



News Release

3rd International CVBD Symposium in Wiesbaden, Germany

Disease-transmitting parasites: Repel what you cannot control

Wiesbaden, April 21, 2008 – “Using repellents remains the best prophylactic measure for dogs against the increasing global threat of parasite-transmitted infectious diseases.” This statement from **Dr. Jean-Pierre Dedet**, University of Montpellier, France, summarizes the discussions of 36 experts in natural sciences, veterinary and human medicine from Europe, North America and Asia during the 3rd International CVBD (canine vector-borne diseases) Symposium in Wiesbaden, Germany. The members of the CVBD World Forum spent two days discussing current scientific data and future developments. They agreed that current guidelines for registration of ectoparasiticides in the veterinary field, however, do not fully reflect the common knowledge about threats posed by disease-transmitting arthropod vectors.

The term CVBD refers to parasite-transmitted infectious diseases of the dog. Many of them affect humans as well. Apart from sand flies and mosquitoes, ticks have been proven to be the most dangerous transmitters. Climate change as well as a higher mobility of humans and their four-legged companions have enabled parasites to increase their geographical spread.

Being a major zoonotic disease endemic in more than 70 countries in the world (recently even found in the US), canine leishmaniosis was the predominant topic in this year’s symposium on CVBD. According to seroprevalence studies from Italy, Spain, France and Portugal, about 2.5 million dogs in these countries are infected. However, many of these dogs do not present any clinical signs. **Dr. Gad Baneth** from the Hebrew University, Rehovot, Israel: “This makes canine leishmaniosis a diagnostic challenge for the veterinary practitioner, clinical



pathologist and public health official in endemic countries as well as in non-endemic regions where imported infection is a concern.”

Has canine leishmaniosis, a disease of warmer regions like the Mediterranean area, become endemic in Germany lately? **Dr. Torsten Naucke** from the German organization “Parasitus Ex”, Niederkassel, reported eleven cases of autochthonous (human/canine/feline/equine) leishmaniosis in Germany since 1991. As a potential vector, sand flies of the species *Phlebotomus mascittii* have been identified. In summer 2007, the northernmost finding ever happened along the river Moselle near Cochem. And in February 2008, winter activity of adult *P. mascittii* in Europe could be proved for the very first time on the island of Corsica. For Dr. Naucke, these are two indicators for an increasing distribution of potential disease-transmitting parasites and their prolonged seasonal activity due to climate change.

In national surveys (1987 and 2004) based on information from veterinary clinics, **Dr. Patrick Bourdeau** from the Ecole Nationale Vétérinaire de Nantes, France, also saw an expansion of leishmaniosis in his country. In 2004, new areas (departments) were found to be infected, especially in the southwest of the country. The number of enzootic departments where clinics have seen more than 50 cases a year increased from 6 areas in 1986 to 12 in 2004. From the latest study, Dr. Bourdeau concludes a national overall prevalence of canine leishmaniosis in France from 1.3 to 9.6 cases per thousand.

In North-Eastern Italy, **Dr. Gioia Capelli** from the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie, Legnaro, tried to fill the informational gap on ticks and tick-borne diseases by collecting and analyzing ticks of the species *Ixodes ricinus*, the vector of – among others – Lyme disease (borreliosis), anaplasmosis and tick-borne encephalitis. Her main purpose was to assess, predict and prevent the risk of human infection. Preliminary results show a huge variety of tick population density and infection rates which highlights the need of assessing the risk of tick-borne diseases on a local basis.

Dr. Barbara Kohn from the Free University of Berlin, Germany, sees anaplasmosis as another “emerging disease” in animals since its vector populations seem to increase continuously. In Europe, seroprevalence for *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* in dogs ranges from 7.5% (Switzerland; for the former *Ehrlichia phagocytophila*) over

22% (Sweden; for granulocytic *Ehrlichia* spp.) to 43-50% (Germany, dependent on the region) and 56.5% (Austria). Regarding clinical signs, the most consistent findings were fever, lethargy or depression, and anorexia, occurring in over 75% of dogs.

Many other highly pertinent topics on a variety of pathogens and vectors for relevant infectious diseases of dog and man were discussed during the 3rd International CVBD Symposium. For **Dr. Norbert Mencke**, Director of Global Veterinary Services at Bayer HealthCare, Animal Health Division, “it was fascinating to see how veterinary and human medicine move together when talking about canine vector-borne diseases. The role of the dog as a reservoir for some human diseases and as a potential sentinel in others is far from clear, but worth studying intensively. When it comes to diagnostics or epidemiology, research in both fields can generate a lot of synergies.”

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, 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 pathogens' and vectors' distribution 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 HealthCare

Bayer HealthCare, a subsidiary of Bayer AG, is one of the world's leading innovative companies in the health care and medical products industry. The company combines the activities of the Animal Health, Consumer Care, Diabetes Care, and Pharmaceuticals divisions. The company's pharmaceuticals business operates under the name Bayer Schering Pharma AG. Bayer HealthCare's aim is to discover, develop, manufacture and market products that will improve human and animal health worldwide.

With sales of EUR 956 million (2007), the Animal Health Division is one of the world's leading manufacturers of veterinary drugs. The division produces and markets approximately 100 different veterinary drugs and care products for food-supplying animals and companion animals.

Contact:

Kerstin Nacken, +49 (0)2173-38 4019

E-Mail: kerstin.nacken@bayerhealthcare.com

We are only one click away – our press service online:

www.viva.vita.bayerhealthcare.com

For further information, see also www.cvbd.org.

Forward-Looking Statements

This news release contains forward-looking statements based on current assumptions and forecasts made by Bayer Group management. Various known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors could lead to material differences between the actual future results, financial situation, development or performance of the company and the estimates given here. These factors include those discussed in our annual and interim reports to the Frankfurt Stock Exchange and in our reports filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (including our Form 20-F). The company assumes no liability whatsoever to update these forward-looking statements or to confirm them to future events or developments.