



Federation of Veterinarians of Europe

NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2009

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OIE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN PARIS

Climate change and the (re)emergence of animal diseases

The impact of climate change on the emergence and re-emergence of animal diseases was discussed at the 85th general assembly of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) held in Paris from 24 to 29 May. This impact was confirmed by a majority of the 174 Member Countries and Territories of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) in a worldwide study conducted by the OIE among its members. Bernard Vallat, Director General of the OIE, stressed the need for a new approach to prevent new threats linked to climate change and the globalisation of trade.

address this issue and to create specific groups of scientists in order to address these concerns.



Dr. Vallat visiting the veterinary week roadshow during the OIE General Assembly

“More and more countries are indicating that climate change has been responsible for at least one emerging or re-emerging disease occurring on their territory. This is a reality we cannot ignore and we must help Veterinary Services throughout the world to equip themselves with systems that comply with international standards of good governance so as to deal with this problem,” he said. In Paris, the Assembly mandated the OIE to

The OIE also pursued its actions on animal welfare by supporting the recommendations issued by the World Conference held in Cairo (Egypt) in October 2008, in particular by implementing the OIE standards in developing countries. It also voted to adopt new international standards to improve rabies control, through better management of stray dog populations.

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EU ELECTIONS



Recent elections have lead to a new European Parliament, with a large number of new, ambitious MEPs eager to contribute to the debates on a broad range of topics, many of which will directly impact on EU citizens' daily lives.

At the same time, a number of MEPs with whom we had fruitful relations have left the Parliament. We are very grateful for their continuous support on issues related to animal health and welfare and to public health, and we are certainly going to miss them.

The biggest challenge for the new Parliament will be developing leadership and long-term visions, avoiding to be carried away by issues of the day. Especially in our field, the promotion of the health and welfare of animals and people, continuing efforts and investments are essential. Sustainable solutions will only be achieved if we keep our eyes on the future and generations to come.

Like all parliaments, the European Parliament will only be able to fulfil its role properly if it receives relevant input from the people they represent. As European veterinary profession we are ready to assist the MEPs in their work, to put our knowledge and expertise at their disposal and to draw their attention to the ethical aspects of keeping and using animals. It will be our challenge to do so in the most effective way, and even before they ask for it.

Jan Vaarten, Executive Director

ANIMAL HEALTH

OIE General Assembly Paris (continued from page 1)

Furthermore, the Assembly endorsed actions of the OIE on novel influenza H1N1, notably its stance on the correct denomination of the new virus, on the decision of unjustified import restrictions and the call for respect of OIE international animal welfare standards in case of culling.

Other notable events included the presentation of the World Veterinary Day Award 2009 to the Nepal Veterinary Association.

Around 600 participants, representing OIE Members and intergovernmental regional and national organisations, took part in the event.

TRAVELLING WITH PETS

Commission proposes extension of transitional measures

The European Commission has adopted a proposal on 16 June regarding the transitional animal health requirements applicable to the movement of pet animals travelling with their owners to Finland, Ireland, Malta, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The proposal states that the transitional measures should be extended until 31 December 2011.

The current transitional period expires on 30 June 2010 and had been granted to derogate from the harmonised Community framework laid down in 'Pet Regulation' (EC) 998/2003. Regulation (EC) No 998/2003 lays down that "pet dogs, cats and ferrets travelling for non-commercial move-

ments to another Member State must be accompanied by a passport, or when imported from a third country by a certificate, providing proof of a valid anti-rabies vaccination". Under the transitional period Finland, Ireland, Malta, Sweden and the United Kingdom are allowed to ask for additional requirements in relation to rabies, tapeworms and ticks when pet animals enter their territory.

The Commission proposal from 16 June is following an impact assessment based on recent consultations and on the report from 8 October 2007 (taking into account the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) opinion). The Commission now considers that the "conditions for moving to a fully harmonised set of rules throughout the EU that would avoid unnecessary burden for travelers are almost entirely fulfilled. However, in order to ensure that the rabies situation in the EU improves even further, the Commission proposes to prolong the transitional period (for Finland, Ireland, Malta, Sweden and the United Kingdom) until 31 December 2011" and will continue its support for vaccination to control rabies in wildlife in certain Member States and neighbouring countries. European Parliament and the Council will now discuss the proposal and the formal adoption will be under the co-decision procedure.

EQUINE DISEASE SURVEILLANCE

European horse vets encourage harmonised contingency planning

In order to 'share data on best practice and to facilitate development of resources across Europe', the Federation of European Equine Veterinary Associations (FEEVA) has carried out

a survey. In November 2008, its national representatives were invited to answer a questionnaire to help establish baseline data about disease surveillance and contingency planning across Europe. The information, which includes details on government departments and websites responsible for surveillance of equine exotic diseases, is available on www.feeva.org.

