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World Veterinary Day to highlight role of veterinarians in society

- FVE holds photo competition -

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“This year, World Veterinary Day, an initiative of the World Veterinary Association, will be celebrated on **April 25**. *It will be the occasion to highlight the need for an integrated approach of veterinary and human medicine*, said Walter Winding, president of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), referring to the One Health policy promoted by FVE. *“Veterinarians play a pivotal role between animals, their owners and society*, he reminded. *However, this role is not confined to animal health, but also animal welfare and public health, including food safety.”*

To highlight ‘World Veterinary Day’, FVE will be holding a **photo competition** with the theme **“Veterinarians and animal owners, a winning partnership”**. The competition will be judged in two separate categories (vets and farmers/farm animals; vets and pet animal owners/pet animals). For further information, please visit the [FVE website](#).

Dr. Winding is encouraging practitioners to use the occasion of World Veterinary Day to promote the profession, by *“holding open-door days, visiting schools, and showing to clients and the public at large how veterinarians touch everyone’s lives – on a daily basis. Vets can for instance use the ‘Blue dog’ project to teach children and their parents how to prevent dog bites”*.

“Not everyone is aware that veterinary epidemiologists and state veterinary officers are for example combating avian influenza, helping to make sure it does not become a pandemic. Veterinary researchers are investigating human and animal health, while veterinary hygienists make sure our food is safe and healthy”, Dr. Winding added.

Avian influenza, MRSA, West Nile Fever... the **One Health** approach is needed now more than ever, as 60% of human pathogens and 75% of emerging diseases are zoonoses (diseases transmissible between animal and man).

‘One Health’ (healthy animals = healthy people) was also the motto of the first EU Veterinary Week campaign launched last November. Fruit of a close collaboration between the EU Directorate-General Health and Consumer Protection (DG Sanco), the FVE and farmer’s representatives (CopaCogeca), stressing the important role of the veterinarian in animal and public health.

‘Biosecurity’, the theme of the last EU Veterinary Week, is perfectly in line with that of the 2009 World Veterinary Day: ‘Veterinarians and livestock farmers, a winning partnership’. *“It is of vital importance that veterinarians and farmers draw up good herd health plans together for an optimal biosecurity, protecting animals, the public – and society at large”*, Dr Winding commented.

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Notes for editors:

1. World Veterinary Day was instigated by the World Veterinary Association to be celebrated annually on the last Saturday of April. In 2008, the WVA and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) agreed on the creation of the World Veterinary Day Award aimed at rewarding the most successful celebration of the veterinary profession by national veterinary associations, alone, or in cooperation with any other selected veterinary body. http://www.oie.int/downld/announcement-FINAL_EN.pdf
2. The Blue dog project is a project developed to teach young children and their parents how to prevent dog bites. It works via an interactive CD and a parent guide. For more info see: <http://www.thebluedog.org/>
3. The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) is an umbrella organisation of 44 veterinary organisations from 38 European countries, representing a total of around 200 000 veterinarians.

For further information, consult the FVE website <http://www.fve.org> or contact the FVE Secretariat on tel +32 2 533 70 20 or by e-mail to info@fve.org