

IFAH COMMENDS WORLD VETERINARY DAY FOR RAISING AWARENESS OF VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES

Brussels, 23 April 2015 -

The International Federation for Animal Health (IFAH) has commended World Veterinary Day (Saturday 25th April), which was created to highlight the lifesaving work performed by vets around the globe, for raising awareness of vector-borne diseases (VBDs) with zoonotic potential.

Carel du Marchie Sarvaas, IFAH Executive Director, says: “We’re delighted that this year’s World Veterinary Day theme will highlight the issues caused by vector-borne diseases. VBDs is a topic that IFAH has had a strong focus on for the last 12 months, acknowledging the significant and growing potential for these diseases to affect both animal and human health.”

In 2014, IFAH produced an industry-first white paper ‘[The growing threat of vector-borne disease in humans and animals](#)’ with support from The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. This formed the basis of a roundtable discussion, where a group of world experts from all areas regarding vector-borne diseases considered the [key challenges](#) that prevent these diseases from being tackled effectively.

As a result of this discussion, a smaller taskforce has agreed to work together to further consider one specific challenge identified in tackling VBDs, as identified at the roundtable. The kick-off meeting for this activity is taking place in June, with the intention of developing a robust plan of action that will deliver a measurable positive impact.

Vector-borne diseases currently account for 17% of the global burden of all infectious diseases. Taken as a group, vector-borne diseases are responsible for high levels of morbidity in human populations throughout the world, economic losses in production animals and reduced animal welfare. For example, Trypanosomiasis (in humans; African sleeping sickness) affects 36 sub-Saharan African countries, with over 17,000 human cases reported annually and accounting for

IFAH

Representing the Animal Health Industry

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cattle production losses of up to 1.2 billion dollars a year. African sleeping sickness is considered fatal without treatment.

“It is essential that everyone appropriate involved in human and animal health tackle vector-borne diseases collaboratively and head on, to prevent further devastation and loss of life where we can. This is what IFAH hopes to facilitate,” Carel concludes.

-ENDS-

Notes for editors

IFAH

The International Federation for Animal Health (IFAH) is an organisation representing manufacturers of veterinary medicines, vaccines and other animal health products in both developed and developing countries across five continents. The mission of IFAH is to foster a greater understanding of animal health matters and promote a predictable, science-based regulatory environment that facilitates the supply of innovative and quality animal medicines, vaccines and other animal health products into a competitive market place. These products contribute to a healthy and safe food supply as well as a high standard of health and welfare for animals and people.

For further information on IFAH, please visit www.ifahsec.org

IFAH can also be found on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/Health4Animals>.

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