



NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2011

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World Veterinary Year, has started! The official opening of Vet-2011 took place in Versailles, the place where, 250 years ago, Claude Bourgelat convinced Louis XV to establish a veterinary school. This school in Lyon, the first one, funded and recognized by the king, is a milestone in the history of veterinary medicine and the veterinary profession.

In the years of enlightenment, it clearly recognized science as fundamental for the development of veterinary medicine. It emphasized research and education as the way forward. It also recognized animal health as being in the interest of the public. The school was not only meant for horses of the French nobility but also, as stated by the original act, for the control of diseases in cattle. At that time diseases like rinderpest, caused enormous losses, ruining farmers and bringing poverty and famine over the country. Only a few months ago, FAO could report that this disease has been brought to the brink of extinction. The official announcement of the eradication is

to be expected in May when the last remaining countries will obtain the disease free status from the OIE.

Also interesting to note is that from the early days onwards, veterinary medicine has been strongly linked to public health. A fruitful collaboration with medical surgeons in Lyon, stimulated the development of comparative pathobiology, or as we call it today: the One Health concept.

Many reasons to look back and to celebrate what has been achieved, but even more reasons to become inspired by such achievements and to look ahead. Many challenges still have to be overcome and new ones lay ahead: animal health and welfare, public health, food security, sustainability, environmental impact, etc.

Crucial for future success will be our ability to communicate about these items and about the permanent need to invest in research and education. Obviously, today it is no longer the king, but it is the society at large that must become or remain convinced of the need for good veterinary services.

World Veterinary Year: the opportunity for all of you to convey this message!

Jan Vaarten,
FVE Executive Director

ANIMAL HEALTH

EU VETERINARY WEEK & VET 2011

OIE and DG Sanco launch photographic competition

Following the success of previous events, the FVE, DG Sanco and its partners¹ are now preparing the next EU Veterinary Week, which will be held in Brussels in Charlemagne building on 19 and 20 May 2011. The conference will focus on crisis management in the food chain. An outdoor stand along the Berlaymont esplanade will be set up.

To highlight the diversity of the veterinary profession and *"to celebrate the important role they play in our daily lives"* the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and DG Sanco are organising a photographic competition, in the framework of Vet2011, which celebrates the 250th birthday of the veterinary profession. The five regional winners will be announced during the event while the overall winner will be presented in the OIE General Session in Paris. Photos will be on display as well. The closing date is 31 March 2011. See www.vetsinyourdailylife.org

BEE HEALTH

Commission steps up efforts to tackle bee mortality

On 6 December, the European Commission adopted a Communication providing for a series of specific actions that will help to better understand the reasons behind the worldwide issue of

high bee mortality and will therefore assist the efforts to find solutions to



the problem. In recent years, an increase in bee mortality has been reported in several countries around the world. To get a better understanding of the reasons behind the high bee mortality worldwide, the European Commission has launched a number of initiatives to address the concerns of the beekeeping sector, including the designation of an EU Reference laboratory for bee health, a pilot surveillance programme to estimate the extent of bee mortalities, bee health training for Member States' officials, looking at veterinary medicines availability for bees and (increased) funding of research projects.

DRAFT LEGISLATION

FVE working group discusses future Animal Health Law

An FVE working group met on 23 February to discuss a preliminary draft of the Community Animal Health Law, which is to become a part of overall legislative package. The working group started by reviewing the EU Animal health strategy 2007-2013, and its original goals and action plan.

FVE is impressed by the enormous amount of work carried out so far and welcomes the efforts made to bring so many pieces of legislation together in one consistent legal frame work.

However this preliminary paper also raised some concerns. It was not so clear whether the main objective is the protection of animal health/welfare, public health or the promotion of free movement of animals and products. The One Health concept also seemed to be insufficiently addressed. The working group noted that the role and position of the veterinary profession is not adequately covered by the draft law and it is unclear whether private practition-



ers are seen as part of the veterinary services or not. The working group also noticed the tendency to move official controls away from the competent authority to the private sector, as already seen in food controls. Doing the same for animal health and disease control could pose a serious risk for society. Veterinary certification also seems fragmented.

