



NEWSLETTER – MAY 2009

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MRL LEGISLATION

Essential substance list for horses to include drugs with 'added clinical benefit'

The revision of the EU legislation on maximum residue limits has lead the European Parliament to address the issue of the (un)availability of veterinary medicinal products. One of the amendments tabled by Avril Doyle MEP, the Parliament's rapporteur for the residues legislation, relates to an amendment of the medicines Directive¹ and is set to further enlarge the essential substance list for horses.

And that is good news: thanks to the amendment of Mrs Doyle, the scope of the list will be extended to substances, which bring '*added clinical benefit compared to other treatment options available for equidae*'. So far, one of the criteria for inclusion in this list is that the substance had to be

'*essential*' for the treatment of horses and other equidae.

Back in 1998, the (non)availability of medicines for horses was the main reason for the creation of the Federation of European Veterinary Associations (FEEVA). Together with FVE, FEEVA booked its first huge success with the adoption of an '*essential list of products*' for treatment of horses, end 2006². This has allowed veterinary practitioners to use drugs listed for the treatment of horses intended for human consumption. The administration of these products must be registered in the horse passport and the withdrawal period for all products

Continued on page 7

¹ EU/2001/82

² Commission Regulation No 1950/2006, establishing, in accordance with Directive 2001/82/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Community code relating to veterinary medicinal products, a list of substances essential for the treatment of equidae

ALARM OR ALERT



When writing this, the world is in the grip of a novel flu outbreak. While our eyes were directed towards birds in South-east Asia, it popped up in Mexico in people. WHO recently raised the influenza pandemic alert level to 5, the second-highest level. Fortunately, at least for the moment, early diagnosis and appropriate medical care have helped to limit the number of casualties.

How it exactly evolved is not clear. Nor do we know how it will evolve. Will it die out, or become more virulent? What we do know, is that what is happening, will happen again, someday, sometime. As we cannot predict how and when this will occur, good planning will make the difference between alert and alarm. For such rather unpredictable situations, "plans are nothing, but planning is everything", to quote former American president Eisenhower.

Part of the planning consists of well-organized veterinary and medical services. A system that is flexible and able to react adequately to ever-changing situations, even those that have not yet been imagined. For such a system to be effective, it is essential to have knowledgeable people with a good overview, capable to oversee multi-species-issues, including humans. Although differentiation in veterinary education certainly has advantages, a broad, scientific base allowing a cross-species view will remain essential to veterinary training.

Jan Vaarten, Executive Director

ANIMAL HEALTH

2009 EUROPEAN VETERINARY WEEK

"One health" event to focus on TSEs and rabies

The launch of this year's Veterinary week *"Animals + Humans = One health"* will be held on 28 September in Brussels. The key message of the conference – *"EU health professionals working together to ensure good health for all"* – will be that animal diseases have an increasing impact on public health and that high standards of animal health therefore benefit both human health and consumer wellbeing. There will be two plenary sessions, one on transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) and one on rabies, and four parallel panel discussions, *"putting legislation to work in practice"*, Rabies, TSEs and Influenza. The date was chosen to coincide with World Rabies Day¹. Delegations of veterinary students will also be invited to the event.

In the meantime, the "One Health" roadshow was present, staffed by FVE and DG Sanco, on Friday 24 April in front of the Berlaymont building in Brussels in order to celebrate



One Health roadshow in front of the Berlaymont building

the World Veterinary Day. The "One Health" roadshow is a customised

vehicle which has been travelling around the EU since the start of the 2008 edition promoting the "One Health concept" and the work of EU veterinarians to the general public.

EMIDA ERA-NET

European research of emerging diseases

At the March meeting in Prague of the Emerging and major infectious diseases of animals project (EMIDA), part of the European Research Area Network (ERA-NET), the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe officially became member of the advisory board.

The ERA-NET scheme was introduced under the EU Framework programme 6, to *"support the networking of research funding organisations to develop and strengthen the coordination of national research programmes"*. As its name indicates, EMIDA focuses on emerging and major infectious diseases of production animals, including fish and bees. Its aim is to *"better share information on current research activities, to better coordinate research by developing common research agendas and common calls"*. Currently, EMIDA has 26 partners (mainly government departments and agencies) in 19 countries, and four associate partners. These partners are expected to provide information on national programmes, to deliver specific contributions to each work package, to review project outputs – and to contribute with national funds.