The survey showed that disease surveillance is passive in all respondent countries and is geared around diseases listed by OIE. With the exception of Austria, governmental responsibility does not extend to endemic diseases, although there is active serological surveillance for Equine infectious arteritis (EIA) in Latvia, and a pilot EIA surveillance scheme, based on testing of dead horses, is planned for 2009 by Germany. France and the UK have industry-led schemes for the passive surveillance of endemic diseases, monitored via sample submissions to participating laboratories (UK and France) and from data contributed by equine practitioners (France). While five countries have generic equine exotic contingency plans in place, with the exception of EIA and African Horse Sickness (AHS), there are no other disease-specific contingency plans in place.

Several equine veterinary associations have been involved in raising practitioner preparedness for exotic disease incursion, with particular efforts made in France and the Netherlands. All contributors felt that there was variable, probably rather low, awareness of equine exotic diseases amongst the horse-owning public, with the possible exception of AHS. Sharing of materials and resources for horse owner education would be most helpful.

The FEEVA Board now wishes to take this initiative forward by encouraging national policy makers to make

harmonized risk assessments and contingency plans for equine emerging diseases, perhaps using African Horse Sickness as a starting point. It also proposes to take a lead on raising the awareness and preparedness of equine practitioners for equine exotic diseases

Europe-wide feedback on this initiative would be most welcome. Please direct your comments to Nancy De Briyne (nancy@fve.org).

ANIMAL WELFARE

CLONING OF ANIMALS

“Veterinarians are the guardians of animal health and welfare”

David Morton, veterinarian and Head of Centre for Biomedical Ethics at the University of Birmingham (UK) was guest speaker at the recent FVE general assembly, and gave a presentation on animal cloning. This short interview gives the highlights of that presentation.

How does cloning relate to other reproductive technologies? Cloning can be achieved in several ways but the Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer is the one that is currently the subject of much research. This involves the transfer of a nucleus from a somatic cell into an oocyte that has had its nucleus removed, ‘jump starting’ it with an electric current, and then transferring that ‘cloned embryo’ into a surrogate dam. This is being tried in cattle, sheep, goats, horses,

dogs and cats. In the future it may be extended into others farmed species such as fish and chickens. The resultant product, if and when born, is referred to as a ‘clone’. Dolly, the first cloned sheep using this technique, came from a mammary cell nucleus and so the association with Dolly Parton was born!

The transfer of genes into a fertilised egg (transgenesis) and other genetic manipulations are separate techniques from cloning. In other words, transgenic animals can also be cloned but cloned animals need not be transgenic.

Are there any animal welfare or health problems for the animals concerned? Although the data are limited, there are considerable welfare and health problems for the surrogate dam (e.g. Caesarean section, hydrops) and for the clone (e.g. respiratory and musculoskeletal defects). Furthermore, it is a very inefficient process with only between 1 and 5 to 20% of implanted embryos being born, and then of those born only around 40% survive until 3-6 months of age in cattle. The efficiency is better in pigs but not in other ruminants.



David Morton: “We should seek to meet our responsibilities as the principal guardians of the ‘animal’s point of view’.

The major problems are placental leading to large offspring, and various abnormalities after birth. Interestingly, the offspring of clones have no significant defects compared with conventional animals.

How do you see the future for animal cloning? It is a Pandora's box with the potential for good and bad, particularly if coupled with transgenesis. Downsides include the very inefficient process coupled with the poor welfare. There are also issues over genetic diversity and susceptibility (and possibly resistance) to disease affecting whole herds. But if further research can help overcome these serious disadvantages, then the opportunity arises for improvement of breeding stock through cloning animals with good productivity, good welfare traits and good health traits. Other benefits have been advanced such as the production of animals that are more environmentally friendly, and resurrecting extinct or near-extinct breeds and species.

Is it safe to use clones in the food supply? Yes, no safety issues have been so far identified between products from cloned and conventional animals.

What is the role of the veterinary profession in respect to cloning? It has a guardianship role with respect to the health and welfare of all the animals involved, particularly the recognition, assessment and avoidance of problems. If cloning is not to be absolutely impermissible, then veterinarians can help in the ethical analysis of the likely harms and benefits and informing the public of real and less realistic benefits which would not include the hopes of those wishing to restore a lost pet!

