

Veterinary Ireland Media Release (Thursday 28th March 2013)



Vets Welcome Minister's Plans for Mandatory Microchipping of All Irish Dogs.

Veterinary Ireland, the representative body for vets, has welcomed the announcement by the Minister for Agriculture to introduce mandatory microchipping for all dogs, allied to a central microchip database.

Commenting on Minister Simon Coveney's announcement in the Dáil on Wednesday 27th March, **Alan Rossiter MVB**, a vet in Greystones, Co. Wicklow and **Past-President of Veterinary Ireland**, said, *"this is fantastic news and something that Veterinary Ireland has been calling on successive governments to introduce for many years"*.

*"Microchip identification is one of the core tenets of **responsible pet ownership**, and Veterinary Ireland is delighted that Minister Coveney has taken this decision to ensure that all dogs must be microchipped. In addition, his commitment to put in place a national microchip database for dogs is particularly welcome as this is the only way to ensure this system will work properly"*, he said.

Mandatory universal microchip identification will ultimately assist in **Animal Welfare** for a number of reasons. A correctly inserted and registered microchip ensures that if a dog gets lost then it can be efficiently and quickly **re-united with its owner**. In addition, if a dog is subject to cruelty or abandonment, **or if a dog attacks a person or livestock**, then the owner can be identified and can be held accountable, up to and including prosecution. Finally, if Ireland ever had an outbreak of **Rabies**, then it would be possible to ensure that all dogs are traceable and can be checked to have been vaccinated against the disease.

Confirming the willingness of the Irish Veterinary Profession to take a lead role in ensuring this system will be a success, Mr Rossiter stated that *"after asking for so long for mandatory microchip identification of all dogs to be introduced, the Irish Veterinary Profession is now ready to step up to the mark to ensure this scheme is a major success."*

Vets have long provided what is effectively a scanning and reunification service for lost or stray animals that are presented to them by concerned members of the public. Vets also help owners check that their pet's microchip is correctly registered to them, thus ensuring the integrity of the system. *"The members of **Veterinary Ireland's Companion Animal Society (VICAS)** deal with a large number of stray pets every week. Minister Coveney can rest assured that the veterinary profession is happy to continue to provide these important services so as to ensure this new mandatory scheme will be a success"*, said Mr Rossiter.

Concluding, Mr. Rossiter stressed the importance to all pet owners of having their pet microchipped, irrespective of it being a legal requirement. *"Veterinary Ireland strongly advises that all pet owners should have their pet microchipped and, in advance of the setting up of the new national database, that they ensure their pet's microchip is correctly registered on a **Europetnet** affiliated database. **Without being correctly registered a microchip is of no use whatsoever**, but if the pet is chipped and correctly registered then owners have a foolproof way of ensuring that they can be reunited with their pet if it becomes **lost or even stolen"**.*

Any owners who wish to have their pet microchipped, or who want to check that their pet's microchip is correctly registered to them, should contact their local vet who will be happy to assist.



Notes to editors

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION VISIT: www.veterinaryireland.ie and www.lovemypet.ie

For further Media Information

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Veterinary Ireland is the representative body for veterinary practitioners in all aspects of Irish veterinary practice.

Members of the **Veterinary Ireland Companion Animal Society (VICAS)** are primarily veterinary practitioners focused on companion animals – pets – and on promoting pet health pet welfare, and responsible pet ownership. VICAS is involved in a number of ongoing Pet Health and Welfare initiatives, including World Animal Week, Spay Aware 2013 and the recently launched on-line initiative, **LoveMyPet.ie**.

Veterinary Ireland is happy to provide appropriately qualified and informed persons to answer questions and to contribute to any debate, in a constructive and reasoned manner.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Microchips used in animal identification are about the size of a grain of rice and carry a unique 15 digit number that can be read by hand-held scanners used in veterinary practices, by dog wardens and in animal rescue centres.

When a pet is microchipped, the microchip's number is registered on a database along with the contact details of the owner.

If a dog is scanned then the number can be read off the scanner, and the owner's identity can be found by entering this number into the database search engine.

A microchip that is not registered on a reputable database is of no use whatsoever.

Veterinary Ireland recommends that microchips are only registered on databases that are affiliated to www.europetnet.com. In Ireland these include www.fido.ie, www.animark.ie, as well as databases run by the IKC and the DSPCA. The Minister for Agriculture has proposed having one central database. This is welcomed by Veterinary Ireland, as it will reduce the possibility confusion and ensure the integrity of the system.