EMIDA has four work packages: Project coordination, management, Communication and dissemination (WP1), Mapping and analysis of current research needs and identify research needs (WP2), Develop, evaluate and refine instruments for pilot

¹ <http://www.worldrabiesday.org/>

projects (WP3) and Developing a strategic trans-national animal health research agenda (WP4).

PETS OR PESTS

Symposium on the future of pet travel to the UK

The future of pet travel to the UK was discussed during a symposium held at this year's congress of the British Small Animal Veterinary Association, which took place in Birmingham from 2 to 5 April.

"Is rabies vaccination reliable enough to justify dropping the current UK requirement for serological confirmation of successful vaccination?" This was the question addressed by William Ollier, professor of immunogenetics at Manchester University.



Speakers at the PETS symposium: William Ollier, Nigel Gibbens, Dilys Morgan, Phil Craig and Susan Shaw (from left).

"There is a wide genetic variation in the response to vaccination, he recalled, in particular among purebred dogs, which are often high genetically inbred". But even within breeds, there were differences according to the breed line. Professor Ollier and his co-workers had studied the data set of some 10,000 dogs tested for their response to rabies vaccination. Looking at the pass/fail rate of post-vaccination rabies serology – a test that is carried out on dogs prior to entry on British territory – professor Ollier identified other factors that play a significant role in the immune response. Apart from the breed of the dog, the age (young and old dogs have

a poorer response), the time interval between vaccination and serology (best response between 20 and 50 days) and the size of the dog matter (in general, larger dogs had a higher failure rate) – as does the brand and batch of the vaccine used. *"It would be naive to believe that 'one size fits all' can be applied to the canine immune system, he concluded.*

Dilys Morgan (Health Protection Agency) stressed the potential risk of introducing Tick-borne encephalitis (TBE). *"The disease does not exist in the UK – but the vector does".* Once introduced, control measure would be *"very difficult and very expensive",* she said.

"Although Echinococcus multilocularis has little impact on animal health, hydatid disease is an important zoonosis, which is fatal in 95% of cases without treatment, reminded professor Phil Craig (University of Salford). Between 1982 and 2000, 532 human cases had been identified in Europe, mainly in the east of France, southern Germany, Switzerland and Austria – a focus that was getting larger, he noted. Dogs also were very good hosts for the parasite, and dog ownership had been shown to be a risk factor for human infection. Despite active surveillance, the parasite has not yet been found in the UK, a reason for Professor Craig to advocate



Nigel Gibbens,
Chief Veterinary Officer UK

tapeworm treatment. *"Even if the risk of introduction is considered low, it is not negligible".* And, if introduced, its control would be *"very dif-*

ficult", he warned, since the UK had an "adequate landscape, a high vole concentration and a high red fox concentration" highly favourable for its dissemination.

The way forward

The British rabies derogation – allows the UK to impose stricter rules for animals entering the country than many other member states – of the European Regulation *"is due to come to an end next year",* warned Nigel Gibbens, UK's Chief Veterinary Officer. *"Very solid arguments"* would be needed to convince the other European Member states to maintain a high protection against the three main risks (rabies, tapeworm and ticks). Three scenarios were possible, he suggested. A permanent derogation (*"highly unlikely"*); implementation of the current EU system (*"which would imply that preventive treatment against ticks and tapeworm would disappear"*); or linking the requirement of preventive measures to the prevalence in the country of origin, based on risk assessment. This would be part of the negotiating plan, he said.

During the discussion that followed the presentations, FVE Executive director Jan Vaarten informed the audience of the upcoming European Veterinary Week, which would focus on rabies, to coincide with World Rabies Day. He also stressed the potential role of illegal cross-border trade of puppies in the spread of disease, in particular from Third countries where rabies is endemic.

Andrew Chirkowsky, representing the European Association of State Veterinary Officers (EASVO), voiced his concern about the lack of animal identification and registration requirements, citing the example of the ID microchip attached to a single dog collar, allowing many similar-looking dogs wearing the same collar to gain entry. Legislation was often poorly

applied and reinforced, he said, and checks were often delegated to private companies.



Harvey Locke (picture left), chairman of the symposium and member of the board of the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners,

concluded that a joined-up approach was needed and that, hopefully, the symposium would be a catalyst to achieving this. Veterinary surgeons, as a profession, had a huge responsibility in educating both the travelling pet owner and the media, to get their arguments across, he said.