How should we prepare ourselves for other novel techniques arising? I think it is important that FVE develop an ethical framework by which they analyse any novel technique in any area that will help them decide whether it is acceptable to utilise a new technology or not. We should be prepared to give our viewpoint on such 'advances' that may challenge the welfare of animals or that

promote better or poorer welfare for some. But in order to do so we should have a firm scientific and ethical basis with which to secure our opinion and defend our views, and we should seek to meet our responsibilities as the principal guardians of the 'animal's point of view'.

ALCASDE

New consortium to look at alternatives to pig castration and cattle dehorning

There is widespread support for farm animal welfare, and in particular reducing the poor welfare implications of the castration of pigs and the dehorning of cattle. This has led to the creation of ALCASDE – Alternatives to Castration and Dehorning – a new European initiative that aims to 'develop and promote alternatives to the surgical castration of pigs and to develop and promote alternatives to the dehorning of cattle'.



Dehorning of cattle can have poor welfare implications.

The aim of the project is to provide research results that will support EU policy to promote demand and acceptance by consumers of pig meat from entire males or produced with alternatives to the surgical castration. It also aims to encourage cattle production systems that do not require dehorning. The project is therefore divided into two subprojects, one on the alternatives to pig castration, and

one on the alternatives to dehorning.

The Consortium undertaking the research and dissemination comprises 20 participant organizations and is coordinated by *Institut de Recerca i Tecnologia Agroalimentàries* (IRTA) in Spain. The FVE will participate in the stakeholder panel.

For further information, please see www.alcasde or info@alcasde.eu

'ONE-STOP SHOP'

FAO launches animal welfare web portal for policy-makers, farmers and scientists

A new internet portal¹ was launched last month by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) with the aim to "serve as a one-stop-shop for individuals and organizations searching for the latest information about the welfare of livestock".

"Any development programme that improves animal health, increases livestock production and responds to natural disasters where animals are involved needs an animal welfare component in it," said Samuel Jutzi, Director of FAO's Animal Health and Production Division. "This portal meets a real information need in this extremely important area."

Compliance with animal welfare standards can open access to international markets for products from less economically developed countries. The portal will also offer on-line conferences and seminars.

The initiative is a clear follow-up of the FAO expert meeting on capacity building to implement good animal

¹ <http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/animal-welfare/en/>

welfare practices, held on 30 September to 3 October 2008 (see FVE Newsletter February 2009).

The veterinary representative organisations collaborating with this initiative are the World Veterinary Association and the FVE.

ECONWELFARE

Good animal welfare in a socio-economic context

EconWelfare is a European research project aiming to provide suggestions for national and European policy makers to further improve farm animal welfare. In collaboration with stakeholder groups it collates and investigates policy options and their impacts on the livestock production chain, the animal and European society.

Our colleague Vlatko Ilieski (FYROM) is member of the EconWelfare core team.

PUBLIC HEALTH

SALMONELLA IN POULTRY MEAT

Increased on-farm biosecurity for improved food safety

In order to improve food safety regarding *Salmonella* contamination of poultry meat, more focus should be put on farm biosecurity, the sampling of live animals and restrictions

for slaughter. This opinion was formulated by stakeholders at the DG Sanco consultation meeting on detailed rules for a *Salmonella* criterion in fresh poultry meat, held in Brussels on 4 June. The meeting had been called by the Commission to consult the stakeholders – all major sectors, including the FVE – on a new draft Regulation with detailed rules and an impact assessment on the rules for *Salmonella* in poultry meat. Kris De Smet (DG Sanco) explained that the criterion ‘*absence of Salmonella in 25 grams of poultry meat*’ would also be applicable to food on the market. However, this “zero tolerance” will be hard to achieve by the processing and retail industry – even in cooked poultry meat.



Margareta Widell represented FVE in the consultation meeting

Those present at the meeting agreed that *Salmonella* should be reduced at the source by taking biosecurity measures at flock level, thereby decreasing the risk of cross-contamination at slaughter. As a consequence, microbiological criteria and sampling the end products would be a verification that the system works. Margareta Widell, speaking on behalf of FVE, pointed out that the Hygiene Package covers these on-farm measurements very well. “*If every stage in the food chain, including feed manufacturers, applies HAC-CP principles and takes all necessary measures there will be a dramatic improvement, she said. “Actions at later stages will never be as effective”.*

The stakeholders also discussed the need of harmonised rules for sampling. At the moment the sampling is not uniform and the results are therefore not comparable.

A new version of the draft Regulation will be circulated in July, while a second stakeholders meeting is scheduled for early September.

