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*Protecting People, Pets and Livestock - Yesterday, Today and Always.*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **ALVMA Celebrates The Year of the Veterinarian**

April 22, 2013

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MONTGOMERY, Ala.** - The Alabama Veterinary Medical Association is pleased to be a part of the national celebration which honors the profession of veterinary medicine. Last month, Governor Robert Bentley signed a proclamation making 2013 "The Year of the Veterinarian" in conjunction with the American Veterinary Medical Association's 150th birthday. Additionally, April 27, 2013 is World Veterinary Day, an annual celebration of the veterinary profession.

"This proclamation recognizes the role veterinarians have played in medicine to advance both animal and human health," says ALVMA President Bill Allen, D.V.M. "We are honored to receive this proclamation in recognition of our profession."

The proclamation acknowledges 150 years of organized veterinary medicine in the United States. Veterinarians have played an integral role in discovering diseases and providing valuable public health services through preventive medicine. The scope of veterinary medicine has expanded to include artificial joints, bone plates, splints and arthroscopy. Veterinarians provide crucial support to our nation's military service, national disaster relief efforts, and protecting the quality and security of our national food supply. Veterinarians are dedicated to preserving the human-animal bond and promoting the highest standards of science-based, ethical animal welfare.

World Veterinary Day falls on the last Saturday of April each year. The theme for this year is vaccination. Vaccinating animals protects both animals and people from the spread of disease. The ALVMA encourages all citizens to keep their pets disease free by keeping them updated on their vaccinations and providing them the care they deserve. In addition to Rabies, other vaccinations that are highly recommended for dogs are Parvovirus, Distemper, and Canine Hepatitis. Depending on your dog's lifestyle, your veterinarian may recommend other vaccinations as well. Core feline vaccinations include feline Panleukopenia, Feline Calicivirus, Feline Rhinotracheitis (also known as Feline Herpesvirus) and Rabies. Cat owners should be aware of Feline Leukemia Virus, which cats are most vulnerable to as kittens. Core equine vaccinations protect your horses from Tetanus, Eastern/Western Equine Encephalomyelitis, West Nile Virus and Rabies.

Preventive care is key in keeping illness at bay and pet medical costs at a minimum. Heartworm prevention is a must in Alabama. If your pet is not currently on heartworm preventative, it should be tested before resuming medication. Administering heartworm preventative to a pet with heartworms can be deadly. Regular checkups will help ensure most medical conditions are caught early. Pets need to be treated for fleas and ticks to avoid illnesses such as Lyme disease. Proper dental care will avoid problems with tooth decay and infection in the future. Be aware of your pet's diet and nutritional needs. Pet obesity is a growing problem, so be sure your pet gets adequate exercise and the right amount of food.

Pets fill our lives with joy. "Man's Best Friend" in particular plays many significant roles in our society including military and police service, search and rescue, protection, therapy, aid to the disabled, comfort to those who are ill and most of all – a companion. The ALVMA stresses the need for responsible pet ownership which includes regular visits to your veterinarian. Have your pet spayed or neutered; support the spay/neuter program by purchasing a spay/neuter tag to help control the pet population across the state. Our pets provide us with unconditional love. They are always there for us, and we should be there for them. Make sure your pet receives the proper medical attention and preventive care to live a long, healthy life.

Founded in 1907, The Alabama Veterinary Medical Association is comprised of approximately 725 veterinarians from around the state, all committed to protecting People, Pets and Livestock – Yesterday, Today and Always.

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