Finally, the working group observed that the new law should include a reference to the role of the statutory bodies, to accreditation of veterinary education and define the role between veterinarians and para-veterinarians. The chain of command should also be clearly defined. Based on these and other findings, an FVE position paper will be developed and presented to the Commission.

The official Commission proposal of the Animal Health Law is expected by March 2012.

¹ World organisation for animal health (OIE), COPA, UECEB, Eurogroup and FESASS

ANIMAL WELFARE

LAYING HENS

Stakeholders discuss upcoming ban on non-enriched cages

The ban on conventional cages for laying hens, which will come into force on 1 January 2012², was the topic of discussion at a recent stakeholders meeting on 18 January, which was also attended by the FVE.



While in many countries, nearly all operators have already switched to other housing systems, this is not the case in certain Member States. While no precise data are available, it is estimated that around 30 % of the EU egg production will still come from hens in battery cages on 1 January 2012.

The main discussion point at the meeting was what to do with these hens and eggs and how to ensure to best focus all existing resources on the timely implementation of the ban. It was clear that most Member States and stakeholders are strongly opposed to postponing the ban, which was decided in 1999. Possible solutions included a stop on the intra-EU trade of these products, increased

inspections and sanctions as well as compensation/aid for producers that are switching over. It was also noted that eggs entering the EU market should conform to the EU legislation. For that reason, non-enriched battery cages should not be sold to Third countries.

According to FVE, all competent authorities should *"assume responsibility as the driving force in achieving a full implementation and enforcement"* as soon as possible, and *"designate adequate funds, staff and resources to support producers making the switch and to implement and enforce the Directive. Sanctions should be effective, proportional and dissuasive."* FVE also calls upon all its European poultry veterinarians to inform their clients and to help them switching to more welfare-friendly poultry housing systems.

On 21 February 2011 at a meeting of the EU Agriculture Council, some Member States led by Poland requested a limited extension to the deadline. However most delegations opposed prolonging the deadline saying it would be *"enormously unfair to all the poultry keepers around Europe who have worked so hard to stop using battery cages."*

PIG WELFARE

European partnership on pig castration

The FVE was one of the first stakeholders to sign and endorse the common *European declaration on the alternatives to surgical castration of pigs*. Thanks to the hard work by the Belgian Presidency and the Commission, representatives of European farmers, meat industry, retailers, scientists, veterinarians and animal welfare NGOs

committed to a plan to voluntarily end surgical castration of pigs in Europe by 1 January 2018. As a first step, from 1 January 2012, surgical castration of pigs will be performed with prolonged analgesia and/or anaesthesia. The declaration, the first of its kind at EU level for animal welfare, is an open invitation for every actor in the European pig sector to join this voluntary initiative. Its content and signatories can be seen online³.

A European partnership will be established to develop the tools to reach the goals and ensure that costs are fairly shared. The meeting *"European partnership on pig castration"*, organised by DG Sanco on 25 February in Brussels, allowed an exchange of views from retailers, producers, animal welfare groups and researchers regarding the formation of the European partnership. Presentations can be found online⁴ by clicking on the agenda.

REGULATION OF WELFARE DURING TRANSPORT

EFSA publishes its scientific opinion, FVE calls for better enforcement

Scientists on the European Food Safety Authority's Animal Health and Welfare Panel have made a number of recommendations based upon a thorough review of the most recent scientific literature from 2004 to date, following the framework of the current European legislation on the

2 Directive 1999/74/EC

3 http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/farm/initiatives_en.htm

4 http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/seminars/docs/25022011_agenda.pdf

welfare of animals during transport⁵. The opinion lists a series of practical indicators and clinical measurements, which can be used by animal industry professionals and inspectors to assess the welfare of animals during transport.