MEDICINES

PRUDENT USE OF ANTIMICROBIALS

The veterinary profession should be more ‘proactive’

“*We as a profession need to be more proactive regarding the prudent use of antibiotics*”, suggested Henk Vaarkamp (Netherlands), professor in pharmacy at the veterinary faculty of Utrecht and representative of the veterinary profession on the management board of the European Medicines Evaluation Agency (EMA). Speaking at the general assembly of the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners (UEVP), held on 21 May in Stockholm, he reminded his colleagues that it was “a fact” that the use of antibiotics leads to resistance in micro-organisms – “*even if there is no evidence to suggest that the veterinary profession is the sole contributing factor*”. And although veterinary practitioners were certainly not the “sole owner of the problem”, Christophe Buhot (France), UEVP president, added that it might be better to be pro-active “*than to wait until a prohibition of certain antibiotics is imposed on us*”. Both Henk Vaarkamp and Christophe Buhot are members of the FVE Medicines working group, which has recently included Peter Jones (UK), former head of the veterinary sector at the EMA and former executive director of the International Federation of Animal Health (IFAH).

The need for action in this field was reiterated during the FVE general assembly, held the following day. Considering the increase in prevalence of multi-resistant bacterial strains, "we will soon reach the point that we can no longer treat pyoderma with antibiotics", warned guest speaker Christina Greko, veterinary microbiologist at the Swedish National Veterinary Institute. In order to curb this trend, there was no "quick fix", she said, but only a sustainable way, which included improved surveillance, a decreased need, correct use and an end to all 'non-medical use' of antibiotics. She described the Swedish experience, where veterinarians and farmers had been convinced at an early stage of the need for prudent use of these drugs. As a result, antibiotic sales had decreased from a total of 30 tonnes of active substance in 1994 to just over 15 tonnes in 2008, of which around 90% concerned individual treatment. In companion ani-



Christina Greko: "Effective treatment of bacterial infections needs to be accessible for humans and animals".

mal practice, Sweden had observed a drop in antibiotic prescription over the past three years. This might be due to the diagnosis, end 2005, of the first cases of nosocomial infection with methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus intermedius* in dogs, she suggested. As a result, Swedish veterinary hospitals had adopted a strict policy on antibiotic prescription and hygiene measures. Change was necessary, she urged, for "current and

future generations of people and animals to have access to effective treatment of bacterial infections". Such change could be obtained by "stop seeing antibiotics as a solution to a problem, but rather as a tool to help when other means of treatment have failed".

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

"Urgent need" to reduce the exposure of animals to antimicrobials

The promotion of responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials was the topic of a meeting with the national medicines agencies, the European Medicines Agency (EMA), the European Commission and stakeholders, organised last month by the Czech EU presidency. Although more data on the use of antimicrobials in veterinary medicine and its possible effects on the development of resistance for animal health and public health are needed, it became obvious that further steps to reduce the exposure of animals to antimicrobials are urgently required.

One of the difficulties that need to be overcome for a proper risk analysis is the great variety of available data of antibiotic consumption, which makes a reliable comparison and interpretation of the data almost impossible. EMA will take the lead in working on a harmonised approach for data collection in the Member States.

Declan O'Brien (International Federation of Animal Health) representing the veterinary medicines manufacturing industry, promoted the EPRUMA project, the European platform for the responsible use of medicines in animals. In particular, he addressed the implementation of the best prac-

tice framework for the use of antimicrobials in food-producing animals in the EU².

Jan Vaarten, FVE executive director, outlined measures already being taken by the veterinary profession, and emphasised the need to work on sustainable solutions by improving conditions under which animals are kept. Antimicrobials should not be used to cover up for poor management practices.

The European Commission announced it is working on a Communication on the management of antimicrobial resistance, the release of which is expected in November.

EDUCATION

EAEVE MEETING

Changing of statutes: Only approved schools to have voting rights

Regarding the evaluation of veterinary schools, there would be 10-14 visitations per year as from 2009, announced Robin Oakley, director of the evaluation/accreditation programme of the European Association of Establishments of Veterinary Education (EAEVE), which held its general assembly in Hanover on 28 and 29 May.

The assembly mandated the board to aim for membership of ENQA, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. This membership was necessary in order to carry out level 2 "accreditation" (quality assurance) visits to approved

² http://www.fve.org/news/publications/pdf/epruma_brochure.pdf

schools by the EAEVE and FVE, which jointly form the European committee on veterinary education. "FVE is delighted, commented Walter Winding, FVE president, as this will allow to obtain a reliable accreditation system".

A revision of the Statutes introducing a differentiation between Full and Associate Members was presented by professor Stuart Reid (Glasgow Veterinary School), EAEVE Honorary Secretary. All the suggested changes and modifications were adopted, which meant that only approved teaching establishments would be able to vote at future EAEVE general assemblies. This decision was welcomed by Walter Winding (FVE), who heralded this as "a major step forward to European-wide, high quality standards of veterinary training".