VETERINARIA ITALIANA

Special journal issue: "One Medicine - One Health"

The Italian peer-reviewed journal *Veterinaria Italiana* has published a special issue on the "One Medicine – One Health" theme².

Contributions include thirteen papers by fifty-three authors from twelve countries. The issue also contains an interview on the topic with Ronald Davis, president of the American Medical Association.



² http://www.izs.it/vet_italiana/2009/45_1/45_1.htm

ANIMAL WELFARE

ANIMAL TRANSPORT

Proposal to limit travelling time for slaughter animals

Limiting journey times, reducing stocking densities on transport vehicles and introducing a legal base for implementing a satellite navigation system, to be linked with TRACES. These are part of a draft proposal, which is currently undergoing an 'interservice consultation' by the various Directorate Generals (DGs) of the European Commission, in order to amend the current animal transport Regulation 1/2005.

This proposal, still at an early stage, aims to align the social rules for drivers with travelling times for animals. The proposal suggests to limit transport times to 9 hours for animals intended for slaughter and sequences of 20 hours transport / 9 hours rest for animals for other purposes. It is not yet clear how many such sequences will be allowed.

When the draft proposal will officially be published will depend on the amount of discussion between the DGs. The proposal falls under the consultation procedure, which means that the European Parliament will be asked for its opinion (if the Lisbon Treaty is adopted, it will fall under the co-decision procedure, requiring both EP and Council to agree).

With the European Parliament elections in June, the dossier is likely to be left for the Swedish Presidency in the second half of the year.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON ANIMAL WELFARE

European Union support boosts UDAW campaign

The European Union has formally announced support for a Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (UDAW), which is seen as a "major breakthrough" for the recognition of animal welfare as a globally important issue. In its supporting statement, the Council of the EU refers to the EU treaty (in which Member States confirm their support for 'improved protection and respect for the welfare of animals as sentient beings') and to the Community Action plan on the protection and welfare of animals. It also refers to OIE strategic plan 2001-2005 (in which animal welfare was first identified as a 'priority') and the OIE standards for animal welfare.

By unanimously stating support for the Declaration, Ministers of Agriculture from the EU Member States join a growing list of governments and veterinary associations from both developing and developed countries.

VETERINARY IRELAND

Veterinarians call for a ban on tail docking in dogs

Veterinary Ireland, the representative body for veterinary surgeons in Ireland, has called for specific Irish legislation banning the act of tail docking in puppies. Speaking as Chairperson for Veterinary Ireland's Companion Animal Society (VICAS), Alan Rossiter MVB stated that, "VICAS unequivocally supports a specific legislative ban on docking of puppies, and a ban on the showing of dogs docked af-

ter such legislation is in place, which would bring Ireland into line with the UK and many of our EU partners". He added, "we in Ireland are in a minority in Europe in not having a complete and specific legislative ban on tail docking of puppies for cosmetic or prophylactic reasons, and in particular we are out of step with the UK who introduced a ban in 2007".

Tail docking is the term used to describe the shortening an animal's tail by amputation, undertaken when the dog is a puppy, without anaesthesia or pain relief. Most dogs are docked for cosmetic reasons. Tail docking is considered to be an 'act of veterinary medicine' that can only be legally performed by registered veterinary practitioners – and under the ethical code of the Veterinary Council of Ireland, veterinary practitioners are prohibited from performing 'purely cosmetic' procedures. Performing a tail docking for cosmetic reasons could therefore leave a veterinarian open to disciplinary action.



Tail docking is performed in puppy's without anaesthesia or pain relief.

The FVE is a long-time opponent of tail docking in dogs. In its position paper from 2000, the FVE speaks out against all surgical interventions of pet animals for non-curative or non-diagnostic purposes, including tail

docking, ear cropping, devocalisation and defanging³.

ALTERNATIVES TO ANIMAL TESTING

Four validation centres sign cooperation agreement

On 27 April, a cooperation agreement has been signed by the European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ECVAM), which is part of the Commission's Joint Research Centre, together with its equivalent in the US (ICCVAM)⁴, Japan (JACVAM)⁵ and Canada's Environmental Health Science and Research Bureau.



Enhanced global cooperation on the validation of in-vitro tests

The agreement establishes enhanced international cooperation and coordination on the scientific validation and evaluation of in-vitro toxicity testing methods. It is expected that, as a result of the agreement, testing methods that undergo scientific validation will be more credible and more rapidly applied by the testing community. For more information please visit the ECVAM website⁶.