The IBF consortium⁶ is expected to submit to the European Commission its final report on the impact of the legislation on the welfare and trade flows of live animals on 24 March. Their survey received over 170 replies. The FVE has also participated in the IBF consultation, and emphasized the role of the veterinarians in implementing and enforcing the transport legislation. The Federation notes that, although the vast majority of movements take place without significant or unacceptable distress being caused to the animals, *"a significant number of journeys continue to take place in which animal welfare standards are unacceptably low."* The FVE calls for competent authorities to assume responsibility and make available *"adequate funds, staff and resources"* to allow correct implementation and enforcement. All parties involved in the transport of animals should *"assume joint responsibility"* for safeguarding the health and welfare of animals. Meanwhile, the Commission continues to concentrate on enforcement. The EFSA opinion and the IBF report will contribute to a report the European Commission is due to present in autumn 2011 to the European Parliament and to the EU Member States on the impact of the 2005 regulation.

EU LEGISLATION ON ANIMAL WELFARE

Second Action Plan discussed at stakeholder meeting

The evaluation of the 2006-2010 Animal Welfare Action plan and the preparation of the 2011-2015 second action plan were discussed at a multi-stakeholders meeting in Brussels in January. FVE also attended.

Participants at the meeting agreed on the importance to improve the implementation and enforcement of the legislation, while the competitiveness with Third countries (with less strict animal welfare legislation) was seen as a challenge. The possibility of drafting an overarching framework law on animal welfare was also discussed.

Many of the FVE recommendations⁷ that were formulated as part of the external consultation (see October FVE Newsletter) were taken into consideration.

ERRATUM

Ritual slaughter

In the December 2010 FVE Newsletter, the source of the figures on ritual slaughter was DialRel, not DG Sanco as stated. The error is regretted.

PUBLIC HEALTH

TSEs

Only BSE is a proven zoonosis, according to EFSA and ECDC

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) have published a joint opinion reviewing the latest available scientific information on possible links between Transmissible Spongi-



form Encephalopathies (TSEs)⁸ in animals and humans. The findings confirm that at present, the only TSE proven to be zoonotic is classical Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), known in humans as variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD). Regarding classical scrapie in goats and sheep, no epidemiological evidence suggests it is zoonotic; whereas for atypical scrapie, the scientific data currently available are too limited to conclude whether it has the potential to be zoonotic or not. This joint opinion of EFSA and ECDC provides an overview of the situation in relation to the zoonotic potential of TSEs and may support risk managers in their work on those TSEs which are of major concern for human health.

5 <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/ahaw110112.htm>

6 <http://www.ibf.be/animalstransport/>

7 http://www.fve.org/news/position_papers/animal_welfare/035_10_vets_and_animal_welfare_final.pdf

8 <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/biohaz110119.htm>

FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME 7

FVE submits proposal to study the impact of human-pet interactions

There is an ever-increasing presence of companion animals in current societies in close interaction with human beings. However, the information on the zoonotic disease incidence in animals and people and on strategies for disease prevention and control is fragmented at best. For this reason, in July 2010, the FP7 called for the set-up of a European interprofessional network addressing zoonotic diseases transmitted via companion animals.

FVE answered the call submitting a proposal named “*CALLISTO*” (companion animal multisectorial interprofessional interdisciplinary strategic think tank on zoonoses). Aim of the project is to identify knowledge and technology gaps in the management of the most important zoonoses transmitted by companion animals, and to propose actions that contribute to reducing the risk of infectious disease outbreaks in humans and food-producing animals due to companion animals. FVE would be the coordinator of Callisto, with many partners, including the International association of human-animal interaction organisations (Iahaio), the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA), the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (Fecava) and the Universities of Copenhagen and of Jerusalem.

The FP7 project would take 3 years and an EU contribution of a maximum of €1 million. FVE submitted the proposal to DG Research & Innovation in January, and will know by mid-April if the proposal has been accepted.

That this is a very timely issue is confirmed by the recent publication of Bruno Chomel and Ben Sun⁹, two Californian scientists who looked at the public health risk of companion animals sleeping on their owner's bed. They estimate that up to 62% of pet owners allow dogs and cats on their beds. They point out that public health risks, including increased emergence of zoonoses, may be associated with such practices.

