The World Veterinary Association (WVA) and Brooke will collaborate to create the first-ever global list of essential veterinary medicines for livestock. This will give food production animals such as cattle, pig and poultry, and working animals, such as horses and donkeys, access to better, timelier and more standardised treatment, and helping to prevent future pandemics of zoonotic diseases like COVID-19.

The list will contain basic medicines and vaccinations, selected for their relevance, efficacy and cost-effectiveness that should be available in every country to every veterinarian. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that around two billion people have no access to essential medicines and it is believed the issue is even worse within animal populations. It is the WVA and Brooke’s aim that no veterinarian should be equipped with the knowledge and skills, but not the medicines to relieve pain and suffering.

WHO created the first list of essential human medicines in 1977, and the list is updated every two years to reflect the latest knowledge and developments in the industry. Human health is closely intertwined with the health of animals. Animal products form a crucial part of billions of people’s diets and livelihoods and veterinarians are responsible for ensuring those products are safe. In low and middle-income countries, in particular, people live and work in such proximity to animals that pathogens can easily travel from species to species, as illustrated by pandemics of zoonotic diseases such as COVID-19, avian influenza, or SARS. We know that up to 75% of emerging diseases and up to 60% of infectious human diseases are of animal origin. Therefore, preventing disease in animals through vaccination and quality health care is essential for human health.

Dr Patricia Turner, President of the WVA, said: “This is a highly significant and long overdue project. By the end of it, regulatory authorities and governments around the world will have guidance as to which medicines and therapeutics all veterinary professionals should have in their kit to fulfil their day-to-day responsibilities. As a result, animals and people alike will enjoy better health and wellbeing, ultimately, improving community prosperity.”

Dr Shereene Williams, Global Animal Health Advisor at Brooke said: “In our work across Africa, Asia and Latin America, we work with more than 4,000 veterinarians and veterinary paraprofessionals, many of whom do not have access to essential medicines. In Ethiopia alone, we found that 100% of practitioners did not have access to pain-relieving medicines for animals, and 40% lacked basic supplies such as syringes and needles. This situation makes it impossible for vets to fulfil their professional oath to protect and save animals from pain and disease, it also puts human health at risk.”

The project, which builds on the success of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association’s (WSAVA) list of essential medicines for dogs and cats, will involve consulting with a wide variety of stakeholders across animal health systems to understand the current gaps and needs of animal health practitioners in the field.
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Notes to editor

About Brooke
Brooke is a global animal welfare organisation which uses international development approaches to improve the lives of working livestock and the people who rely on them. One of our objectives is to strengthen animal health systems across the world, which we do through mentoring animal health practitioners, improving access to medicines, as well as research and policy work, such as the Global Burden of Animal Disease and Action for Animal Health.

Website: www.thebrooke.org
Facebook: thebrookecharity
Twitter: @thebrooke
Instagram @thebrookecharity

About The World Veterinary Association (WVA)
The World Veterinary Association unites and represents the global veterinary profession. It is the umbrella organization for National Veterinary Associations and International associations of veterinarians working in different areas of veterinary medicine. The WVA continues the ambition of Dr Gamgee to bring veterinarians from all over the world together, to share experiences, to exchange ideas and to join forces for the promotion.

Website: www.worldvet.org
Facebook: World-Veterinary-Association
Twitter: @WorldVetAssoc