3 http://www.fve.org/news/position_papers/animal_welfare/fve_00_066_cosmetic_surgery.pdf

4 Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods

5 Japanese Center for the Validation of Alternative Methods, hosted by the National Institute of Health Sciences, part of Japan's Ministry of Health, Education and Welfare

6 <http://ecvam.jrc.it/>

PUBLIC HEALTH

GLOBAL HEALTH

Global concerns caused by "novel influenza virus"

Presumably originating from Mexico, but having spread already to the US, Canada and some European countries, the so called "swine flu" is causing increasing global concerns. Even though the commonly used name for the Influenza implies that the virus is originating from pigs, this specific virus had not been detected in pigs before its occurrence in humans. It combines genetic information from human, avian and swine Influenzas Type A/H1N1, therefore "novel influenza virus", as suggested by Health Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou during a meeting of the General Affairs & External Relations Council in Luxembourg on 27 April, should be used until more is known about the origin of the virus.

On 2 May 2009 the Canadian Food Inspection Agency officially announced that a swine herd in Alberta had been found positive for the novel Influenza A/H1N1. It is considered highly probable that the pigs were exposed to the virus from a worker who had recently returned from Mexico. In the case that these findings will be confirmed this would be the first reported case of a human-to-animal transmission of the new virus.

Biosecurity precautions should therefore be taken very serious by pig farmers - not only the ones living in the affected areas as the case in Canada has shown - in order to prevent the introduction of this virus into swine herds. But the epidemiology of the novel Influenza virus needs to be further scientifically assessed and in its

statement from 5 May the Standing Committee of the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH) *welcomes the announcement made by the Commission that it intends to grant financial support to experimental studies.*

Bernard Van Goethem (Director DG Sanco Animal Health and Welfare Directorate) had already informed the EU Chief Veterinary Officers on 27 April that even though there is currently no scientific evidence that the “novel influenza virus” could be introduced via the import of live pigs, pigmeat, or pigmeat products the imports of those products from Mexico are currently not authorized as a precautionary principle. Also the new developments in Canada did not lead to a change on the safety assessment of eating pork and pork products and further restrictions on the trade of pigs and pig products is not seen as justified at the moment by the SCoFCAH.



DG Sanco is leading the EU coordination for the Influenza virus

DG SANCO is leading the EU coordination under the framework of the Communicable disease decision 2119/98 through the Community Early Warning and Response System (EWRS), and will continue to maintain permanent contact with Member States, ECDC (European Center for Disease Control), WHO (World Health Organisation), and with the United States and Mexico through the Global Health Security Initiative channel. For more information and links to the

above mentioned institutions please visit the DG Sanco website⁷.

PERSONAL CONSIGNMENTS

New rules for the introduction of animal products into the EU

The new Regulation on the introduction into the EU of animal products by travellers entered into force on 1 May 2009⁸. This new legislation intends to clearly explain to the general public the rules concerning the introduction of animal products into the European Union. Indeed, animal products brought into the EU by travellers or sent through the post, may pose a risk to the health of EU livestock by carrying certain animal diseases such as foot and mouth disease. The general public therefore plays an important role in keeping such diseases out of the EU.

Commissioner for Health, Androulla Vassiliou, said: *“This Regulation embodies the Commission’s animal health motto, ‘prevention is better than cure’. If the spread of certain animal diseases is not prevented, it can affect both animal and public health”.*

As a general rule, travellers are not allowed to bring in their luggage meat, milk or their products from third countries into the EU. To ensure that these rules are clearly understood, an awareness campaign was launched during the EU Veterinary Week of 2008 (10-16 November 2008) to

bring the message across to travellers entering the EU.

Posters are now available in 35 languages to be displayed in port, airports, and other points of entry into the EU, to ensure that passengers are aware of the rules and the reasons behind them, before they travel as well as during their journey. In addition, a video in 35 languages has also been developed. It will be screened at EU points of entry and in particular in airports, as well as during flights coming from outside the EU⁹.

REAL VETS DON'T WEAR HELMETS

Information leaflets on food safety and the role of the public health veterinarian

Two FVE publications have been released earlier this year: ‘Real Veterinarians don’t wear helmets?’ and ‘Can your food kill?’.