The assembly furthermore discussed ways to obtain legal recognition by DG Sanco, for example by means of the compulsory fulfilment of the European Food Hygiene Regulation. Guest speakers at the meeting included Tjeerd Jorna (President of the World Veterinary Association), Albert Cornelissen, (Utrecht Veterinary Faculty), Walter Winding (President of FVE), and Jorge Oros (Las Palmas Veterinary Faculty).

EUROPEAN BOARD OF VETERINARY SPECIALISATION

The user's guide to becoming a specialist

Stefano Romagnoli, Full Professor of Veterinary Reproduction (University of Padua, Italy), who was recently elected President of the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation, answers some frequently asked questions on veterinary specialisation in Europe.

What exactly is EBVS? The European Board of Veterinary Specialisation has representatives of all veterinary specialist colleges currently present in Europe. It defines guidelines for the recognition of new specialist areas, coordinates the foundation and monitors the activity of each College and maintains a register of College diplomates. It is important to note that all specialist areas must be supported by scientific knowledge and evidence-based medicine. Therefore, the establishment of veterinary specialist colleges in so-called complementary and alternative fields of veterinary medicine, for which there is no evidence of clinical effectiveness (e.g. veterinary homeopathy), is not possible. The EBVS also promotes public awareness about the veterinary specialisations and supports diplomates if they have problems in their country to have their title officially recognized.

What are the requirements for establishing a European College?



Stefano Romagnoli

In order to be established, a European Specialist College must show that it: Improves the veterinary medical service offered to the public in a specific aspect of the veterinary profession; Represents a distinct and identifiable specialisation of veterinary medicine; Fulfills a specific need within the veterinary profession; and has a sufficient number of potential diplomates. If these conditions are satisfied, a request is sent to the EBVS with the Statutes and Policies & Procedures. If the EBVS approves the proposal, a provisional recognition is granted for a period of 10 years. In order to be granted a full recognition, a provisional College must demonstrate that it is fully functional having properly

organized training institutions and examinations with normal as well as alternative residency programs.

What responsibilities does a European College have? A European Specialist College must ensure that each diplomate has undergone a specified, high quality training and can prove her/his ability in the veterinary profession at a specialist level by passing an examination. Therefore, each College must organize training programs at recognized institutions, monitor the quality of training programmes and organize and administer the diplomate examination.

Every five years, each College must go through the process of re-certification, by which each diplomate must prove her/his continuous activity as specialist during the previous five years.

How many European Specialist Colleges are there at the moment? Currently there are 23 fully (or provisionally) recognised Specialist Colleges, and a total of more than 2600 European diplomates (see table page 8).

How can a veterinarian become a European Specialist? Prior to the foundation of a College, those veterinarians who have been working (and publishing) for years in the same discipline may be considered for the role of Founding Members and/or Invited Specialists. During the first five years following the foundation of the College, those who have a curriculum vitae of a satisfactory level may apply to be recognized as a so-called de facto diplomate. This is currently the case for the ECPVS and the ECSRHM. After that, the only way to become a diplomate is by working in close contact with a diplomate for a certain period. Such a training period is called residency, and the veterinarian going through a residency is called resident. Residencies can be standard or alternative. Standard residencies may only be done at a training

College	Full name	Number of diplomates
ECVAA	European College of Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia	105
ECVD	European College of Veterinary Dermatology	64
ECVDI	European College of Veterinary Diagnostic Imaging	130
ECVIM-CA	European College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (companion animals)	229
ECVN	European College of Veterinary Neurology	97
ECAMS	European College of Avian Medicine and Surgery	29
ECVO	European College of Veterinary Ophthalmology	64
ECVS	European College of Veterinary Surgery	368
ECVP	European College of Veterinary Pathology	281
ECVPT	European College of Veterinary Pharmacology and Toxicology	59
EVDC	European Veterinary Dentistry College	27
ECAR	European College of Animal Reproduction	191
ECVCN	European College of Veterinary Comparative Nutrition	37
ECLAM	European College of Laboratory Animal Medicine	83
ECVPH	European College of Veterinary Public Health	244
ECEIM	European College of Equine Internal Medicine	70
ECVBM-CA	European College of Veterinary Behavioural Medicine (companion animals)	24
ECVCP	European College of Veterinary Clinical Pathology	78
ECBHM	European College of Bovine Health and Production	192
EVPC	European Veterinary Parasitology College	170
ECPHM	European College of Pig Health and Medicine	81
ECPVS	European College of Poultry Veterinary Science	6
ECSRHM	European College of Small Ruminant Health and Medicine	11
Total		2640

23 Specialist Colleges are currently recognised. In the table above you will find the names of the Colleges and the number of registered Diplomates (statistics from 2008).

institution that has been formally recognized and accredited by the College. Training institutions are generally (but not necessarily) located at a University. A standard resident must work for at least 2.5 years full time in close contact with a diplomate, and must publish at least 2 papers in scientific refereed journals during this time. Alternative residency programs are available from each College and are designed so that veterinarians who already have a job may spread their residency over a maximum of 7 years.

