



NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2009

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TSE, INFLUENZA, RABIES AND 'ONE HEALTH'

2009 EU Veterinary week to be launched on 28 September

The opening conference of the 2009 edition of the European Veterinary Week will be held on 28 September in Brussels¹, on the occasion of World Rabies Day. This is no coincidence, as rabies, along with influenza and transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs), is the topic of this year's edition. Some 400 delegates are expected to attend the event, which is jointly organised by DG Sanco and the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe, in collaboration with the Alliance for Rabies Control.

Furthermore, veterinary students from 25 countries have been invited to submit ideas on the education of children and pet owners on rabies, and on the promotion of the 'One Health' concept.

Speakers on 28 September include Androulla Vassiliou (Commissioner for Health), Robert Madelin (Director-general for health and consumers), Bernard Vallat (OIE) and Juan

Lubroth (FAO). The morning session is followed by plenary sessions and workshops on rabies, influenza, TSEs and 'One Health'.



To mark the occasion, a diary in all EU languages will be available with information on six zoonotic emerging diseases. The Road show, a customised van promoting biosecurity and the role of the veterinary profession and travelling throughout Europe, has been extended due to its success until end December 2009².

For further information on EU Veterinary week activities, please contact the FVE Office.

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/food/dyna/conference/>

² http://www.one-health.eu/ee/index.php/en/page/follow_the_bus_tour/

OFFICAL vs PRIVATE



The dualistic discussion about the role and importance of 'private' versus 'official' veterinarians is not new. It derives from times

when the state was the omnipresent and unassailable authority in animal health matters, especially in countries with 'strong' regimes. Even today, our profession often seems to act as if divided into two classes: on the one hand, official veterinarians representing the state authority and in charge of controlling animal health and welfare and public health, and on the other hand, private veterinarians running their practices and looking after the needs of their patients and clients.

But reality is different. Especially in difficult times like these, when the call for more governmental support is rising but funds are drying up, public and private parties have a common interest and shared responsibility. They are interdependent and complementary. While competent authorities are responsible for contingency plans, border control, certification, legislation, implementation and enforcement, private practitioners provide a direct link between animals, owners and society, working closely with the animals and translating rules into practice.

Disease control and food safety – both under the scope of 'One Health' – can only be successful if the official and private profession join forces and act in close cooperation. It is FVE's main aim to unite the European veterinary profession for the benefit of animal health, animal welfare and public health: One Profession - One Vision - One Voice!

Walter Winding, FVE President

ANIMAL HEALTH

WORLD RABIES DAY 28 SEPTEMBER

FVE: partner on global rabies prevention initiative

The third annual World Rabies Day³ will take place on 28 September, the date chosen as opening day of the EU Veterinary Week in order to mark the event.

Despite being 100% preventable, it is estimated that rabies causes 55,000 human deaths worldwide each year, approximately one person every ten minutes. The World Rabies Day initiative is a global rabies awareness campaign being spearheaded by the UK charity Alliance for Rabies Control and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).



But rabies is not only a problem in Asia and Africa: In the Moscow region (Russia), during the first five months of 2009, 11,000 persons applied for post-exposure treatment. The number of rabies cases in animals in 2008 was 2.5 times greater than in 2007. And this year alone, 12 rabid

animals were identified in New York City, where raccoons are the most commonly reported rabid species.

'This campaign offers all of us a unique opportunity to increase global awareness of the most deadly disease known to humans,' according to Deborah Briggs, Executive Director for the Alliance of Rabies Control. *'A major part of this effort is the declaration of an annual World Rabies Day on September 28th. Events are planned throughout the world to increase awareness about rabies, and to raise support and funding towards its prevention and control.'*

In Europe, rabies cases in wild animals have been greatly reduced thanks to the success of oral vaccination of foxes, the main reservoir. Recent cases in domestic animals in Western Europe were nearly all due to the illegal import of dogs from endemic regions in Northern Africa.

PET TRAVEL

FVE calls for ticks and tapeworm risk assessment

The FVE welcomes the EU Commission's proposal to amend the 'pet travel' Regulation⁴. It supports the extended deadline for the derogations until end 2011, in particular to allow EU countries in which rabies still occurs, *'to make adequate efforts to complete the eradication of rabies within the EU'*.