REVISION OF MEAT INSPECTION

FVE Hygiene working group to meet in April

The FVE Hygiene working group will meet on 14 April to discuss the revision of meat inspection and emergency slaughter procedures. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has set up a web page on the modernisation of meat inspection¹⁰. It gives an overview of the current state of affairs, with lists of the current legislation and papers published. Since the EFSA opinion on the revision of meat inspection of pigs is expected by June 2011, EC will release an electronic questionnaire in order to collect the views of all Member States and Stakeholders. Together with its section concerned, the Union of European Veterinary Hygienists (UEVH), the FVE will prepare the response.

Emergency slaughter is a matter of considerable concern in some countries, where certain slaughterhouses have developed a ‘niche’ emergency slaughter market and process the majority of carcasses.

⁹ <http://www.cdc.gov/eid/content/17/2/167.htm>

¹⁰ <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/ahawtopics/topic/meatinspection.htm>

Although livestock are certified as required, the Official veterinarian often cannot find any valid reason for emergency slaughter, as required by legislation. Many animals sent for emergency slaughter are in fact commercial culls (production-based diseases including mastitis and lameness). The critical point seems to be poor legislation, resulting in animal welfare problems due to poor certification. Official veterinarians at the slaughter premises are in a difficult position having to enforce poor legislation, often without adequate support. The role, training and definition of plant inspection assistants will also be discussed.

EU COUNCIL MEETING

First reading of food information regulation

At the EU Council meeting of 21 February, European agriculture ministers adopted the first-reading position on a draft regulation on providing food information to consumers¹¹. One of the elements of the Council's position is the mandatory nature of the nutrition declaration: the labelling of the energy value and of the quantities of fat, saturates, carbohydrates, protein, sugars and salt would become compulsory. Labelling of the country of origin would also become compulsory for pork, lamb and poultry (it is already the case for foods such as beef, honey, olive oil and fresh fruit and vegetables).

However, the amendment regarding labelling meat from “*special slaughter*” (i.e. without stunning) was not taken over by the Council.

¹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/foodlabelling/publications/proposal_regulation_ep_council.pdf

"This is a huge step backwards", Harvey Locke, president



of the British Veterinary Association (BVA), commented. *"The BVA believes that all animals should be stunned before slaughter. But as long as slaughter without stunning is permitted, consumers should have the right to make an informed choice. We hope that Members of the European Parliament will look at this issue again and push for compulsory labelling to be brought back into the plans."* Last June, the EP had voted on new food labelling rules including a requirement to label meat from animals slaughtered without stunning according to certain religious traditions.

The FVE wholeheartedly supports the BVA position.

MEDICINES

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (1)

FVE calls for the set-up of a European task force

On 9 March, the FVE task force on antimicrobial resistance¹² will meet to develop a strategy regarding the responsible use of antimicrobials. It is currently developing both general and species-specific guidelines for the use of antimicrobials. FVE is also working together with the American Veterinary Medical Association in order to draw up a common position on the responsible use of antimicrobials. This is important for the Federation, which is *"well aware of the occurrence of antimicrobial resistance in bacteria and is concerned by the current increase and its cross-species transmissibility"*, according to its recent position paper¹³. The FVE and its members are taking *"all the necessary measures to tackle these trends in food-producing animals, as well as in horses and in companion animals."*

To combat antimicrobial resistance – in other words, to *"maintain the efficacy of antimicrobials"* – the FVE recommends:

- to take measures that are *"science-based, realistic, mandatory, proportionate and sustainable"*, with a *"well-coordinated"* approach between the veterinary field and their counterparts from the human medical field.

- to minimise the preventive use of antimicrobials. *"Antimicrobials should not be used to mask poor farm management or an inadequate performance"*.

- to promote best practices in animal husbandry and disease prevention

- to restrict the use of certain critically important antimicrobials

- to develop on-site diagnostic tools to allow the differentiation between viral and bacterial infections

- to train veterinary professionals and undergraduates in the responsible use of antimicrobials



Furthermore, the FVE calls upon the Commission and national authorities to support the animal health sector. *"The public in general must be aware of the risks associated with the use of antimicrobials without any professional advice or prescription, and especially when purchased via the Internet"*.

Finally, FVE calls upon the European Commission to convene all the concerned stakeholders *"to set up a multidisciplinary EU taskforce in order to develop a European policy"*.

