27 April 2013

Britain and Beyond – Celebrating World Vet Day

Vets across the globe will mark World Veterinary Day on Saturday 27th April, with a focus on vaccination as a means to prevent disease. “This is an excellent opportunity for the veterinary profession to celebrate the huge contribution of vaccination to both animal welfare and human health”, says BSAVA President Professor Michael Day, who is also Chairman of the WSAVA One Health Committee (OHC).

The WSAVA One Health initiative, supported by BSAVA, includes a focus on zoonotic infectious diseases where companion animals play an integral role in transmission, or act as reservoirs of infection. A major example is canine rabies virus infection.

Globally, there is an estimated minimum of 50,000 human deaths from rabies each year, the majority of them children – and this is one of the most important zoonotic diseases where the veterinary profession can have a significant impact.

BSAVA supports the WSAVA’s Vaccination Guidelines Group (VGG), also chaired by Professor Day. The World Health Organisation says that mass canine vaccination programmes are the most effective measure for controlling rabies, and the VGG has been working with vets across Asia to establish effective national canine vaccination programmes. The WSAVA OHC also supports the Afya Serengeti Project in Tanzania by helping promote canine vaccination in rural villages through its innovative ‘collar and wrist band’ campaign, which provides dog collars and matching wrist bands to incentivise village communities to have their dogs vaccinated.

Both BSAVA and the WSAVA Foundation have also got on board with the ambitious Mission Rabies project, organised by Luke Gamble’s charity Worldwide Veterinary Service (WVS) and supported by Dogs Trust and Davies Veterinary Specialists. WVS has pledged to vaccinate 50,000 dogs in selected rabies hotspots in India in just one month for the launch of the project which will target 2 million
animals over three years, with the vaccination campaigns running in parallel with education of local small animal practitioners. WSAVA President, Jolle Kirpensteijn, says “supporting these important rabies vaccination initiatives in Africa and Asia are key activities in our new global outreach programme”.

As BSAVA President, Michael Day is keen for the Association to have an increasing international outlook; “We have achieved great things in advancing scientific knowledge, particularly in terms of vaccination, and as a profession we have become a leader in veterinary medicine in the UK; so it is our responsibility to share that knowledge for the good of animal welfare and in turn contribute to better human health across the world”.

Notes for Editors
For more information about BSAVA visit www.bsava.com or contact Kay Colquhoun – k.colquhoun@bsava.com. Tel: 01452 726718
For more information on the WSAVA visit www.wsava.org or contact Rebecca George - rebecca@georgepr.com, Tel: 01449 737281/07974 161108
For more information about Mission Rabies visit www.wvs.org.uk

Images
(1) BSAVA President Professor Michael Day
(2) Dr Gabriel Varga (WSAVA Foundation), Luke Gamble (WVS) and Professor Michael Day (BSAVA) with the Mission Rabies truck at BSAVA Congress