However, in its recent opinion, the FVE urges the Commission and Member States to initiate an EU-wide echinococcosis risk assessment, followed by an appropriate prevention, reduction and control strategy throughout the EU, in order to investigate the

⁴ Regulation (EC) No 998/2003 on the animal health requirements applicable to the non-commercial movements of pet animals

³ www.worldrabiesday.org

spread of this tapeworm that can be fatal to man. Currently, five EU Member States apply additional measures with regard to the treatment of companion animals against tapeworms, when entering into their territory.

Also the spread of ticks and tick borne diseases throughout the EU should be investigated, recommends the FVE. *'Although the EFSA opinion states that relevant tick species seem to be widespread in Europe, current surveillance systems for tick species and tick borne diseases are limited and incomplete'*, it observes.

The Federation furthermore strongly supports the inclusion of companion animal diseases (zoonoses in particular) in the Community Animal Health Strategy 2007-2013.

In order to prevent and control transmissible diseases and zoonoses in particular, FVE encourages the promotion of permanent identification - by means of internationally accepted (ISO) transponders – together with easily accessible registration of all pet dogs and cats, in particular of those travelling in the Community. In addition, the exchange of information between registration databases should be improved for the benefit of the animals, the owners and the Community.

The complete FVE opinion on the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 998/2003 on the animal health requirements applicable to the non-commercial movement of pet animals can be found on the FVE website⁵.

ILLEGAL PUPPY TRADE IN EUROPE

Poor vaccination, poor identification

Illegal puppy trade and puppy farms are a well-known threat to the health and welfare of dogs. But how widespread is the problem and what are the consequences? In an attempt to investigate this, a joint initiative from the European Association of State Veterinary Officers (EASVO), the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners (UEVP), the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (FECAVA), Eurogroup for animals and the FVE, lead to a survey among both official veterinarians and veterinary practitioners throughout Europe.



Illegal puppy trade has an impact on animal health, animal welfare and public health

Results of the survey among veterinary officials indicated that while some respondents suggested that illegal puppy trade occurred *'frequently'*, others thought it occurred *'occasionally'*. The remaining respondents had no direct knowledge.

The origin of the puppies was mainly traced back to central and eastern European countries but also Western European and third countries were cited. The most common irregularities were a lack of vaccination or poor vaccination practices and incorrect documentation (e.g. ID not matching

the identification) sometimes in connection with health problems or even death on arrival. Other irregularities were ear cropping or tail docking and the absence of a vaccination certificate. Very few investigations were carried out into sales via the internet, mainly because it was not deemed a priority, too time-consuming or too difficult to trace. A link with organised crime was sometimes suspected. Licensing requirements and the frequency of inspections of breeders and pet shops varied widely between countries. The study also showed that official vets mainly rely on tips by breeding and animal welfare organisations and private individuals for their investigations.

The survey among veterinary practitioners (431 veterinary respondents from 16 countries) suggested that so-called puppy farms were very common in some countries, and played no role in others. Practitioners, too, often noted poor vaccination, early weaning, incorrect identification and/or documentation as main problems.

However, due to the inconsistency of data provided by the respondents, only trends could be observed and no statistically valid data could be drawn from the surveys.

In the UK, Puppy Farm Awareness Day is being held on 19 September, and the British Veterinary Association and the British Small Animal Veterinary Association are encouraging vets to take this opportunity to educate their clients about the high level of risk and about the potential health and welfare issues that their clients might inadvertently be buying into.

The health and welfare issues in the puppy trade have long been a concern to the FVE, which will now examine the information and data collected by the survey. As a first step, a closer collaboration with breeding organisations seems warranted.

⁵ http://www.fve.org/news/position_papers/animal_health/fve_09_051_movement_pet_animals.pdf

ANIMAL WELFARE

WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH

OIE seminar calls for regional animal welfare strategy

'Animal health is one of the key components of animal welfare'. This statement was reiterated repeatedly by the World Animal Health Organisation (OIE) during the European Regional Seminar on Animal Welfare, held in Istanbul on 16-17 July.

At the conclusion of the event it was recommended, among others, that the OIE should continue to develop science-based animal welfare standards and promote research, education and communication on animal welfare. It was also recommended that the OIE regional representation for Europe coordinate the development of a regional strategy. Furthermore, it should continue to *'evaluate the implications of private standards for animal welfare'* and *'help prevent trade problems arising from the use of private standards that are in conflict with the OIE official standards'*.

