WSPA, Calvin Ayre Foundation Campaign to end Cruel Bear Farms

Contributed by Thomas Jensen
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The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) is delighted to announce a new partnership with the Calvin Ayre Foundation, which was founded by Saskatchewan-born billionaire Calvin Ayre. WSPA will receive major funding from the Calvin Ayre Foundation for its on-going campaign to end the cruel practice of farming Asian bears for their bile.

"The Calvin Ayre Foundation's support will enable us to sustain and increase our efforts to end the horrific practice of bear bile farming in Asia," said Peter Davies, Director General of WSPA. "This partnership will soon bring significant benefit to the farmed bears that are captive and suffering in Asia, and I very much welcome it."

Animal welfare is one of the Calvin Ayre Foundation's major areas of focus. "We're happy to be teaming up with one of the most well-known animal protection organizations in the world," said Calvin Ayre. "This will be a joint effort to raise the level of international awareness about the intensely cruel practice of bear farming."

Bear bile is believed to have medicinal properties, and since the 1980s bile has been extracted from live bears kept on bear farms. Today, more than 14,000 bears in China, Korea and Vietnam are kept in appalling conditions, in cages no bigger than a telephone booth, while subjected to the excruciating procedure of daily bile extractions. Some bears live this horrific existence for more than 10 years. Most of the bears farmed for bile in Asia are Asiatic black bears, which are an endangered species.

"WSPA and its Member Societies are working throughout Asia on our campaign to end bear bile farming," said Dave Eastham, Head of Wildlife at WSPA. "We have made great progress lobbying the government authorities in Vietnam and Korea already."

For animal welfare reasons alone, WSPA believes that the practice of bear farming should be phased out completely. Its use is also unnecessary because there are a large number of equally effective synthetic and herbal alternatives to bear bile.

"WSPA has the support of many people in the Traditional Medicine community who are working with us to encourage change among consumers in Asia," said Eastham.

WSPA is calling for an end to bear farming in Asia on the grounds of the severe welfare problems involved. The negative effects on wild bear conservation and the existence of suitable alternatives to bear bile are also important issues. The partnership with the Calvin Ayre Foundation will enable WSPA to sustain its work to end this horrible practice.

About the Calvin Ayre Foundation:
The Calvin Ayre Foundation is headquartered in Antigua with a charter to do charitable works worldwide. Founded in 2004 by Calvin Ayre, the foundation focuses on promoting greater equity in five broad areas: environment, education, social development, child welfare and animal welfare.

About the WSPA:
The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) works to raise the standards of animal welfare throughout the world. WSPA holds consultative status with the United Nations and observer status with the Council of Europe, and is the world's largest international federation of welfare organizations. Headquartered in the UK with offices in 13 countries, WSPA works towards building a united global animal welfare movement with compassion and action through partnerships with 736 animal organizations in 146 countries.