¹² Members: Christophe Buhot, Henk Vaarkamp, Rainer Schneichel, Rens van Dobbenburgh, Jan Vaarten, Despoina Iatridou

¹³ http://www.fve.org/news/position_papers/medicines/fve_10_056_maintenance_anticrobials%27_efficacy.pdf

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (2)

Heads of medicines agencies outline action plan

In view of the concerns regarding antimicrobial resistance, the heads of medicines agencies (HMA) have prepared a strategic plan on veterinary medicine related antimicrobial issues. Concrete steps/actions to be taken by the HMA and national competent authorities are outlined in the HMA action plan¹⁴.

At HMA level, this action plan includes a communication strategy for interaction with stakeholders, both in the Member States and at Community level; the legal classification of antimicrobial veterinary medicines (as prescription-only medicines); and the mapping of prescription and use habits for antimicrobials in the EU.

Other areas mentioned in which HMA takes a responsibility for action include the monitoring of sales of veterinary antimicrobials, the monitoring of resistance in zoonotic and indicator bacteria and communication and training of prescribers and users of antimicrobials.

The HMA will also take into account the guidelines, strategy papers and recommendations already produced (including those by the Codex Alimentarius Task force on antimicrobial resistance, the Scientific Advisory Group on Antimicrobials, the Committee on Veterinary Medicinal Products, the European Food Safety Authority and the European Medicines Agency).

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (3)

FVE in favour of transatlantic co-operation

Maintaining a broad veterinary arsenal and reducing the use of antimicrobials by focusing on disease preven-



tion through sustainable practices in animals (improvement of animal husbandry, biosecurity) and in humans (better hygiene rules throughout food chain): these were seen as the most important areas for cooperation between the US and the EU, according to the FVE. The Federation – “very much in favour of transatlantic co-operation on antimicrobial resistance” – replied to a public consultation, held late 2010, regarding the transatlantic task force on antimicrobial resistance (TAFTAR).

Other priorities, according to the FVE, are the production of harmonised guidelines to help reduce inappropriate drug use and increase pharmacovigilance awareness.

TAFTAR was created following the EU-US Summit of November 2009 and its report has just been published¹⁵. Like FVE, the vast majority of respondents expressed that they were either very much or clearly (91.1%) in favour of the transatlantic cooperation.

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (4)

Pilgrim issues newsletter

The EU-funded Pilgrim project – short for “*Preventing community and nosocomial spread and infection with MRSA ST-398 instruments for accelerated control and integrated risk management of antimicrobial resistance*” – investigates the animal-adapted strain ST-398 of meticillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). The Pilgrim consortium brings together public health specialists, microbiologists, veterinarians and engineers from academia and industry to explore the epidemiology of resistant bacteria, especially MRSA. The 3-year project (2009-2011) has a funding of € 3 million. Its second annual meeting was held in Ghent, in December 2010, and its newsletter is now available on the Pilgrim website¹⁶.



¹⁴ http://www.hma.eu/uploads/media/HMA_AMR_Action_Plan_Feb_2011.pdf

¹⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/health/antimicrobial_resistance/docs/antimicrobial_cons01_report_en.pdf

¹⁶ <http://www.fp7-pilgrim.eu/>

23-24 MARCH

Global conference on the availability of veterinary medicines

The Global conference on the availability of veterinary medicines – *“Providing a Climate for Science and Innovation”* will take place from 23-24 March 2011 at the European Medicines Agency’s offices in London¹⁷.



Organised jointly by the EMA, the International federation of animal health (IFAH) and the Drug information association (DIA), the conference aims to provide a platform *“to discuss the opportunities and challenges of ensuring an adequate supply of up-to-date medicines to meet the needs of animals around the world”*.