Among other things, OIE Member countries were recommended to implement the OIE sanitary standards, to support the regional strategy on animal welfare and to promote awareness and education of stakeholders and the general public as well as to encourage the inclusion of animal welfare in the veterinary undergraduate curriculum.

While the FVE is delighted with most recommendations and is pleased with the leadership the OIE has assumed

in the field of animal welfare, it is less taken by the proposed recommendation that OIE member states are encouraged to *'take whatever steps available to help prevent the introduction and use of private standards that conflict with the OIE animal welfare standards'*. The existence of several different standards does not necessarily have a negative impact on animal welfare, reminds Jan Vaarten. On the contrary, in the past *'private standards have contributed greatly to raising awareness, stimulating the societal debate and putting pressure on public authorities'*. It would therefore be a pity if such instruments were lost. The FVE believes private standards have their place – as long as they are transparent, not misleading marketing and not a hidden obstacle to trade. *'A simple ban is not desirable nor workable'*, he concluded.

Since including animal welfare in its strategic plan (2001), the OIE considers itself *'the global veterinary organisation for the setting of international animal health and welfare standards'*.

ANIMAL TRANSPORT

New FVE working group nominated

During the FVE Board meeting on 9 and 10 July in Leuven (Belgium), the new FVE working group on transport was appointed. It consists of the following persons: Karin Von Holleben (Germany), Pdraig Kenny (Ireland), Giancarlo Belluzzi (Italy), Ludo Hellebrekers (Netherlands), Borut Zemljič (Slovenia) and Madeleine Campbell (UK). Joe Collins (Federation of European Equine Veterinary Associations) will be invited as an observer.

The working group will assist the FVE by following the discussions and providing scientific backup on all issues

regarding the transport of animals, taking into account possible effects on animal health, animal welfare and public health. A first meeting is planned in Brussels later this year.



Animal transport: main focus for FVE's newly established working group

The FVE is grateful to the previous FVE Transport working group for its valuable input and contributions in the past.

ALCASDE MEETING

International symposium on alternatives to castration and dehorning

The consortium Alternatives to Castration and Dehorning (ALCASDE)⁶, the 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'*, will hold an international symposium on 28 and 29 October in Bologna (Italy). The programme includes projects and workshops on boar taint detection methods and cattle dehorning alternatives. FVE is member of the ALCASDE stakeholder panel.

Nick Blayney, past president of the British Veterinary Association, will hold a presentation called *'the veterinary approach in relation with cattle dehorning'*. With this meeting, the ALCASDE project, funded by DG Sanco, will come to an end after an 11-month contract.

⁶ <http://www.alcasde.eu>

PUBLIC HEALTH

FOOD HYGIENE

FVE Hygiene working group meets

The FVE Hygiene working group meeting of 7 September, chaired by Margareta Widell from Sweden, discussed the following topics: the recently published Commission report on the experiences gained with the 'hygiene package', the FVE position paper on modernising slaughterhouse inspections – which will be on the agenda of the November FVE General Assembly – and the revision of the FVE brochure 'Food safety – the stable to table approach'. This brochure dates from 2001, i.e. from before the EU hygiene package. Furthermore, the group decided to gather information on the national requirements for continuing professional development of official veterinarians and to link the FVE Herd Health Plan paper with the 'Farm visitation scheme' currently drafted by UEVP.

FOOD SAFETY

Salmonella in poultry meat: impact assessment

At the stakeholder meeting on Salmonella in poultry meat, held on 3 September, Kris De Smet (DG Sanco) gave a presentation on the impact assessment on a Commission regulation laying down the rules on Salmonella food safety criteria in the fresh meat of fowl and turkeys. He also presented the latest versions of the questionnaire to stakeholders and Member States. The meeting had been called by the Commission to

consult all major players of the poultry production sector and other interested stakeholders, including the FVE, on a new draft Regulation with detailed rules and an impact assessment on the rules for Salmonella in poultry meat.

Points raised at the meeting included the importance of other food-borne pathogens such as *Campylobacter*, the criteria for sampling, awareness campaigns and animal welfare issues in case the slaughterhouse refuses to slaughter positive flocks.