Having a Practitioners' College sounds like a good idea. Is this an option EBVS is considering? We have developed the species-oriented, production animal Colleges (Bovine Health and Production, Small Rumi-

nant Health and Production, Swine Health and Production, Poultry Veterinary Science) to fulfill the needs of those veterinarians who are specialist on just a single species. These "production Colleges" are in the process of discussing mutual recognition with the various branches of the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners. We have approached this issue in a different way with respect to American Board Veterinary Specialisation, and we feel that our system is working well, the "production Colleges" are well established and can count on fairly high numbers of diplomates.

Is there an intermediate level of specialisation? There can only be one type of specialist, one who has trained under the guidance of a specialist and keeps working for the majority

of her/his time at the specialist level. One cannot be an "intermediate" specialist. However, there have been initiatives to develop an Acknowledged Practitioner (AP) scheme.

Is the European Specialist title officially recognized by the different European countries? It should be noted that EU countries cannot discriminate against other EU nationals if they have a specialist qualification that is of equal or even higher standard than their own. EBVS specialist titles are of a very high standard, which makes it impossible for any European country to refuse accepting these titles. Currently, diplomate qualifications can be used in at least 13 European countries (Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Slov-

enia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom).

The indirect way of providing some form of legal protection for an EBVS specialist is by using the EBVS logo. The EBVS is the owner of this logo and permission to use it has to be formally asked using a form available on the EBVS web site. This logo can only be used by diplomates registered with EBVS as fully active specialists.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CPD mandatory for veterinarians in about half of Europe

Results of a survey on continuing professional development (CPD) of veterinarians throughout Europe were presented at the FVE GA by Christophe Buhot (UEVP, France).

In all, answers from 22 countries had been received, most of which (19) offered CPD to veterinarians. In about half of these, CPD was mandatory. However, the number of hours (points, credits) of CPD required in these countries was highly variable (20-35 hours/year) and was linked, in some but not all countries, to the right to practice or to the renewal of the professional licence. Veterinarians had CPD record cards in 9 countries, and these were usually kept and managed by the veterinary chamber.

In half of the countries (11), CPD providers were evaluated, although they were only accredited in six countries. In countries where a CPD committee existed, it was usually composed of practitioners, academics and the chamber. A large majority accepts CPD credits gained abroad.

The survey was an update of the 2003 edition and carried out following a request by the European Coordinating Committee on Veterinary Training (a joint initiative of the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Training, the European Board on Veterinary Specialisation and FVE).

For full details, please contact the FVE office.



FVE & PROFESSIONAL MATTERS

STOCKHOLM 22-23 MAY

FVE spring general assembly



Leif Denneberg, Chief veterinary officer for Sweden (picture left), congratulated the FVE on its work and gave a brief outline of the

items on the agenda for the Swedish EU presidency, which starts on 1 July. Speaking at the general assembly of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), held on 22 and 23 May in Stockholm, he announced that, in the fields of veterinary interest, the presidency would focus on the impact of climate change, the provision of adequate food supply and animal welfare. "At least, that is the plan, but the key word is 'flexibility', since crises may occur at any time", he said, citing the H1N1 pandemic threat and the recession as examples. In the field of animal welfare, the spotlight would be on indicators of farm animal wel-

fare, the welfare of laboratory and slaughter animals, labelling of animal welfare-friendly products and the protection of animals during transport. Food safety and the movement of pet animals were also on the agenda, he said. In the coming months, conferences had been planned on H1N1, climate change and animal welfare.

Sweden: pet insurance and alternative medicine

With a coverage of 78% of dogs, 27% of cats and 74% of horses, Sweden is unique when it comes to insuring companion animals. In comparison, Norway and Finland have a coverage of 'only' 25% in dogs (UK: 20%), 1% in cats (UK: 4%) and 30-40% in horses (UK: 35%). The advantages of this unique situation were presented by guest speaker Pekka Olson, veterinarian and deputy managing director of Agria, the oldest (founded in 1890; the first dog was insured in 1924) and largest Swedish insurer dedicated solely to animals. The large number of insured animals and the close collaboration with pet owners, breeders and veterinarians, have made that Sweden "probably has the most advanced veterinary care per capita in Europe". Sweden (pop. 9 million) has over twenty companion animal hospitals, while "49% of their turnover is dependent on Agria". This is a win-win-win situation, he concluded, for the pet owner, the veterinary practitioner and the insurer – and, of course, for the pet. Furthermore, 4% of the net premium earned is set aside for research. Agria's extensive database provides a wealth of data on breed-related disorders or life expectancy and treatment outcomes. Mr Olson announced that Agria was now also exporting its model to other European countries, and had acquired PetPartners (UK) in 2007.

