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## **Australian Veterinarian to Receive 2018 WSAVA, Hill's 'Next Generation' Veterinary Award**

### **Judges recognize veterinary 'bridge-builder' and One Health champion**

TOPEKA, Kan. (14 August 2018) – Dr. Guyan Weerasinghe, an Australian veterinarian working in small animal practice and as a state government veterinary officer, has been announced by the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) and Hill's Pet Nutrition as the winner of the 2018 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.

"Given the importance of the human-companion animal bond, veterinarians have an important role to play in global initiatives such as One Health, which unite human and veterinary medicine with environmental health, to secure a safer future for our planet," said Dr. Iveta Becvarova, Director of Global Academic and Professional Affairs at Hill's Pet Nutrition. "As a past President of Australian Veterinarians in Public Health (AVPH), Guy has already made an outstanding contribution in this area. His leadership of various One Health projects and his involvement in running veterinary continuing education (CE) on this topic, remind all companion animal veterinarians that our work also has a global dimension."

Dr. Weerasinghe graduated from the University of Queensland in 2011, gaining experience in dairy practice in New Zealand and in shelter medicine in Sydney, Australia. In 2017, he achieved a Master's in Veterinary Public Health and became a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine. In his current role at Greencross Caloundra, a companion animal practice on Queensland's Sunshine Coast, he maintains a small animal caseload and works alongside local animal rescue groups. Through his work for the Queensland Government's Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, he is involved with animal disease surveillance and response and increasing the awareness of public health risks in veterinary practice, including small animal clinics. He also collaborates on a number of One Health projects across Australia, including an initiative to develop a tool to capture hotspots for tick paralysis on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland.

Dr. Weerasinghe is an active proponent of CE, regularly giving talks on topics including climate change, zoonoses, and clinical work health and safety. He has also served on several Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) committees and is a past President of its Sunshine Coast branch. He is the designated veterinary spokesperson for the Climate Media Centre and engages regularly with broadcast, online and print media on topics including the impact of climate change on animal health and welfare.

Dr. Weerasinghe will be presented with his award at WSAVA World Congress 2018 which takes place September 25-28 in Singapore. He will also give a lecture entitled: 'Antimicrobial resistance: the 'tragedy of the commons' in companion animal practice.'

Dr Käthi Brunner, Chair of the WSAVA's Leadership and Nomination Committee, said: "In just eight years Guy has made an outstanding contribution to the veterinary profession in Australia through his participation in the AVA and AVPH and through encouraging colleagues to consider the strategic value of their work to society as a whole through One Health.

"His enthusiasm for CE, the breadth of his involvement in the profession and his excellent communication skills equip him to act a bridge between his 'next generation' peers and other veterinarians and to lead the profession in new and important directions. He is the perfect candidate for the WSAVA, Hill's Next Generation Award and we will be delighted to present it to him later this year."

As the winner of the 2018 'Next Generation' Veterinary Award, Dr. Weerasinghe will receive an engraved plaque and a WSAVA certificate.

Dr. Weerasinghe said: "I'm honored to have been nominated for the WSAVA, Hill's Next Generation Award, let alone to be the 2018 winner! I'm hoping to use this opportunity to explore veterinary antimicrobial resistance in relation to the late Garrett Hardin's 'tragedy of the commons' concept: where in a shared system, individuals make choices based on self-interest to the detriment of the common good. The imprudent use of antimicrobials, in both human and animal health, is a factor in the development of global antimicrobial resistance. Tackling this wicked problem requires joint stewardship by practitioners of animal, human and environmental health. We all have a role to play and by working together at the intersect of One Health, we can preserve this diminishing resource for future generations."

Hill's will fund Dr. Weerasinghe's attendance at WSAVA World Congress 2018 so that he can accept his 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 104 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 industry partner.

For more information about the 2019 Next Generation Award, visit <https://www.wsava.org/About/Awards>

### **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 specialty retailers worldwide.

For more information about Hill's, our products and our nutritional philosophy, visit us at [HillsPet.com](http://HillsPet.com), [HillsVet.com](http://HillsVet.com) or Facebook, keywords "Hill's Pet Nutrition."

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