The consultation phase for the impact assessment is now closed, and the impact assessment steering group will meet on 17 September. The Regulation is expected to be ready before end 2010.

FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS

'More transparency and harmonisation'

'Public and private partnership, a contribution to food safety' was the name of the meeting of the working group of the advisory group on the Food Chain and Animal and Plant health (FCAPH). The meeting, held on 17 June, focused on the relation between private and official standards for food safety and was attended by Nancy De Briyne (FVE).

The Commission highlighted the main difficulties, which included the increasing number of private standards, their overlap and costs, their potential obstacles to trade and their burden on the official competent authorities. Frequent, unannounced changes, lack of consistency in performance, high costs of certification, efficiency of certifying bodies, lack of transparency and accountability in setting requirements, and the ab-

sence of training and assistance to producers were the main problems identified. In particular developing countries perceive private standards as a competition for official ones.

The Commission's position is to be 'pragmatic, factual and constructive' and to focus on what could be done to move forward constructively. Suggestions to improve the situation included an increased transparency by private standard setting and certifying bodies and improving harmonisation. The FVE fully supports this pragmatic view.

MEDICINES

FVE MEDICINES WORKING GROUP

Important topics covered during meeting



Working group chair
Christophe Buhot

The 'positive' list of medical products for food-producing horses, the new Medicines Directive, the responsible use of medicines, medicines for minor uses and minor species (MUMS), the right to prescribe, the cascade, 'pig castration' vaccines and the revision of the FVE brochure on the prudent use of antimicrobials were the main topics of discussion during the meeting of the FVE medicines working group, held on 26 August.

The meeting was attended by FVE Vice President Christophe Buhot (chair), Johan Van Tilburg (FECAVA),

Andrew Robinson (UEVP), Peter Jones (UK), Henk Vaarkamp (NL), Rainer Schneichel (FVE Board) and Thierry Chambon (UEVP).

JOINT SCIENTIFIC REPORT ON MRSA

Prudent use of antimicrobials key measure

A scientific report on meticillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) in livestock, pets and food was published jointly by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (ECDC) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA), on 16 June⁷.

According to EFSA's Panel on Biological Hazards and the ECDC, 'food-producing animals such as pigs, veal calves and broiler chickens often carry without symptoms a specific strain of MRSA called CC398'. There is currently no evidence that eating or handling food contaminated with MRSA can lead to an increased health risk for humans. However, people in contact with live animals that carry the CC398 strain are at risk of infection, the report noted. Pet animals can also be infected with MRSA. In these cases, the bacteria first pass from humans to pets and then back to humans.

The report concluded that, as animal movement and contact between live animals and humans are likely to be important factors in the transmission of MRSA, the most effective control measures will be at farm level.

In a parallel review, the EMA looked at the risk of colonisation or infection of livestock and companion animals with MRSA in the context of

the authorisation and the use of antimicrobial veterinary medicines. The Committee for Veterinary Medicinal Products (CVMP) found that MRSA is resistant to virtually all antibiotics from the beta-lactam group, and very often also to other antimicrobials. Prudent use of antimicrobials in animals should remain a 'key measure' and the CVMP recommended monitoring of animal consumption of antimicrobials to identify any sources of unnecessary use.

The Committee also recommended that 'medicines of last resort' for MRSA treatment in humans should be avoided in animals, to ensure their continued efficacy in humans.

FVE is already promoting the prudent use of antimicrobials, amongst others through the European platform for the responsible use of medicines in animals (EPRUMA) initiative. Last year, EPRUMA published a "Best Practice Framework" for the use of antimicrobials in food-producing animals in the EU⁸. According to EPRUMA, 'a guiding principle with respect to antimicrobials should be *'as little as possible, as much as necessary'*'. EPRUMA was established in 2005, and represents the interests of farmers (COPA/COGECA), the animal health industry (IFAH-Europe), the European initiative for sustainable development in agriculture (EISA) and the veterinary profession (FVE).

MINOR USE MINOR SPECIES

EMA to hold Info Day on 20 October

An informative day on the procedure of classification and incentives for veterinary drugs for MUMS/limited mar-

kets will be organized on 20 October in London⁹. The EMA intends to offer financial and regulatory incentives to potential applicants, which may include free scientific advice, administrative assistance and assistance with fees for centralized submissions.