Science versus non-science was the topic of guest speaker professor Dan

Larhammar, of the department of neuroscience at Uppsala University. Controversial treatment such as homeopathy was an excellent opportunity for students to practice critical thinking, he suggested. However, if scientific studies on the efficacy of such treatment gave a negative outcome, "students rapidly accuse me of being overly critical". Professor Larhammar recalled, a critical view would also help them to see potential pitfalls of 'conventional' medicine. He warned against 'inattentive blindness', explaining the importance of practising objective, evidence-based medicine. And rather than dividing the world into 'alternative' and 'conventional medicine', he suggested to divide treatments into those that have been shown to work, those that have not (yet) been shown to work and those that have been shown, not to work. He also recalled the importance of the placebo effect, and suggested that anecdotal thinking comes naturally to us (and therefore has a stronger impact) whereas scientific thinking does not. A long-standing tradition of use of a certain method does not necessarily mean that it works, he warned, and evidence-based medicine was key.

It should be noted in Sweden, veterinarians are not allowed to practice homeopathy on animals, while doctors may not use it in children.

Enlargement of 'positive list' of medicines for horses

The revision of the EU legislation on maximum residue limits has moved forward "substantially", with a positive outcome for the medicines availability for horses, reported Jan Vaarten, FVE Executive director. The list of 'essential substances' for the treatment of horses for food production will be extended to substances that 'bring added clinical benefit' compared to other available options. In collaboration with the Federation

of European Equine Veterinary Associations (FEEVA), the FVE is currently examining which substances should be considered for inclusion on the grounds of 'added clinical benefit', and to look at means of raising awareness among veterinary practitioners.

Conclusions of the seminar 'Balancing pet travel and disease control', held at the recent BSAVA congress (see FVE Newsletter May 2009) were

tion is one of the most lethal zoonoses around, and there is evidence that the prevalence and geographical spread is on the increase in Western Europe", he reminded. While education of the general public was key, the disease should be made notifiable, he suggested. These and other recommendations were presented to the general assembly for further consideration.



FVE Board 2009-2011: (from left) Rainer Schneichel (DE), Ljiljana Markuš-Cizelj (CR), Walter Winding (President - AT), Stephen Ware (UK) and Christophe Buhot (FR)

presented by Harvey Locke (UK), former UEVP vice president. He reported the main conclusions of the seminar to both the UEVP and FVE general assemblies. 'Prevention is better than cure' is the motto of the new Community Animal Health Strategy, and Mr Locke suggested that this "fitted perfectly" with the current derogation on the Regulation of pet travel for the UK, Ireland, Sweden, Finland and Malta, countries that may continue to require rabies vaccination and treatment against ticks and tapeworm for all pets entering their territory. Although certain measures could certainly be made more flexible, including a shorter post-vaccination 'waiting period' and a larger treatment slot for pre-travel praziquantel administration, a complete removal of the measures could have serious consequences for public health in the countries concerned. "Echinococcus multilocularis infec-

The General assembly also discussed the Herd health management paper, presented by Margareta Widell (Sweden). The Herd Health Plan (HHP) should include good husbandry practices (housing, climate, water/feeding and management), guidelines for the (prudent) use of veterinary medicinal products and feed additives, as well as a plan of preventative healthcare and guidelines for the prevention of epizootics and zoonotic diseases. The Union of European Veterinary Practitioners (UEVP) suggested to link this to the Farm visitation scheme, which is currently being finalised.

Section's meetings reports

All four sections had held their general assemblies the day prior to the FVE general assembly.

UEVH - Undergraduate training in public health was one of the topics

discussed at the general assembly of the Union of European Veterinary Hygienists, reported Robert Huey (UK). According to the UEVH, veterinary undergraduates should receive technical training in public health which allows to prepare them for the work of the Official Veterinarian

During the joint meeting with EASVO, Margareta Widell (SE) described the enforcement of Salmonella controls in Sweden at all points in the food chain, in particular at farm level, while Bernard Ursinitsch presented the Austrian system of herd health plans.

Other topics discussed at the UEVH meeting included the quality of the Food Chain Information and the modernisation of meat inspections.

