

World Small Animal Veterinary Association ***Guidelines for Recognition, Assessment and Treatment of Pain***

As a member association of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA), the AVMA is pleased to provide the [WSAVA Guidelines for Recognition, Assessment and Treatment of Pain](http://www.wsava.org/sites/default/files/jsap_0.pdf) as a resource for its member veterinarians. This document can be accessed online at the WSAVA web site at www.wsava.org/sites/default/files/jsap_0.pdf.

The WSAVA *Guidelines for Recognition, Assessment and Treatment of Pain* are intended to be used by a global audience, and U.S. veterinarians must be aware that many of the drugs listed in the WSAVA document may not be commercially available in the United States, or may have dose regimens that are inconsistent with information found in commonly used formularies (e.g., *Plumb's Veterinary Drug Handbook*, 2014 edition). Other drugs listed in the WSAVA *Guidelines* would need to be administered extra-label for use in animals within the U.S. As such:

U.S. veterinarians MUST adhere to the [Animal Medicinal Drug Use Clarification Act \(AMDUCA\)](#) and all other applicable federal and state regulations when applying the WSAVA *Guidelines for Recognition, Assessment and Treatment of Pain* to their own practices.

Although no AVMA document is currently available with the level of detail found within the WSAVA *Guidelines*, the core message of this document is consistent with the [AVMA Animal Welfare Principles](#), [Principles of Veterinary Medical Ethics](#), and [Policy on Pain in Animals](#).

The AVMA notes that the [WSAVA](#) is an international association whose members are national or specialty veterinary associations. Its *Guidelines for Recognition, Assessment and Treatment of Pain* were developed by its Global Pain Council, which was established and charged with the task of developing pain assessment and treatment guidelines having universal relevance, taking into account regional differences in attitude, education and available analgesic modalities. Issues related to these regional differences were recognized by the Global Pain Council and are addressed in a section titled "Use of this document" within the WSAVA *Guidelines for Recognition, Assessment and Treatment of Pain*. Following are two relevant excerpts from this section:

- "There are real regional differences in the availability of various classes of analgesics, specific analgesic products, and the regulatory environment that governs their use."
- "Recognize this document as providing guidelines only, with each situation unique and requiring the individual assessment and therapeutic recommendations that only a licensed veterinarian can provide."

Additionally, although the recommendations for approaches to euthanasia within the WSAVA *Guidelines for Recognition, Assessment and Treatment of Pain* are similar to those outlined in the [AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals](#), there are some inconsistencies. Accordingly, the AVMA recommends that its members and other U.S. veterinarians follow the [AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals](#) rather than euthanasia guidelines outlined in the WSAVA document.

The AVMA reiterates that U.S. veterinarians must adhere to the [Animal Medicinal Drug Use Clarification Act \(AMDUCA\)](#) and all other applicable federal and state regulations when applying the [WSAVA Guidelines for Recognition, Assessment and Treatment of Pain](#) to their own practices.