EMA supports applications for veterinary medicinal products for minor species

Interested companies can register for the info day including a 'surgery hours' session during which they can book individual appointments with EMA staff¹⁰

EDUCATION

SPECIALISATION

Survey on EBVS 'Diplomate' degrees recognition

The Federal Veterinary Chamber in Germany (BTK) is faced with a growing number of individuals that have received recognition as a 'Diplomate' of one of the 23 European Colleges member of the European Board for Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS)¹¹.

While it highly respects the educational standard that the European Colleges provide in their trainings, there is a well-established educa-

7 http://efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/efsa_locale-1178620753812_1211902581497.htm

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

9 <http://www.ema.europa.eu/pdfs/conference/flyers/MUMS/agenda.pdf>

10 send an email to VetMUMS@ema.europa.eu to book an appointment

11 <http://www.ebvs.org>

tion system existing in Germany that also provides some value for German veterinarians. This situation has triggered 'the need for further discussions on how to implement the European College education system into a national one'. The BTK has therefore organised a survey among FVE members, aimed at providing an overview on the situation throughout Europe.

The outcome of the survey will be published in the next FVE Newsletter.

OIE CONFERENCE

Jan Vaarten to present European veterinary schools evaluation system

At the upcoming international conference on veterinary education, organised by the World Organisation for Animal health (OIE)¹², FVE Director Jan Vaarten has been invited to give a presentation on the evaluation of veterinary training in the EU.

Status of schools	EU-27	Non-EU	Total
Visited and approved	38	4	42
Visited and conditionally approved	2	1	3
Visited and not approved	12	5	17
Visitation pending	19	6	25
Not applied for visitation	1	10	11
Total	72	26	98

Table: Number of schools visited and approved, visited and conditionally approved, visited and not approved, visitation pending and schools that have not yet applied for a visit in Europe. For a complete overview please visit the EAEVE website (www.eaave.org)

In his presentation, he will describe the background, origin and possible future role of the current evaluation system, which is carried out jointly by the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education and the FVE.

Current evaluation reports reveal that the EU counts a number of excellent schools, a total of 38 out of 72 schools

are unconditionally approved. These schools meet the minimum standards as defined by the Directive¹³, while 'many go far beyond that level'.

However, at least one third of the EU schools are inadequate in one or more areas and fail to meet the standards set by the Directive. Most shortcomings concern a lack of facilities, lack of staff, lack of clinical training and insufficient caseloads. Especially in countries with a high of number of teaching establishments, schools often have insufficient budgets and are understaffed.

Such schools face one or more major deficiencies that continue to exist over the years. The national competent authorities concerned do not seem to be interested or have other priorities. For, in the EU, each individual Member State is responsible for the quality of its own undergraduate training and education of veterinarians and it is the national competent authorities that authorize the access to and the exercise of the profession.

The role played by the EU itself is limited. In fact, apart from the exception for official veterinarians, 'the EU has taken on a very limited role with regard to quality assurance of undergraduate veterinary training. The EU main concern is to assure a free

market not to improve the quality of education', notes Jan Vaarten.

In conclusion, he finds it 'very regrettable' that, often, 'the outcomes of the evaluations are not used in the way they should be used'. Opportunities to improve the quality of veterinary education are not recognised or simply neglected by the responsible authorities.

STUDENT MOBILITY

Brno veterinary university: label for excellence

The University of Veterinary and Pharmaceutical Sciences in Brno (Czech Republic) was awarded a Diploma Supplement (DS) label last June¹⁴.

In total, 65 higher education institutions from 16 countries were awarded with special European quality labels in recognition of their efforts to make it easier for students to study abroad. These labels are given to universities which have shown excellence in applying the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the Diploma Supplement (DS), two European instruments that make teaching and learning more transparent and facilitate the recognition of studies and qualifications.



Veterinary faculty of Brno receives label for excellence

Among the institutions with a veterinary faculty that received an ECTS label are the Universities of Ghent, Liege, Bologna and Parma as well as the Technical University of Lisbon.

