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News Release

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Veterinary Experts Highlight the Growing Concern of Canine Vector-Borne Diseases (CVBD™)

Participants at CVBD World Forum Call for Greater Awareness and Prevention of Parasitic Diseases Affecting Dogs and Humans

[April 15, 2010, New York] – Leading global experts in veterinary medicine, human medicine, and parasitology have outlined the growing threat of canine vector-borne diseases (CVBD) and the impact these diseases have on canine and human health at the 5th Annual CVBD Symposium in New York City.

The CVBD Symposium, sponsored by the CVBD World Forum, includes veterinary and human experts hailing from the U.S., UK, France, Italy, Germany, Portugal, Brazil and Korea.

Scientific data presented at the meeting cited global animal movement and climate as major contributors to the increase in parasites, bacteria, and viruses spread by ticks, fleas, mosquitoes and sand flies. Among the more prevalent and virulent of these are *Borrelia spp.* (Lyme Disease), *Rickettsia rickettsii* (Rocky Mountain spotted fever), *Bartonella spp.* (Bartonellosis or

Cat Scratch Fever), *Ehrlichia spp.* (Ehrlichiosis), *D. Immitis* (Heartworm Disease) and *Leishmania spp.* (Leishmaniasis).

In the U.S., veterinary researchers are finding an increase in CVBD in geographic areas not typically associated with the diseases. This increase is a growing concern to experts because U.S. veterinarians generally have limited experience in CVBD diagnosis, prevention and treatment.

“Vector-borne diseases once considered exotic or unusual are now commonly found in well-populated areas,” said Edward Breitschwerdt, DVM, professor at North Carolina State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine. “Veterinarians are often the first responders, from a public health perspective, to see evidence of the geographic spread, but may not recognize the symptoms or fully understand the public health ramifications of these diseases.”

As CVBD becomes a growing concern in the U.S., patient case studies (animal and human) were the focus of many of the Symposium’s host country presenters.

Michael Lappin, DVM, Ph.D., professor at Colorado State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, ascribes an increase in the diagnosis of vector-borne agents in the Rocky Mountain region to the relocation of dogs from other areas of the U.S. and increased surveillance. Said Dr. Lappin, “CVBD remains unfamiliar to some veterinarians throughout the U.S. and it is essential that every veterinarian in the country have appropriate CVBD on his or her differential list based on the presenting complaint, geographical location, and travel history.”

“In the last 20 years, we have gone from two known *Bartonella* species to 22,” said Dr. Breitschwerdt who presented the case of a father, employed as a veterinarian, and his daughter who were each co-infected with types of *Bartonella*. “Because we have seen an increase in the types of vectors transmitting these bacteria, we are beginning to recognize the human impact of bartonellosis. It is imperative that we increase the use of preventative methods for not only this disease, but all vector-borne diseases,” said Dr. Breitschwerdt.

In addition to research from the U.S., data and cases from Europe, South America and Asia were also presented at this year's Symposium, including those on key CVBD issues such as pet mobility, environment and climate, and co-infection.

“As we look at all the data from the CVBD Symposium, the need for increased disease prevention was the clear outcome,” said Cristiano von Simson, DVM, director of veterinary technical services at Bayer Animal Health, the supporter of the CVBD World Forum. “For veterinarians who regularly see dogs with these vector-borne diseases, it is important that they remain vigilant in educating pet owners on the importance of prevention. And, for those who are not yet diagnosing many dogs with these diseases, we hope that they become better-versed in the prevention of CVBD and that they become alert to the signs and symptoms of these potentially lethal diseases.”

For more information on canine vector-borne diseases and the CVBD World Forum, please visit CVBD.org.

About The CVBD World Forum

The CVBD World Forum is a working group of leading experts in natural sciences, veterinary and human medicine from Europe, North America, Latin America, Australia and Asia. It was founded during the 1st International CVBD Symposium in April 2006 in Billesley, UK, as a consequence of the increasing global threats through canine vector-borne diseases (CVBD). The main goal of the CVBD World Forum is to exchange knowledge and findings about ectoparasite-pathogen-host interaction as well as the characterisation and assessment of the distribution of pathogens and vectors in order to increase awareness for the specific regional risks of CVBD and to foster preventative measures. This work is supported by Bayer HealthCare, Animal Health Division.

About Bayer Animal Health

Bayer HealthCare, a subsidiary of Bayer AG, is one of the world's leading, innovative companies in the healthcare and medical products industry and is based in Leverkusen, Germany. The company combines the global activities of the Animal Health, Consumer Care,

Diabetes Care and Pharmaceuticals divisions. The pharmaceuticals business operates under the name Bayer Schering Pharma AG. Bayer HealthCare's aim is to discover and manufacture products that will improve human and animal health worldwide. With sales of EUR 977 million (2009) the Animal Health Division is one of the world's leading manufacturers of veterinary drugs. The division manufactures and markets approximately 100 different veterinary drugs and care products for food-supplying animals and companion animals (dogs, cats, horses).

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