11 OCTOBER 2011

WVA Summit on the use of antimicrobials

At the upcoming World veterinary congress in Cape Town from 10 to 14 October, the World veterinary association (WVA) will hold its summit on the use of antimicrobials – *“Lessons learned and future approaches”*, in co-operation with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the World organisation for animal health (OIE) and the World health organisation (WHO). For further information, please contact the WVA Secretariat (secretariat@worldvet.org)



EDUCATION

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Updating the professional qualifications directive: FVE actively involved

On 7 January, the second evaluation round started reviewing the Professional qualifications Directive¹⁸. The public consultation, which aims to gathering stakeholders’ views on a modernisation of this Directive, will end on 15 March. The FVE is actively involved as a stakeholder and has attended numerous meetings on the issue. In its briefing note, the FVE encourages the European commission to take into account the importance of public health and consumer protection when recasting the Directive¹⁹. *“Citizens, animals and animal owners benefiting from cross border services should not have their health or safety put at risk and they should be assured of obtaining adequate level of quality and consumer protection.”*

Also, more emphasis should be placed on *“the need for all veterinarians – and not just practitioners – to be registered with their competent authorities”*. A high level of education and training throughout the EU is essential, according to the FVE. *“Since the disbandment of the Advisory Committee on Veterinary Training, the FVE and European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) have operated a successful system of evaluation of European veterinary schools. In the interests of consumer and animal protection, and for the goal of*

¹⁷ http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Agenda/2010/11/WC500099021.pdf

¹⁸ Directive 2005/36/EC

¹⁹ http://www.fve.org/news/position_papers/veterinary_profession/fve_sbvw_briefing%20note_final_version_docs_042.pdf

delivering high quality services, it is desirable that this system should be strengthened and, possibly, complemented by the system of mutual recognition such as that supported by the European Commission in respect of architects”.

The FVE also re-iterated the need to update the annex on minimum training requirements and for professionals crossing borders to have adequate language skills and carry adequate professional indemnity insurance. FVE is also member of a steering group discussing the development of an EU-wide professional card, of which the first meeting took place on 10 January and the second on 25 February. At this meeting Commission has agreed that it will start to work on an “options paper” for the professional cards which will be an opportunity for the members to comment on (scheduled by the 5th April 2011); responses received to the public consultation paper will be considered as well.

13-15 MAY

Second world conference on veterinary education

To highlight the diversity of the vet-



erinary profession and “to celebrate the important role they play in our daily lives” the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and DG Sanco are organising a photographic competition, in the framework of

Vet2011, which celebrates the 250th birthday of the veterinary profession. The closing date is 31 March 2011.

See www.vetsinyourdailylife.org

OIE CONFERENCE ON VETERINARY LEGISLATION

Conference highlights important role of veterinary statutory bodies

The first Global conference on Veterinary Legislation, organised by the World organisation for animal health (OIE) in Djerba, Tunisia, from 7 to 9 December, highlighted the significance of veterinary legislation as a “cornerstone of national veterinary good governance and infrastructures”. In this context, the role of veterinary statutory bodies to “good governance of the veterinary profession is often overlooked”, according to the conference conclusions²⁰. The document also recommends the creation of a pilot twinning programme between statutory bodies in developed and developing countries. It was also recommended that the OIE and the World veterinary association organise a global conference for veterinary statutory bodies.

OIE members that do not yet have an autonomous veterinary statutory body, as defined by the OIE terrestrial code²¹, are urged to do so.

20 http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Conferences_Events/docs/pdf/recommendations/ANG_Recommendations.pdf

21 http://www.oie.int/index.php?id=169&L=0&htmfile=chapitre_1.3.2.htm

WILD VET SHORT COURSE !

SOUTH AFRICA

Live the experience: Be a Wild Vet for 15 days!

‘Wild Vet Africa’ is an experiential program for vet’s that focuses on wildlife in Africa. This practical and theoretical course offers vet students and qualified vets an opportunity to work and live amongst elephants and other wildlife thus gaining insight into aspects of veterinary work specific to wildlife that occurs in Southern Africa.

The course focuses on veterinary work with wildlife, a vet’s role in conservation and a focus on elephants and elephant behaviour.

http://www.africademy.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=86&Itemid=100



THREE QUESTIONS FOR...

Jos Olaerts



PHARMACO VIGILANCE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF REPORTING AD- VERSE EVENTS

Jos Olaerts is Principle scientific administrator at the European medicines agency in London. He kindly answered a few questions to the FVE Newsletter regarding pharmacovigilance and the importance of veterinarians reporting on adverse events.