¹² http://www.oie.int/eng/A_DEANS2009/DEANS-INTRO.html

¹³ http://www.fve.org/veterinary/pdf/profession/directive_2005_36_ec.pdf
Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1239_en.htm



Because of an extension of its tasks, the FVE office is currently looking for a

VETERINARY POLICY OFFICER
(24 hours /week; starting date: 1 January 2010)

The successful candidate should

- ☐ have a University degree, preferably in veterinary medicine¹ or in the field of agriculture;
- ☐ have excellent communication and networking skills;
- ☐ be fluent in written and spoken English. Other European languages especially Spanish will be an asset;
- ☐ have a minimum of 1 years work experience
- ☐ have an interest in policy making
- ☐ have good technical/IT interest and skills (MS Office, Dreamweaver, ...)
- ☐ be an enthusiastic team player
- ☐ be willing to travel for short business trips

The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) is a Federation of 46 national veterinary organisations across 38 European countries. Through its members, FVE represents approximately 200 000 veterinarians. FVE's mission is to unite the European veterinary profession for the benefit of animal health, animal welfare and public health (for further information, please visit: www.fve.org)

The FVE secretariat is located in the heart of Brussels. It is responsible for the daily management of the Federation and for policy development and political lobbying within the mandates set down by the FVE General Assembly and Board of Directors. For this purpose, FVE maintains strong relations with its member organisations, EU institutions and many other international organisations.

We offer an interesting job opportunity in an exciting international environment and in a small, but positive and motivated team. Salary will depend on qualifications and experience.

If you are interested in applying for this position, please send your letter of motivation and CV, preferably by email, before 30 September, to

Jan Vaarten, Executive Director,
1 Rue Defacqz,
1000 Brussels, Belgium.
Tel +32 2 5337020,
e-mail: info@fve.org

¹ preferably graduated from one of the veterinary schools and faculties approved by the EAEVE-FVE education committee

http://www.eaeev.org/fileadmin/downloads/establishments_status/establishments_status.pdf

FVE & PROFESSIONAL MATTERS

TAIEX-FVE CONFERENCE

One Health: Effective herd health control

A two-day conference *'One Health: effective herd health control'* was held in Plovdiv, Bulgaria on 23 and 24 June. Organised jointly by the Technical Assistance Information Exchange Instrument (TAIEX)¹⁵ and FVE in collaboration with the Bulgarian Ministry of Agriculture, the Bulgarian Union of Veterinarians and the Bulgarian National Veterinary Service, the conference was aimed at the improvement of herd health control in large animals, a better understanding of the causes, epidemiology and the control of certain zoonoses including (re) emerging infectious diseases. Disease prevention, early detection and rapid response for a reduced risk to public health were also on the agenda.



Jan Vaarten, Walter Winding, Andrew Chirkowski (all FVE) and Mette Kirkeskov Jensen (Copa-Cogeca) were four of the speaker in Plovdiv (from left to right)

In addition, the conference promoted *'prevention is better than cure'*, the slogan of the EU Animal Health policy by trying to explain the importance of good surveillance strategies based on risk assessment and by stronger part-

nership between official vets, private vets and animal producer.

Around 150 veterinarians from Bulgaria attended the meeting. Speakers were from Bulgaria, OIE, DG Sanco, Copa-Cogeca, EAEVE, Veterinary Faculty Gent and from the FVE. The presentations are available on the TAIEX web site¹⁶.

A similar meeting (*'One Health: training on zoonotic diseases'*) is planned to be held in Becici, Montenegro, on 20 October next¹⁷.

EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

FVE application to join the stakeholder platform

The FVE has officially submitted its application for membership of the stakeholder platform of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

As the representative body of the veterinary profession in Europe (50 member organisations in 38 countries, representing a total of 200,000 veterinarians), FVE feels it is well qualified. EFSA's remit is *'risk assessment and risk communication for food and feed safety'*, and veterinarians play a very important role in both areas as well as in risk management.

The veterinary profession is involved at every level of the food chain, be it in controls (inspections and audits), research but also in risk communication. Two of the FVE sections, the Union of European Veterinary Hygienists and the European Association of State Veterinary Officers, combine a wealth of expertise in food hygiene at all levels (risk assessment, risk communication and risk management).

The FVE's main fields of interest in the remit of EFSA are: animal health and welfare and veterinary public health. Regarding veterinary public health our special emphasis lies in the areas of zoonotic diseases (including food borne zoonoses), food borne diseases and the safety of food from animal origin.

FVE MEETS OIE

Bernard Vallat receives 'Code of Conduct' brochure

A FVE delegation, consisting of President Walter Winding, Vice President Christophe Buhot and Executive Director Jan Vaarten, met with OIE Director General Bernard Vallat in Paris on 16 September for an informal meeting.

