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## News Release

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### **Bayer supports infectious disease surveillance program for companion animals in Africa**

- Bayer is the major sponsor of an African infectious disease surveillance program aimed at providing novel data on the prevalence and distribution of ectoparasites and arthropod-borne infectious diseases in dogs and cats
- This study will produce an extensive database and valuable biobank of samples for future research
- The new AFSCAN project will provide disease distribution maps for Africa, giving veterinary practitioners a valuable tool for control and prevention of these diseases

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**Monheim, January 28, 2019** – The African Small Companion Animal Network (AFSCAN), a project of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association's (WSAVA) charitable foundation, has launched a significant new sub-Saharan infectious disease surveillance program. With Bayer Animal Health as the major sponsor, the program will provide novel data on the prevalence and distribution of ectoparasites and arthropod-borne infectious diseases of dogs and cats across six sub-Saharan African countries and will run throughout 2019.

“We are very grateful to Bayer Animal Health for providing this exciting opportunity for the African companion animal veterinary community”, commented Emeritus Professor Michael J. Day, the project leader and a member of the AFSCAN and WSAVA Foundation Boards and WSAVA Honorary Treasurer. “There is almost no fundamental knowledge about the most important arthropod-borne infectious diseases in dogs and cats in Africa, some of which are zoonotic in nature.”

As a world leader in parasiticides, Bayer has continuously invested in research into vector-borne diseases to help protect dogs and cats around the world from these infections. Increasing research output, facilitated by expert groups such as the Companion Vector Borne Diseases (CVBD) World Forum, has led to the development of

distribution and prevalence data for companion animal ectoparasites and CVBDs in many parts of the world, including North America and Europe. However, approximately 25% of the world's population lives on the African continent. According to WSAVA, there is a major knowledge gap, particularly for the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

“This study will help us strengthen our knowledge in this region”, said Dr. Markus Edingloh, Head of Global Veterinary Scientific Affairs at Bayer Animal Health. “Arthropod-borne infectious diseases are serious conditions that can be transmitted to both humans and animals. It is vital for veterinary practitioners to be equipped with the latest data to prescribe appropriate prevention to support the health and well-being of companion animals.”

The infectious disease surveillance 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 an ectoparasite preventive campaign coordinated by the investigator.

Emeritus Professor Day is convinced that the study will not only produce an extensive database and valuable biobank of samples for future research, but also a real added value for the veterinarians. “This project will provide disease distribution maps for Africa, helping veterinarians to manage the control and prevention of these infections in veterinary practice.”

To find out more about the infectious disease surveillance program for companion animals in Africa please visit: <http://afscan.org> Veterinarians can view the latest knowledge on CVBDs at: [www.CVBD.org](http://www.CVBD.org).

### **About Companion Vector-Borne Diseases (CVBD)**

Companion vector-borne diseases (CVBDs) are a growing international public health threat. These diseases are transmitted by blood-feeding ectoparasites, including ticks (e.g. Lyme disease, babesiosis, anaplasmosis, and ehrlichiosis), fleas (e.g. canine bartonellosis and feline rickettsiosis), and sand flies (leishmaniasis). They are known to veterinarians and public health professionals throughout the world and in some cases have also shown zoonotic consequences.

## **About African Small Companion Animal Network (AFSCAN)**

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.

## **About Bayer**

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