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NEWS RELEASE

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Haiti's Agriculture Minister to discuss animal health infrastructure recovery with Canadian veterinary professionals

OTTAWA — Representatives from the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association's (CVMA), Canadian Veterinary Reserve (CVR) and Canada's Veterinarians without Borders (VWB/VSF) will meet tomorrow in Ottawa with Haiti's Minister of Agriculture, Joanas Gue, to learn how the recent earthquake has impacted Haiti's animal health infrastructure and discuss what Canadian veterinarians can do to assist with both short and long term recovery and development needs.

Haiti's Chargée d'affaires, Nathalie Gissel-Ménos; Jean-M. Robert Chery, member of the Minister's cabinet; and senior representatives, Francois Dagenais and Michael Bedoya, from the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) will also be part of this discussion.

Minister Gue's visit to Canada concludes two weeks of meetings with international governments and organizations interested in supporting the rebuild of Haiti's agricultural and rural sector. IICA has worked with Minister Gue to prepare project profiles which form the basis for that reconstruction. At least 50 per cent of the projects identified will benefit from an improved animal health infrastructure in the country.

"These projects represent a great challenge for the professionals involved in Haiti's agriculture and rural life and will impact 55 per cent of the population," explains Michael Bedoya, IICA's Canadian representative in Ottawa. "We're very pleased with the spontaneous interest in collaborating and leadership shown by the CVMA, CVR and VWB/VSF. We look forward to a continued partnership with these prestigious Canadian institutions of the veterinary profession."

The Canadian Veterinary Reserve, managed and operated by CVMA, is a volunteer membership of veterinarians who are ready to respond to the medical needs of animals in large-scale disasters and emergencies.

"When the earthquake hit Haiti, Reservists were placed on stand-by immediately," says Jost am Rhyn, Executive Director of the CVMA. "Though the Reserve was not called to serve in the immediate response, we're working with the Haitian delegation and our partners at VWB/VSF to determine how we can help with recovery."

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Veterinarians without Borders-Canada has put Canadian expertise and resources to work in more than 25 projects in parts of the world as near as the Canadian Arctic and as far as Laos and Malawi. The organization is committed to helping communities develop locally-defined strategies to promote and maintain public and animal health.

“We are very pleased to be contributing to the rebuilding and strengthening of Haiti’s livestock health capacity and to be working with such capable partners,” says Enid Stiles, VWB/VSF Vice President. “Our strength is in working with communities in a way that fosters long-term change and we are excited to merge our areas of expertise with those of the CVR and IICA.”

Please visit www.vwb-vsfc.ca to donate to the effort to rebuild Haiti’s livestock health capacity.

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The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) is the national voice for the veterinary profession dedicated to serving and representing the veterinarians of Canada. To learn more about CVMA visit www.canadianveterinarians.net.

Veterinarians without Borders-Canada (VWB/VSF) is a Canadian charity dedicated to working for, and with, communities in need to foster the health of animals, people and the environment. To learn more about the VWB/VSF visit www.vwb-vsfc.ca.

The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) is a specialized agency of the Inter-American System. Its purposes are to encourage and support the efforts of its Member States to achieve agricultural development and well-being for rural populations. The Institute’s headquarters is in Costa Rica and it also has offices in 34 countries of the Americas, including Canada. To learn more about the IICA visit www.iicacan.org.

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