The papers have been produced by the Union of European Veterinary Hygienists (UEVH), one of the four FVE sections. They aim to illustrate the role, tasks and responsibilities of veterinarians in public health and more precisely in the food chain to a broad public.

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_threats/com/Influenza/swine_influenza_en.htm

⁸ Commission Regulation (EC) No 206/2009 of 5 March 2009 on the introduction into the Community of personal consignments of products of animal origin and amending Regulation (EC) No 136/2004

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/animalproducts/personal_imports/index_en.htm

The paper 'Can your food kill?' is aimed at the consumer, to inform about acceptable risks that come with our daily food and to explain that the concept of 'zero risk' has no real meaning when it comes to food safety.



The documents can be downloaded from the FVE website (www.fve.org).

MEDICINES

Essential substance list for horses (continued from page 1)

is 6 months. Horses not intended for human consumption could already be treated with these products following the so-called cascade for non-food producing animals – provided the national authority has implemented this possibility in the national legislation.

In 2009, this list will now be further extended, to allow the addition of substances with added clinical benefit. FEEVA is currently consulting its member associations to decide, which of substances should now be reconsidered for inclusion on the grounds of 'added clinical benefit'.

IMPROVAC

CVMP approves 'castration vaccine' for pigs

During its March meeting, the Committee for veterinary medicinal products (CVMP) of the European medicines agency (EMA) adopted a positive opinion on the first marketing authorisation for Improvac (Pfizer), the vaccine intended for the active immunisation of pigs as an alternative to surgical castration for the reduction of boar taint.¹⁰ The Commission is now expected to approve the vaccine for use in the EU.

In Europe, the product has already been marketed since September 2008 in Switzerland, where castration without anaesthesia will be forbidden from 2010. However, the product seems to meet with some resistance from the side of the retailers: Migros and its meat subsidiary Micarna have jointly decided to opt for gas anaesthesia to castrate piglets surgically, to be carried out on farms by visiting veterinary teams, according to Migros. However, the Swiss veterinary association GST/SVS described surgical castration as "outdated" in a statement issued early in December, and urges its members not to use or supply Isoflurane used for this procedure. *"Given that vaccination has been tested and approved as a reliable method of preventing boar taint in meat production, one could and one should renounce a procedure as violent as surgical castration,"* GST/SVS declared. While conceding that there were short-term handling advantages, GST/SVS warned that subsequent postoperative pain could only be relieved by analgesics.

In the UK, pigs are not castrated, but boar taint is less of a problem since pigs are slaughtered at around 75 kg,

at an age where the hormone development has not yet lead to boar taint. However, many European retailers, in Germany in particular, will not accept boar meat.

The Netherlands, another big exporter of pigs and pig meat, switched from mid-2008 to the use of anaesthetics before castration (using gas mixture with CO₂) as the result of an agreement between retailers, the pork industry, welfare organisations and the Ministry. The Netherlands aims to achieve a total ban on pig castration by the year 2015.

In Denmark, the Danish pig industry is now co-operating with the authorities in finding effective pain-relief strategies to be implemented. In the longer term, the Danish industry is committed to phase out the castration of male piglets and to employ alternative strategies to eliminate the risk of 'boar taint'.

The FVE is currently updating its position paper on piglet castration.

ANTIMICROBIAL USE

Surveillance reports show slight increase in 2007

Recent reports on the use of antibiotics in several European countries showed an increase in antimicrobial use over the past years. For example, in France, the veterinary use of antibiotics increased by 6.92% in 2007, according to the report on the 2007 antibiotic sales figures in veterinary practice in France, recently published by the Food safety agency (Afssa)¹¹. Overall, the report notes an increase of 6.92% compared to 2006. Although lower than the 1999 figure, it is the highest figure of the past six

10 www.emea.europa.eu/pdfs/vet/opinion/1848009en.pdf

11 www.afssa.fr

years. Around half (50.5%) of the total amount of antibiotics sold were tetracyclines, of which 93% were used in the food animal production sector.

Also in Denmark, the total use of antibiotics rose slightly in 2007, by 5.2%¹². The pig sector makes up 80% of this quantity. Calculated per kg pork produced, 3.9% more antimicrobials were needed than in the previous year. Looking at the total quantity of antibiotics prescribed in 2007, this is nearly identical to that prior to the ban on antimicrobial growth promoters.

