Press Information

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WSAVA Calls for Co-ordinated Action on World Rabies Day

The World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) has added its voice to experts around the world who are linking up to celebrate World Rabies Day on 28 September. The organization, which represents 180,000 veterinarians globally through 94 member associations, is calling for a co-ordinated global initiative to eliminate rabies. Efforts to control the disease, which kills a child every hour in countries such as India and causes countless animal deaths, is estimated to cost $70 billion annually.

The WSAVA's One Health Committee has rabies as its key focus and is already active, having launched a dog collar and wristband campaign last year as part of an on-going control programme in Africa. Through its charitable foundation, the WSAVA Foundation, it is also supporting Mission Rabies, a WVS-led project to eliminate the disease in some regions of India.

On 5 and 6 November 2013, it is holding a major symposium in Paris in conjunction with the World Organisation of Animal Health (OIE). During the event, experts will explore strategies to control and eradicate the disease, discussing successful case studies and aiming to stimulate new approaches to prevention and treatment.

WSAVA President Professor Jolle Kirpensteijn comments: "While many vaccines are available to prevent rabies and much good work is already being done, for instance, by the Mission Rabies team, there is as yet no effective global concerted bid to eliminate this dreadful disease. This must change for major steps forward to be taken.
The WSAVA's One Health Committee is working closely with other global stakeholders and our Symposium in November will mark a major milestone as we come together to pool our resources and expertise.

World Rabies Day is a day on which we can reflect on the progress which has undoubtedly been made - but also remind ourselves of the importance and urgency of the major task which still lies ahead. If human and veterinary physicians work together within the One Health movement, I firmly believe that rabies could be the next infectious disease to be eliminated from our planet."

For further information on the WSAVA/OIE Symposium visit  www.wsavaonehealth.com.

The World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) is an umbrella organization representing 180,000 veterinarians globally through 94 member associations.

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The WSAVA One Health Committee with kind sponsorship of MSD Animal Health has produced 30,000 dog collars and wrist bands for use in the 2013 Afya Serengeti vaccination campaign in Tanzania. The collars provide confirmation that individual dogs have been vaccinated and the wrist bands incentivize villagers to bring the dogs for vaccination.

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