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Date

Dear (media contact)

We are writing in connection with a current marketing campaign by Intervet, a veterinary vaccine manufacturer, supported by veterinarians throughout the UK. The campaign – National Vaccination Month – promotes the vaccination of dogs, cats and rabbits and is to run throughout June.

We are concerned that, within the promotion, animals can be given a full ‘restart’ vaccine series for the price of a booster. For example, dogs whose vaccines have not been boosted within the last eighteen months are offered a full puppy series for the price of a normal booster. This seems to imply that if a pet is six months ‘overdue’ on its annual booster, they have to start again.

We, the undersigned, query the science and safety of such a promotion, refute the need for annual vaccination, and call for the proper education of vets in practice so that animals are not needlessly subjected to potential vaccine reactions. We also call for long-overdue legislation in this matter from the British government.

**Pet vaccines are effective for at least seven years, and probably for life**

The World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA), the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA), and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) have announced publicly that annual vaccination is neither necessary nor without harm. These pronouncements are based upon the known and current science, namely that dogs and cats, once immune to viral disease, are immune for years or life. No added protection is conferred by re-vaccination. These statements are supported by scientific duration of immunity studies.

We must point out that the veterinary associations named above, by publicly announcing that annual vaccination is unnecessary, are potentially significantly reducing the booster income of their members, and so they would not make these pronouncements lightly.

These organisations recommend that “vaccines should not be given needlessly”.

**The government fails to act**

The British government, through the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) and the Veterinary Products Committee, has allowed veterinary vaccine manufacturers to hide behind licenses that require only minimum duration of immunity studies. Thus, for years, the manufacturers have been facilitated to sell unnecessary and potentially

harmful annual boosters simply because annual boosters haven't been tested for longer by manufacturers. This is despite the work that has been done internationally by independent scientists, and despite correspondence with the VMD and successive Defra Ministers to alert them to the known science. Latterly, a few of the veterinary vaccine manufacturers have licensed their products for three years – but even this is an arguable practice, since independent studies show that the MLV vaccines protect for many years longer.

As a result, vets in practice routinely encourage clients to bring their pets for unnecessary annual boosters. The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, as well as the British Small Animal Veterinary Association, appear to do nothing to educate their members with regard to the known duration of immunity for viral vaccines.

Similarly, insurance companies and boarding kennels frequently demand that animals are vaccinated yearly, despite the fact that this practice is neither necessary nor safe. Kennels, in turn, are forced by local councils to demand proof of annual vaccination from pet owners. Councils, who grant licenses to kennels, are themselves advised by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

Pet owners are therefore forced from several directions, despite the known science, to subject their pets to unnecessary vaccine risks.

### **The science**

The WSAVA guidelines recommend: “We should aim to vaccinate every animal, and to vaccinate each individual less frequently.” These international guidelines also recommend that, “we should aim to reduce the ‘vaccine load’ on individual animals in order to minimise the potential for adverse reactions to vaccine products”.

The WSAVA guidelines advise that dogs properly vaccinated with MLV core CDV, CPV-2 and CAV-2 vaccines (distemper, parvovirus and adenovirus) “would have 98% protection from disease. Similarly we would expect a very high protection from infection”. They recommend that dogs should not be vaccinated more frequently than every three years, but that immunity to viral disease lasts for at least seven years, but probably for life. This is based on direct challenge studies, and on serology.

It should be noted that a small percentage of the dog population, notably amongst the black and tan breeds, are unable to acquire immunity, whether or not they are vaccinated. Neither does it matter how many times you vaccinate these dogs – they just don't acquire immunity.

The WSAVA guidelines also define non-core vaccines, which are “those that are required by only those animals whose geographical location, local environment or lifestyle places them at risk of contracting specific infections. For example, dogs boarded at kennels may need additional vaccination for kennel cough. However, given the possibility of adverse reaction to vaccination, pet owners should consult with their veterinarian to assess risk-benefit ratios, and consider very carefully if their pet actually needs any non-core vaccines.”

According to the Fact Sheets for the WSAVA Dog and Cat Vaccination Guidelines, duration of immunity after vaccination with MLV core vaccines is **7 years or longer**, based on challenge and serological studies, for Canine Parvovirus Type 2 (CPV-2), Canine Adenovirus (CAV-2) and Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) vaccines.

The WSAVA guidelines also note: “Most vaccinated dogs will have a persistence of serum antibody (against core vaccine antigens) for many years. For core vaccines there is excellent correlation between the presence of antibody and protective immunity and there is long DOI (duration of immunity) for these products.”

Dr Ronald D Schultz, head of pathobiology at Wisconsin University, and the man behind the DOI studies, has stated that, in his view, dogs can be considered safe if vaccinated as puppies and then once after the age of six months of age, at which time their immune systems are mature. They need not be vaccinated again. Dr Schultz does not support the use of the Leptospirosis vaccine (deemed a non-core vaccine), as it is known to be ineffective and comes with the most severe adverse reactions.

When pet owners over-vaccinate their pets, they spend their money unnecessarily and they are frequently then required to spend even more money dealing with the after-effects of unnecessary vaccinations. Money, of course, is not the main point: human beings are making dogs and cats ill, and promoting early death.

### **Vaccine damage**

We attach an article which gives scientific references with regard to vaccine adverse events.

Vaccines are known to cause vaccinated dogs (but not non-vaccinated dogs) to develop autoantibodies to their own DNA (Larry Glickman et al, Purdue University). This means that vaccines cause dogs to attack their own genetic blueprint. Each time we vaccinate, we risk introducing further genetic defects into dogs, which are passed down the line.

Vaccines are known to cause T cell immunodeficiencies, which are also inheritable and associated with heart disease. Combine T cell immunodeficiencies with B cell immunodeficiencies (which are also inheritable), then you have animals which are predisposed to respond to vaccines with inflammatory/allergic and immune-mediated conditions like dermatitis, arthritis, epilepsy, brain damage, digestive problems, and cancer.

It is well known by the veterinary profession that cats are prone to vaccine-site sarcomas, but few vets seem to be aware of the research which shows that dogs also develop vaccine site sarcomas (Journal of Veterinary Medicine, August 2003). Ferrets do, too.

Vaccines are also known, and accepted, to cause encephalitis – inflammation of the brain (Merck Manual). Encephalitis is a spectrum disease. It can be mild and invisible, all the way through to brain damage and death. It is a symptom of, or a word used to describe, the inflammation that is a known sequel to vaccination.

Epilepsy is also a symptom of encephalitis, and around one in every hundred dogs in the UK is epileptic.

Other studies show that vaccines can cause arthritis; others that vaccines can cause diabetes; others that vaccines can cause autoimmune haemolytic anaemia. Paresis (paralysis of one or more limbs) is a sequel to encephalitis, which is an acknowledged vaccine reaction.

Therefore, on two counts, unnecessary vaccination should not be promoted or legally acceptable. Financially it is unjustified, and it is potentially harmful to the animals

who are needlessly vaccinated. Blood (titer) tests also exist to determine circulating antibody, and these are a safer option for vets to offer.

Yours faithfully

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