In the Netherlands, the amount of antibiotics sold in 2008 has decreased by 12%, according to FIDIN (the Dutch veterinary pharmaceutical federation), compared to a 9%-increase in 2007. However, a recent study that looked at the average daily dose an



The increasing use of antimicrobials in Europe needs to be monitored closely

animal received, found that more antimicrobials were prescribed in the Netherlands than in other European countries. It also found that, when looking at the period 2004-2006, the quantity of antibiotics used was clearly on the increase¹³.

The FVE is currently carrying out an inventory among its member organisations regarding the prudent use of antimicrobials or other initiatives used to combat antimicrobial resistance. Apart from the type of initiatives (e.g.

guidelines, training courses, quality schemes, surveillance of antimicrobial use...), FVE also aims to collect information about who is taking these actions (e.g. the professional body, the competent authorities, teaching establishments...).

EDUCATION

EVALUATION OF VETERINARY SCHOOLS

Las Palmas and Cambridge approved, Wroclaw failed

Reports of evaluation visits to Las Palmas (Gran Canaria, Spain), Cambridge (UK) and Wroclaw (Poland) were examined at the April meeting of the European Committee on Veterinary Education (ECOVE), a joint committee of the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) and the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE). ECOVE's primary task is to accredit schools, based on the outcome of the visitation/evaluation.

While Cambridge and Las Palmas 'passed' with flying colours, the veterinary faculty of Wroclaw was not approved, as it had several 'category-one deficiencies', which fail to meet the minimum requirements as set out in the Directive concerned¹⁴. The executive summary of these schools will be available shortly on the web site of the EAEVE (www.eaeve.org).

Many more evaluation visits are planned in the coming months: Milan, Ljubljana, Jelgava, Helsinki, Stara Zagoria and Konya will all be visited in October 2009. Helsinki will be the first establishment to be evaluated at level 2 (quality assurance). Other establishments to be visited in 2009 include Cordoba and Pisa, in November and Coimbra in December.

In 2010, visits are planned to Lublin (Feb), London (Feb), Caceres (March), Warsaw (May), Padua (May), Copenhagen (Sep), Karditsa (Oct), Dublin (Oct), Timisoara (Oct), Stara Zagora (Oct), Turin (Nov), Villa Real (Nov), Iasi (Nov), Toulouse (Dec) and Parma (Dec).

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

UK: First audit of veterinary nurses' CPD

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, the UK statutory body for the veterinary profession, has launched its first annual audit of continuing professional development (CPD) for registered veterinary nurses.

Registered veterinary nurses commit to keeping their professional skills and knowledge up to date and must meet a target of 45 hours of CPD over a three-year period. For veterinary surgeons, the RCVS recommends a minimum of 105 hours of CPD over three years with an average of 35 hours per year.

As with veterinary surgeons, poor compliance with CPD obligations would be taken into account in any complaint arising against a registered veterinary nurse.

12 www.danmap.org

13 Van Geijlswijk I et al, Tijdschrift voor Diergeneeskunde, 2009, vol. 134, n°2, p69-73

14 Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications, OJ L 255, 30.9.2005

FVE & PROFESSIONAL MATTERS

FVE SPRING GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2009

Guest speakers and board elections in Stockholm

The upcoming general assembly of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe will take place in Stockholm, on 22 and 23 May. Guest speakers include Leif Denneberg (Sweden's Chief Veterinary Officer), David Morton (Birmingham University), Pekka Olson (Agria), Joy Agar (winner of 'One health' essay competition), Dan Larhammar (Uppsala University) and Christine Greko (Swedish National Veterinary Institute).

Other highlights include the elections, of a new executive board for the FVE 2009-2011, and of the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners (UEVP). Furthermore, two position papers will be up for adoption during the general assembly in Stockholm, one on cloning and one on herd health management.

WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE

Negotiations failed – back to the drawing board?

The European Parliament and the European Council failed to resolve long-running disagreements of the work-

ing time Directive¹⁵ during their final attempt at conciliation.

The main points of disagreement included exceptions to the 48-hours' maximum weekly working time, how to categorise 'on-call time' and the opt-out clause. Regarding the on-call time, Parliament had conceded to accept the Council's differentiation between 'active' (a period during which the worker must be available at the workplace in order to work when required to do so by the employer) and 'passive' (a period during which the worker is on call but is not required by his employer to work) on-call time. However, the EP did not budge on its position regarding the opt-out clause, which it wants to delete from the Directive.