Walter Winding thanked Bernard Vallat on behalf of FVE for his support with the *'European Veterinary Code of Conduct + Veterinary Act'* brochure, for which Mr. Vallat had contributed the preamble. The brochure was officially presented to him.



Bernard Vallat (OIE, right) receives the FVE 'Code of Conduct' brochure from FVE President Walter Winding

OIE and FVE share common interests like animal health, animal welfare, public health and veterinary education. Frequent discussions are taking place on these topics and currently close cooperation is planned for the harmonization of European veterinary qualification (see also article on OIE education conference, page 7).

¹⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/taiox>

¹⁶ <http://taiox.ec.europa.eu/NewLibrary/New-EventAgenda.aspx?EventId=33359>

¹⁷ For more information please contact the FVE office

FVE BOARD MEETING

Important position papers adopted

In its meeting of 17 September the FVE Board adopted FVE's opinion on the EU Commission's proposal for a Regulation on the animal health requirements applicable to the non-commercial movement of pet animals (see article on page 2). A recently drafted position on modernisation of inspections in slaughterhouses (paper will be available on the FVE website soon) was also discussed and adopted.

The Board and the four Section Presidents – which the FVE Board regularly invites to join its meetings – further discussed the latest draft of the revised paper on the castration of piglets without anesthesia. The paper will be on the agenda of the next meeting of the General Assembly in November. Further discussions took place on veterinary matters such as veterinary medicines, veterinary education, and identification of animals, as well as on internal matters like the upcoming November GA, the FVE finances and a new FVE information leaflet.

FVE MEMBER SECRETARIATS

Network Group Meeting in December

The next Secretariats Network Group meeting will take place on Monday 7 and Tuesday 8 December in Brussels.

The purpose of the meeting is to strengthen the contacts and communication between the secretariats of the FVE member organisations and to share experiences on the organisation of the daily work. The agenda

for the meeting will be sent out soon and all secretariats of FVE member organizations are cordially invited to join the meeting. Please contact the FVE office for more information.

LOWE REPORT

Role of the veterinarian in food animal production

A poorly developed demand for veterinary services rather than a shortage of farm animal veterinarians has been identified by a personal report¹⁸ published last month by Professor Phillip Lowe, Chairman of the Vets and Veterinary Services Working Group¹⁹ in the UK. *'There is no absolute shortfall in supply'* of farm animal veterinarians, the report states, and while there will be a need to replace older and experienced farm animal veterinarians when they retire, *'there is no evidence of a systematic problem with succession'*. The report was commissioned by UK Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on behalf of a Government/Industry Steering Group which has been considering whether there is a shortage of farm animal veterinarians in Great Britain.

The report identified the potential for veterinarians to increase their role as providers of expert advice to the farming and food industries. *'The relationship between veterinarians and farmers needs to be renewed'*. Both veterinarians and farmers need to recognise that their ultimate customer is the food consumer, the report points out. Veterinarians need to add value beyond the farm gate but also *'need to overcome the per-*

ception held by some farmers that vets are 'quasi regulators' and do not add value'.



UK report on veterinary expertise in food animal production

Veterinarians have an image of scientific professionalism rather than a strong self-identity as providers of services to businesses, the report notes. *'These aspirations must be pursued jointly. In building stronger business skills there is a role for the professional practice manager but also an opportunity to embed business skills more clearly into the veterinary curriculum.'*

The ability of veterinary businesses to offer more clearly differentiated services to its customers is not helped by a confusing concept of veterinary specialism (which is not structured for the benefit of the customer). The concept of the veterinary team is also poorly developed, with potential for a clearer and more prominent role for veterinary technicians. Professor Lowe recommends that the veterinary profession *'take a leading and progressive role in the development of training and career structures in broader veterinary services'*.

Furthermore, the report notes that there is *'scope for a broader involvement of veterinarians in assuring the integrity and safety of food'*. However, the underlying relationship between

¹⁸ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/ahws/vservices/index.htm>

¹⁹ This Group is made up of representatives from Defra, Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly Government, the British Veterinary Association, Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and the National Farmers Union.

the profession and government has come under increasing strain in recent years. The delivery arm of government '*needs to focus on improving its relationship with the network of small practices and practitioners on which it depends*'.