UEVP - Antimicrobial resistance was discussed at the UEVP GA, reported Christophe Buhot. Guidelines for good practice are now more than ever necessary, and the UEVP should make active proposals. The EPRUMA document on responsible use of antimicrobials should be promoted and UEVP encourages FVE members to translate the brochure.

The results of a Europe-wide survey on continuing professional development were also presented (see article under Education page 9).

Regarding the Community Animal Health Policy, the UEVP had drafted Scoping papers on education and farm visitations, and had discussed other topics including companion animal ID and registration and vaccination.

On the Working time Directive, no conciliation has been reached between European Parliament and the Commission, which means that 'on call time' remains to be seen as working time. This should be monitored very carefully, and Mike Jessop

(UK) was asked to carry out a survey among UEVP members.

Finally, a new UEVP Board was elected consisting of Zsolt Pinter (HU, president), Andrew Robinson (UK, secretary general), Anne Ceppi (CH, treasurer) and the three vice presidents Thierry Chambon (FR), Andrew Byrne (IE) and Rens van Dobbenburgh (NL).



UEVP Board 2009-2011: (from left) Thierry Chambon, Anne Ceppi, Zsolt Pinter, Andrew Robinson and Andrew Byrne

EASVO - Andrew Chirkowski (UK) reported that EASVO members have launched a survey on the involvement of state veterinary officers with statutory bodies. As a further step, the outcome will be discussed with the Statutory Bodies working Party to optimise a good relationship.

The questionnaire on puppy trade clearly showed a lack of enforcement and the importance of working closer with practitioners. Rabies risk: inadequate vaccinal titres and a lack of coordinated international databases.

During a joint meeting with UEVH, Margareta Widell gave a presentation on the 'Salmonella situation' in Sweden and Robert Huey reported on the welfare at slaughter and killing working group.

The EASVO general assembly also discussed Bluetongue controls and contingency planning of unfamiliar exotic diseases, and a possible collaboration with other health professions.

Finally, the EASVO president Cornelia Rossi-Broy (DE) had been involved in animal welfare and imports, the Ani-

mal Health Law, puppy trade and the FVE hygiene working group.

EVERI - Richard Weilenmann (CH, EVERI president) reported that Prof. Marcel Wanner (EAEVE president) had been invited as guest speaker in order to discuss how EVERI could cooperate with EAEVE. Other topics on the EVERI agenda had included extramural studies, the revision of Directive 86/609/EEC for the Protection of Animals used for Scientific Purposes, the history of veterinary medicine as part of the undergraduate curriculum and working together with FVE and EAEVE towards the "acknowledged vet". More specific topics of the various EVERI subgroups were: global exchange / cooperation in animal & public health (education); '3R', animal welfare and medicine (research); and distribution, laboratory diagnostics, registration VMP (industry).

Elections: a new FVE board

Other topics discussed in Stockholm included the Community animal health strategy, the cloning of animals, the welfare of slaughter animals and the evaluation of veterinary teaching establishments.

On the topic of veterinary education, FVE will participate in the conference on education organised by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), from 12 to 14 October in Paris.

In Stockholm, elections were also held for the FVE board 2009-2011. The results are: Walter Winding (Austria), president; Christophe Buhot (France), Ljiljana Markus-Cizelj (Croatia), Rainer Schneichel (Germany) and Stephen Ware (UK), vice presidents (see picture page 10).

The next FVE general assemblies will be held in Brussels (13-14 November 2009) and in Basel, Switzerland (10-12 June 2010).

OUT NOW:

Code of Conduct & Veterinary Act

FVE is proud to announce the publication of its Code of Conduct & Veterinary Act, adopted in 2008. *"We are the first liberal profession in Europe to have achieved this"*, reminds Christophe Buhot, former president of the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners, the FVE section that played a key role in the drafting of the document.

They aim to serve as guidance for the veterinary profession throughout Europe, and *"clearly demonstrate the profession's commitment to assuring the health and welfare of animals and people and its adherence to ethical standards"*, added Walter Winding, FVE president.



The brochure, which presents both papers in a single clear and comprehensive document, is also available as a free download from the FVE web site (www.fve.org). A French version is in preparation.

JOB ADVERTS:

Check the FVE website for regular updates:

<http://www.fve.org/profession/jobs.html>

WORLD VETERINARY ASSOCIATION

FVE to manage the WVA secretariat from 2010 onwards

At the FVE general assembly, Tjeerd Jorna, president of the World Veterinary Association (WVA) announced that his organisation had unanimously decided to accept the FVE bid for tender to manage the WVA secretariat, from 1 January 2010.

The WVA secretariat is currently based in Copenhagen.

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Free lance editor Karin de Lange

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