



Paradigm shift in the role of parasites

21st WAAVP conference in Ghent, Belgium

Leverkusen, September 10, 2007 – Partnership, commitment, and persistency: What seemed to be the winning ingredients of the Bayer team's running relay race at the 21st International WAAVP Conference (World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology) from August 19-23 in Ghent, Belgium, also worked well for the community of parasitologists.

The scientific impact of Bayer HealthCare, Animal Health, at the congress was great: One symposium, ten lectures and 23 posters by internal and external experts proved the company's remarkable efforts and commitment for research and development. At the conference it became clear that modern science sees a paradigm shift in the understanding of the role of parasites and their hosts. Today, ectoparasites like fleas, ticks, mosquitoes or sand flies are more in focus because of their ability to function as vectors for the transmission of pathogens, than for their bloodsucking parasitism. Most prominent in this regard are the so called canine vector-borne diseases (CVBD), including life-threatening parasite-transmitted infections such as anaplasmosis, borreliosis, babesiosis, ehrlichiosis, leishmaniosis and dirofilariosis. Partially zoonotic, CVBD are a common threat to dogs in almost every part of the world.

Parasite-transmitted infections were intensively discussed during the Bayer Symposium. Prof. Dwight D. Bowman, Cornell University, USA, highlighted the spreading of the mosquito-transmitted heartworm disease in the United States, which has only taken about 50 years to engulf the entire 50 states of the country. Dr. Volkhart Kempf from the University of Tuebingen in



Germany talked about the increasing relevance of *Bartonella* bacteria transmitted by fleas, lice and probably ticks from the perspective of a medical doctor. *Bartonella* as an infectious agent is widely underestimated, causing infections in cats, dogs and also humans. A solution to these threats was provided by Prof. Domenico Otranto, University of Bari, Italy, displaying a major Italian field trial and demonstrating that Bayer's spot-on ectoparasiticide Advantix[®] was effective to prevent canine leishmaniosis by virtue of its repelling effect on the transmitting sand flies.

To customize the scientific outcomes of WAAVP for practicing veterinarians and scientists, Bayer supported special issues of the journals Veterinary Parasitology and Parasitology Research. On top of its conference engagement, Bayer assisted WAAVP in the recognition of important parasitologists. This year's winner of the WAAVP Bayer Award for Excellence in Services to Veterinary Parasitology is the Australian parasitologist Dr. Peter Holdsworth, who has been recognized for his achievements in the generation and harmonization of test guidelines for parasiticides in veterinary medicine. Among many other activities, Dr. Holdsworth is an active member of the VICH (International Cooperation on Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Registration of Veterinary Medicinal Products). The award, sponsored by the company and endowed with US\$ 10,000, was handed over by Dr. Klemens Krieger, Head of Clinical Research and Parasiticide Development at Bayer Animal Health.

According to Dr. Norbert Mencke, Director of Global Veterinary Services at Bayer Health Care, Animal Health, "the WAAVP conference underscored Bayer's engagement and responsibility in the field of veterinary parasitology. The exchange of scientific knowledge and inspiring ideas with the scientific world are the key to meet the future challenges regarding animal health. The next WAAVP conference to be held 2009 in Calgary, Canada, will hopefully provide even more munitions for the ongoing battle against parasitic diseases in animal and man."

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