Ketamine is an essential medicine. In many countries, it is the only available anesthetic.

In its November 2015 ruling, the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence advised against placing ketamine under international control. The WSAVA urges the Committee to continue to uphold this latest ruling as its control could limit access to the only anesthetic and pain killer available in large areas of the developing world.

Access to anesthetic and analgesic drugs is imperative to mitigate animal suffering. Ketamine is the most common, affordable and easy-to-use anesthetic agent in veterinary medicine. Its loss would devastate the veterinary care given to exotic, laboratory and wildlife patients.

The WSAVA has formed the Global Pain Council, a group of leading global experts on the management of pain in companion animals.

The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated – Mahatma Gandhi

The dog and cat population is growing most strongly in developing countries where ketamine is often the only available product for pain relief during surgery, including neutering.

In many developing countries, it is the only available product for veterinary anesthesia and analgesia. The loss of ketamine would harm patients and, in some parts of the world, would simply halt surgical treatment. Ketamine is critical to feral dog/cat spay/neuter programs in the developing world. its loss would eliminate these programs which are vital in the quest to stamp out Rabies as a zoonotic disease.

In countries with more than ten million pets, the increase in population varies from 4% to 15%, with the highest increase in India at 21%.

Vets are under oath to prevent and relieve suffering. Access to anesthetic and analgesic drugs is imperative to mitigate animal suffering. Ketamine is the only anesthetic that does not require trained providers, or all who access it is needed simply in developing countries.

The WSAVA is an umbrella organization representing 158,000 veterinarians globally through 96 member associations. Visit www.wsava.org for more information.

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