A recurring theme in the report is the need to better align farm animal veterinary services to meet the changing needs of the livestock industries. Professor Lowe recommends the creation of a Veterinary Development Council as an appropriate forum for bring the suppliers and customers of farm animals veterinary services together.

Defra will now consider Professor Lowe's report and is due to meet with other Steering Group members in November.

MISCELLANEOUS

BRITISH VETERINARY ASSOCIATION

BVA Congress 2009: Together forever?

The annual congress of the British Veterinary Association (BVA) is being held in Cardiff, Wales from 24-26 September 2009 and will include CPD sessions, political debates and a lively social programme. Don't miss out, register online now²⁰.



20 www.bva.co.uk/congress

JOBS FOR THE BOYS?

RCVS takes action to regain balance in the profession

Being a vet comes joint second with being a doctor in the top five 'dream jobs' for girls, according to a Careers Advice Service poll recently reported in the UK's *Daily Telegraph*. The top five wish-list for the boys was footballer, businessman, pop star, pilot and doctor.

No surprise, then, that 80% of vet students in the UK are women: this was the first year that the number of female UK-practising vets overtook the number of men. While women clearly make excellent vets, a well-rounded profession needs some balance. In addition, the socioeconomic and ethnic profile of the profession – just 2% of members consider themselves not to be white – means that the relatively homogenous UK pool of veterinary skills may be missing some potentially excellent individuals.

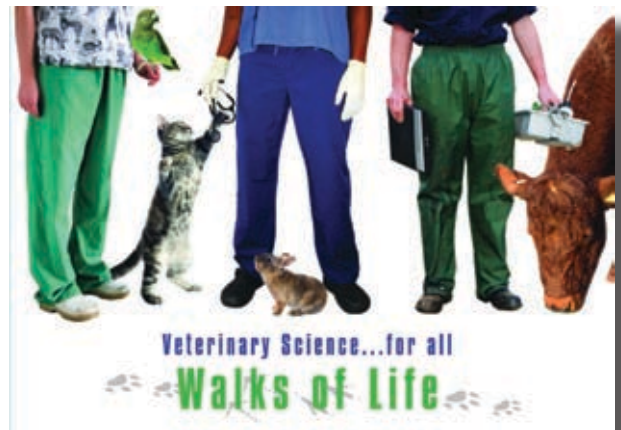
In 2007 the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, together with six of the seven UK veterinary schools and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, was successful in securing £90,000 from a Government fund that was set up to address issues of accessibility to the professions.

Our objective was to improve awareness of the career options available and expose some of the myths surrounding access to the profession, such as needing three straight As in science A Levels.

Following research, we developed a brochure, DVD and interactive web-

site²¹, aimed at 14-18 year olds and their parents, teachers and careers advisors. Under the theme "Veterinary Science... for all Walks of Life," we emphasised that vets can come from all walks of life, and work with people and animals from all walks of life.

The brochure and DVD were sent to every secondary school and further education college in the UK, and a copy of the brochure to every practice. A specific PR and advertising



campaign was run in media aimed at the black and ethnic minority audiences, and posters and copies of the materials were sent to community and faith centres. We even have our own channel on You Tube²².



Sanjay Mangabhai is one of the veterinary surgeons featured in the 'Walks of Life' CD

It will take time before the project bears fruit, but initial feedback and requests for information have been very positive, with around 500 re-

21 <http://www.walksoflife.org.uk>

22 <http://www.youtube.com/vetcareers>

quests for more information, and well over 4,000 You Tube hits.

If you would like a copy of the DVD or brochure, please contact info@walksoflife.org.uk or 020 7202 0791.

USA 'ONE HEALTH' INITIATIVE

Former AVMA president to head multidisciplinary commission

Roger Mahr, former president of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), has been appointed chief executive officer of the One Health Commission in the US²³.

The mission of the One Health Commission is the establishment of closer professional interactions, collaborations and educational opportunities across the health sciences professions, together with their related disciplines, to improve the health of people, animals and the environment.



One Health: new website was launched recently

A changing environment populated by interconnected animal and human contact creates significant challenges. These challenges require integrated solutions and call for collaborative leadership.

An US summit will be held later this year, and will initiate a National Academies study about collaboration of the medical disciplines over the next year.

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