raft of initiatives at its 39th World Congress. They include activities to highlight the key role of welfare within the veterinary profession; a partnership with global animal welfare charity World Animal Protection (formerly WSPA) and the creation of a dedicated fund for welfare projects.

Speaking at WSAVA World Congress, Dr Shane Ryan, Chair of the WSAVA’s Animal Welfare and Wellness Committee (AWWC), said: “Animal welfare is an integral and inherent part of the everyday practice of veterinary medicine and the veterinary professional’s awareness of its importance influences every decision taken when treating an animal. But animal welfare is also a specialist discipline in its own right and the AWWC strives to provide relevant information to veterinarians on developments in contemporary animal welfare science.”

Initiatives announced by the AWWC to promote the importance of animal welfare include:
• A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with World Animal Protection under which the organizations will work together to develop an annual, measurable welfare action plan

• The extension of the WSOVA’s Global Outreach scheme which ran for the first time around World Congress in Cape Town to future Congresses, starting with the next one which takes place in Bangkok in May 2015. WSOVA Global Outreach aims to help share the knowledge and experience of WSOVA veterinarians more widely around the world, offering the opportunity for veterinarians to take up volunteer placements for animal welfare organizations in the region where the World Congress is being held

• The offering of an annual AWWC travel grant of up to $5,000 to enable veterinarians or (post-graduate) veterinary students wishing to pursue a career in animal welfare to travel to a suitable project to gain experience. The first award will be announced at the WSOVA’s next World Congress in Bangkok, Thailand, in May 2015

• The establishment of a small group of ‘Friends of Animal Welfare’ drawn from veterinarians around the world who will be asked to make an annual pledge to a fund to be used for specific animal-welfare related initiatives

A voluntary veterinary oath with a strong focus on welfare which was unveiled at World Congress which all WSOVA members are being encouraged to sign.

Dr Ryan added: “Although good animal and human welfare are interlinked, animal welfare has its own intrinsic benefit and importance. Promoting a high standard of animal welfare and wellness is the one of the most significant and satisfying contributions veterinarians can accomplish on a daily basis, affecting both their patients and their clients. By harnessing the power of our global veterinary community, the WSOVA aims to enhance the well-being of animals around the world and the initiatives we are announcing are an important step along the way.”

The WSOVA is a not-for-profit body, dedicated to enhancing the quality of veterinary care for companion animals around the world. It works in key areas such as welfare,
Continuing Education (CE), One Health and nutrition. Its Animal Welfare and Wellness (AWWC) Committee, kindly supported by Waltham®, aims to promote the importance of welfare, ensuring it is an everyday consideration for small animal practitioners around the world.

Note to editors:

The WSAVA

The World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) is an association made up of 92 veterinary organizations from all over the world, representing 145,000 individual veterinarians globally.

World Animal Protection

The World Animal Protection believes that now, more than ever, is the time to stop animal suffering around the world. It moves the world to protect animals across four main areas:

• Animals in disasters
• Animals in communities
• Animals in the wild
• Animals in farming

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