Since there is no agreement, the current Directive, dating from 1993, remains in force. Nevertheless, the new Commission has the option of drafting a new proposal from scratch when it takes office in the autumn.

VETAEGIS LAUNCHED

Veterinary Ireland support system for veterinarians

There is a growing awareness in Ireland of the problems that veterinary professionals are faced with, not only within practices and workplaces, but also in life in general. If veterinary colleagues have concerns, about themselves or about those they know, there is a wide range of support organisations and services in Ireland that can help. All these can now be accessed via one central point on the Veterinary Ireland website: VetAEGIS¹⁶.

Derived from the Greek word *aigis*, the shield of Zeus in Greek mythology, aegis in English implies protection, guidance and direction. In VetAEGIS it is also an acronym for Advice, Education, Guidance, Information and Support, which it aims to provide for veterinary colleagues, and those around them, on stress, addiction, health, family and life-event matters.

Veterinary Ireland would certainly appreciate any comments or suggestions on the VetAEGIS website, and would also like information as to how other FVE members are dealing with the aspect of Veterinary stress in their own jurisdictions. Please contact Peter Bishton, Operations Executive in Veterinary Ireland, at HQ@vetireland.ie

STRESS AND ALCOHOL

Veterinary practitioners are a 'risk group'

That initiatives such as VetAegis (see article above) are very necessary was brought home by a recent study, showing the potential consequences for veterinarians suffering from stress. Veterinary practitioners are most commonly affected by psychological stress and have an increased risk of alcohol and drug abuse compared to their colleagues from non-clinical sectors such as administration or industry. This is the outcome of a German study from the Institute for Statutory Accident Insurance and Prevention in Hamburg¹⁷. In total, 1060 veterinarians participated in the study.

According to the study, a German veterinarian works an average of 47.9 hours per week, and 14.5% of the vet-

15 Directive 2003/88/EC regarding certain aspects of the organisation of the working time

16 http://www.veterinaryireland.ie/Non-Members/Vet_Support.html

17 « Psychological stress, demoralization and the consumption of tobacco, alcohol and medical drugs by veterinarians. » Harling M et al. J Occup Med Toxicol 2009 Feb 25 ;4(1) :4

erinarians work more than 60 hours per week. According to the respondents, the main sources of psychological stress are a heavy workload, difficulties in balancing professional life with private life, insufficient free time and dealing with difficult customers. The authors found that many of the

vets reported symptoms of demoralization - they were frequently dissatisfied with themselves, rarely optimistic or confident and almost never felt proud.

At least one colleague in five (22.5%) admitted to having been 'binge

drinking' in the previous month, while 6.9% admitted to doing so on a regular basis (at least once a week). Veterinarians suffering from severe psychological stress are twice as likely to show this kind of behaviour.

NO SECRETS HERE...

Ian Holloway, Senior Communications Officer at the RCVS (UK), describes why it's so worthwhile to get involved in the FVE's Secretariat Network Group.

Veterinarians are often told about the uniqueness of their profession: no one else's working life is quite the same as theirs. True enough. As a consequence, though, a similar situation applies to those of us who work for veterinary organisations, be that a national association or a statutory body; our day-to-day activities and challenges reflect the specialised nature of the profession we represent or uphold.

As such, when it comes to generating ideas, discussing problems or agreeing on best practice, it can be difficult to find anyone who understands your particular situation.



Lively discussions take place during the meetings

Step forwards the FVE's Network Secretariat Group – an information-sharing and communication forum (it has no policy-making function) for those working in veterinary secretariats across Europe.

After a hesitant start (not helped by being initially described in an FVE General Assembly report in an abbreviated form: the "Secret. Network Group" raised a few eyebrows!), the Group has become a very useful resource, not just for its own members, but also for the FVE itself as the information exchange is a definite two-way process.

Convening at the FVE office around twice a year, each meeting is chaired by Executive Director Jan Vaarten, who provides an update on the FVE's latest activities. This, in itself, is handy for those who aren't able attend General Assembly meetings, especially if official delegates might not have had time to pass the information down the line.

There follows a 'tour de table', with each delegate giving a short update on the latest veterinary activities and challenges underway in their own country. One of the most interesting aspects of the day, this provides an excellent opportunity not only to find out what's happening at national level elsewhere in Europe (and how this might impact on things at home), but also to get ideas for new initiatives and to quiz other delegates on how they have tackled problems similar to your own.

