



WSAVA
FOUNDATION

Improving
Animal Care
Through Science
And Education

PRESS INFORMATION

AFSCAN Launches Pan-African Infectious Disease Surveillance Program

The [African Small Companion Animal Network](#) (AFSCAN), a project of the [World Small Animal Veterinary Association's \(WSAVA's\) charitable Foundation](#), has launched a major new pan-African infectious disease surveillance program aimed at providing novel data on the prevalence and distribution of ectoparasites and arthropod-borne infectious diseases across six sub-Saharan African countries.

The project will be undertaken by a team of six veterinary parasitologists from the participating countries: Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Namibia, Tanzania and Uganda. Each country will provide samples from 100 dogs and 50 cats from urban and rural locations in each of two different geographical regions. Sample collection will be coupled with a local rabies vaccination and ectoparasite preventive campaign co-ordinated by the investigator. Ectoparasites will be speciated and multiplex polymerase chain reaction (PCR) will be used to identify microparasite DNA within the parasites and in blood samples from each parasitized animal. Seroprevalence of infection will also be determined. The study will produce an extensive database and valuable biobank of samples for future research. Laboratory work will be centralized in the facility of Clinvet in South Africa.

The WSAVA Foundation's AFSCAN initiative is working to advance standards of veterinary care across Africa through education and through facilitating the creation of a sustainable network of companion animal veterinarians, associations and specialist groups in Sub-Saharan Africa. The surveillance program was launched at a meeting of the participants,

held in Arusha, Tanzania, on December 5th. It will run throughout 2019 and is being supported by Bayer Animal Health.

Commenting, Emeritus Professor Michael J Day, the project leader and a member of the AFSCAN and WSAVA Foundation Boards and WSAVA Honorary Treasurer, said: 'This is an exciting opportunity for the African companion animal veterinary community as there is almost no baseline knowledge about the major arthropod-borne infectious diseases in dogs and cats in Africa, some of which are zoonotic in nature.'

"This new AFSCAN project will provide disease distribution maps for Africa, giving veterinary practitioners a valuable tool for the control and prevention of these infections in their countries. We have assembled a team of exceptionally well-qualified and enthusiastic veterinary parasitologists who will undertake the sample collection and are working with a world-renowned laboratory for sample analysis."

He continued: "We are very grateful to our major project sponsor, Bayer Animal Health, for providing this opportunity for the African veterinary community, and to Zoetis, which continues to provide the core funding for AFSCAN. This is the largest and most significant research programme to emerge from the highly successful AFSCAN project, which celebrated its fifth year of working in Africa in 2018."

Ends

Notes to editors:

About AFSCAN

The AFSCAN project was developed by the WSAVA Foundation with the backing of the global animal health company Zoetis, global veterinary equipment company KRUUSE and a Consortium of other supporters. Its Project Board is chaired by Dr Gabriel Varga, President of the WSAVA Foundation and Director at Zoetis and includes Emeritus Professor Michael Day (WSAVA); Dr Theo Kanellos (Zoetis); Dr Remo Lobetti (referral practitioner, South Africa); Dr Kevin Stevens (practitioner, South Africa) and Dr Patrick Bastiaensen (OIE).

Other supporters and sponsors of AFSCAN include the OIE, the North American Veterinary Community (NAVCC), veterinary digital content provider Vetstream; veterinary charity Worldwide Veterinary Service and its Mission Rabies Project; healthcare advertising agency Circa Health; the University of Veterinary Medicine in Kosice; BSAVA; The Petplan Charitable Trust and the WSAVA Foundation.

About Bayer Animal Health

The Bayer business unit, Animal Health, is a leading research-based veterinary medicine company that ranks among the top five in the world. The company offers a broad range of innovative therapies and solutions with a particularly strong position in the field of parasiticides for companion animals and parasiticides and anti-infectives for the treatment of infectious diseases in livestock. In fiscal 2017, the Animal Health business unit employed over 3,500 people, in more than 120 countries, and had sales

of EUR 1.6 billion. More information at www.animalhealth.bayer.com. Connect with us as Bayer4Animals on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube.

About Zoetis

Zoetis is the leading animal health company, dedicated to supporting its customers and their businesses. Building on more than 60 years of experience in animal health, Zoetis discovers, develops, manufactures and markets veterinary vaccines, medicines and diagnostics, which are complemented by genetic tests, biodevices and a range of services. Zoetis serves veterinarians, livestock producers and people who raise and care for farm and companion animals with sales of its products in more than 100 countries. In 2017, the company generated annual revenue of \$5.3 billion with approximately 9,000 employees. For more information, visit www.zoetis.com.

For further information: Rebecca George, George PR, Tel: 01449 737281/07974 161108