

# The WSAVA AFSCAN Project: 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of a successful network in Africa

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## SUMMARY

The Foundation of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) began the African Small Companion Animal Network (AFSCAN) project in 2014 with the support of Zoetis and numerous other commercial and Association supporters. AFSCAN was borne of recognition of the need for support and capacity-building for the African small companion animal veterinary community. The countries currently participating in the AFSCAN project are Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda. Small Animal Associations are now being established in the AFSCAN member countries. AFSCAN further offers on-line education to member countries on small companion animal practice. Nevertheless, face-to-face continuing education is also provided by the WSAVA Continuing Education Committee. Member countries have also participated in the rabies Control activities. The clinical research and mobility awards which currently are worthy of US\$ 60,000) have been provided to institutions in Kenya, Nigeria and Tanzania, and seven undergraduate scholarships to veterinary students in Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda. Four BSAVA and four NAVC AFSCAN International Scholarships have been awarded to attend the annual BSAVA and VMX congresses in the UK and Florida. A new programme that will 'twin' veterinarians and veterinary practices in Africa with partners in the USA and Europe will commence shortly. With support from Bayer Animal Health and Idexx Laboratories a major new AFSCAN research programme on canine and feline ectoparasites and arthropod-borne infectious diseases is about to commence.

**Key words:** AFSCAN, WSAVA, companion animals, veterinary practices

## INTRODUCTION

The Foundation of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) began the African Small Companion Animal Network (AFSCAN) project in 2014 with the support of Zoetis and numerous other commercial and Association supporters. AFSCAN has four 'pillars' of activity and over the past four years, we have made considerable progress on each of these with a great support of national AFSCAN Ambassadors. The project was borne of recognition of the need for support and capacity-building for the African small companion animal veterinary community. The countries currently participating in the AFSCAN project are Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda. The four pillars of AFSCAN are:

1. Assisting in the establishment of National Small Companion Animal Veterinary Associations to the point where these associations can become full members of the WSAVA global community;
2. Providing accessible on-line continuing education to the members of these new associations;
3. Encouraging and supporting initiatives by the associations for canine rabies control programmes in each country
4. Fostering development of academic companion animal clinical research by the award of clinical research grants, undergraduate studentships, supporting mobility through the new twinning programme and the BSAVA and NAVC AFSCAN International Scholarship programmes

### **Association Building**

Small Animal Associations are now being established in the AFSCAN countries and thus far those from Kenya and Nigeria have achieved WSAVA membership. Zambia has independently become an affiliate member of WSAVA in 2018.

### **On-line Education.**

With the support of Vetstream, members of the national associations have been provided with subsidized access to digital content related to small companion animal practice.

Face-to-face continuing education is still primarily provided by the WSAVA Continuing Education Committee. However, when an AFSCAN Board Meeting is held in conjunction with a National Veterinary Association Congress, Board members have provided lectures at no cost to these Associations.

### **Rabies Control**

A number of the National Associations have participated in or organized canine rabies control activities. The WSAVA Foundation continues to provide support to Mission Rabies for its programmes in Malawi, Tanzania and Ghana.

### **Clinical Research and Mobility**

AFSCAN has now made six clinical research awards (total of above US\$ 60,000) to institutions in Kenya, Nigeria and Tanzania. Seven undergraduate scholarships were awarded to veterinary students in Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda. Four BSAVA and four NAVC AFSCAN International Scholarships have been awarded, allowing those individuals to attend the annual BSAVA and VMX congresses in the UK and Florida.

In addition, a new programme that will 'twin' veterinarians and veterinary practices in Africa with partners in the United States of America (USA) and Europe is also planned. With support from Bayer Animal Health and Idexx Laboratories a major new AFSCAN research programme on canine and feline ectoparasites and arthropod-borne infectious diseases is about to commence. Veterinary parasitologists from the six AFSCAN countries have been appointed to collect fleas and ticks and blood samples from dogs and cats in different urban and rural geographical areas from each country for central analysis and compilation of a surveillance database.

### **REFERENCES**

Further information about AFSCAN may be found at: <http://www.afscan.org/> and [www.wsavafoundation.org](http://www.wsavafoundation.org)