The rest of the meeting – which is split over an afternoon and the following morning and allows for some informal networking over dinner – is devoted to specific presentations and discussions, sometimes from the FVE staff, but usually from delegates who would like some feedback from the Group. For example, the RCVS's ongoing review of the current veterinary requirement to provide 24-hour emergency cover benefited from some very helpful input at the Group's recent meeting in April.

The Group is also in an excellent position to assist the FVE in some of its activities, especially when it comes to helping the Federation communicate with its members. Following some suggestions from a Communications Working Group a year or so ago, the FVE secretariat presented at the April meeting a number of new communications initiatives that it has since been able to implement, to the benefit of all FVE members.

And finally, benefits from the Group extend beyond its biannual meetings. With a growing network of contacts in place across Europe, simply knowing who to phone when you have a question about veterinary life elsewhere is immensely valuable and can save an awful lot of time and effort!

Horses travel,
Diseases spread...

Protecting against Equine Diseases in a Changing International Environment

Join leading experts from around the world to discuss and express your views on what actions can be taken to help protect horses against common and emerging diseases: Equine Influenza, Equine Herpesvirus, Equine Viral Arteritis, Strangles, Equine Infectious Anaemia, African Horse Sickness and West Nile Virus.

Organised by **University of Kentucky; University of Padova; Veterinary Faculty of Padova; Centro Medico Equino** and **Comune di Padova** in conjunction with **Fort Dodge Animal Health**.

Date: 10-12 June 2009

Venue: Prestigious and historic rooms at the University of Padova, Italy

Meeting: Interactive seminar – disease profiles /updates and discussion groups

Accommodation: 4-star NH Mantegna, Padova

Price: Seminar Only*: € 150 per person

Seminar with Accommodation**: € 367 per person.

*price includes admission to seminar, and excursion and dinner on the 11th June.

**price includes admission to seminar, 2 nights bed and breakfast accommodation at the 4-star NH Mantegna, Padova, including dinner on the 10th June, (www.nh-hotels.com) and excursion and dinner on the 11th June.

Featuring talks from guest speakers:

Dr Gian Luca Autorino, IZS delle Regioni Lazio & Toscana, Italy;

Dr Rocky Bigbie, Fort Dodge Animal Health, U.S.A.;

Dr Ann Cullinane, Irish Equine Centre, Ireland;

Dr Alan Guthrie, University of Pretoria, South Africa;

Dr Kees van Maanen, GD Deventer, The Netherlands;

Dr Peter Timoney, University of Kentucky; U.S.A.;

Dr Andrew Waller, Animal Health Trust, UK

Seminar includes excursion on the afternoon of the 11th June along the picturesque waterways of Padova, followed by dinner at the Centro Culturale Altinate - San Gaetano.

Places are limited. To reserve your place, and join the discussion, register @ www.fortdodge.eu by 22nd May 2009



UNIVERSITA
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DI PADOVA



Centro Medico Equino S.r.l.
Equine Medical Center



Fort Dodge
Equine Disease
Seminar 2009



Fort Dodge – World Equine Leaders – 1st to licence a West Nile virus vaccine in Europe

Fort Dodge Animal Health, Huizerstraatweg 117, 1411 GM Naarden, The Netherlands. Tel: 00 31 35 699 3300

WORLD VETERINARY DAY

Lucky winner FVE photo competition

Paul Versteeg, with his picture of Dr. Arnout Dekker a young veterinarian who works in the south of the Netherlands treating a cow, was the well-deserved winner of Amazon voucher of 50€ of the FVE Photo competition to celebrate 2009 World Veterinary

Day with as theme of the year “Veterinarians and livestock farmers: a winning partnership”.

World Veterinary Day was celebrated all over the world, with conferences, information campaigns, free vaccinations camps, nominations of the best livestock farmer and veterinary deed of the Year. The most successful celebration of the veterinary profession by national veterinary associations, alone, or in cooperation with any other selected veterinary body, will be

eligible for the 2008 WVA/OIE World Veterinary Day Award¹⁸. The prize: US\$ 1,000 will be donated to the winner.

¹⁸ World Veterinary Day Award: http://www.oie.int/download/announcement-FINAL_EN.pdf



**Winning picture of the FVE photo contest 2009:
Photographer Paul Versteeg, Veterinarian Dr. Arnout Dekker**

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The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) is an umbrella organisation of 44 veterinary organisations from 38 European countries and 4 Sections, regulated by the law on international societies in Belgium.

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