1. Are adverse event reports centralised in the EU?

In the EU, all pharmaceutical companies – and in several Member States also veterinarians – have a legal duty to report adverse events related to the use of veterinary medicinal products (VMPs) to the local authorities. The European Medicines Agency in London centralises all such adverse event reports, together with data from events having occurred with similar products outside the EU. The data are monitored by expert groups for unexpected adverse reactions, higher than normal frequency of adverse reactions, lack of efficacy, potential environmental problems or information regarding the validity of the withdrawal period. The outcome of the investigations may lead

to changes to the conditions under which a VMP is allowed to be marketed.

2. Why is it important that veterinarians report side effects?

The veterinarian is in the best position to verify that the claims for safe and effective use for a VMP correspond to the experience gained in the field. The central EU database provides a unique opportunity to monitor a VMP based on the combined observations by veterinarians. Therefore, the veterinarian has a crucial role in communicating any adverse events including suspected lack of efficacy.

3. How do veterinarians benefit and are their interests protected?

The general benefit for vets is that the reports contribute directly to the improvement of the VMPs that are used in his/her practice. The immediate benefit from a single report is less obvious and is considered one of the reasons why there is underreporting by vets in the EU. Vets are sometimes also concerned about the possible follow-up by authorities and about the confidentiality of his/her personal details. There should however be no concern since the focus of reporting and surveillance are the VMPs under investigation and not the practice. In addition, personal details are to be kept confidential in line with stringent EU personal data protection legislation and may only be made available following the express agreement by the veterinarian. With the new database system (planned for 2013), it is also envisaged to allow vets to sign-up for receiving new information available on the safety and efficacy of specific products or products for the species of interest.

FVE & PROFESSIONAL MATTERS

Vet2011

Celebrating 250 years of the veterinary profession

"Happy birthday and my very best wishes for the next 250 years!" With these words, John Dalli, EU Commissioner for health and consumer policy, formally opened the celebration of World Veterinary Year Vet2011. The opening ceremony took place on 24 January, at the historical site of Versailles, the former residence of the French kings. It was here that 250 years ago Claude Bourgelat managed to convince king Louis XV to set up the first veterinary school: a landmark in the development of veterinary education and the veterinary profession.

Applauding Claude Bourgelat's initiatives, World Veterinary Association (WVA) president Tjeerd Jorna said: *"His work initiated the birth of veterinary education and the birth of the veterinary profession throughout the world. Bourgelat has laid the cornerstone for the development of veterinary medicine as a Global Good."* President Jorna complimented the organisers and encouraged everyone to join in celebrating Vet2011. *"It offers an excellent opportunity to communicate about the broad range of contributions of the veterinary profession in all its diversity to our society"*. Over the past 250 years much had been achieved. *"Let it be the inspiration for the continuing development of the veterinary profession: a profession to be*



proud of!" He also announced that World Veterinary Year would be officially closed at the WVA congress in Cape Town (South Africa), in October.

"The recent dioxin, African swine fever and bee health issues serve only as a snapshot of the sort of risks that may emerge at any given moment. They also remind us of the importance of vets in managing these issues," said John Dalli. He noted that there were around 200,000 vets working across Europe, of which 250 worked in the European Commission. *"The measure of success is not the number of crises we face, but how we respond to them,"* he added. To highlight this, emergency preparedness had been chosen as the theme of the next EU Veterinary Week.

"Physicians treat humans, while veterinarians treat humanity," said Jacques Diouf, general director of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). He reminded delegates that one of the founding objectives of the FAO had been to eradicate rinderpest, *"a great cause of famine in the past centuries"*. It was a happy coincidence that the disease, one of the trigger factors for the creation of the first veterinary school, was likely to be officially declared eradicated later this year. *"Claude Bourgelat was not only the founding father of veterinary sciences, veterinary education and our profession, but he was also ahead of his time as promoter of comparative pathology and the inventor of the concept of One Health"*, recalled Jean-François Chary, head of the Vet2011 organ-

ising committee and former dean of the Lyon veterinary school. *"As a profession, we can truly say: Merci Monsieur Claude Bourgelat!"*

Many other distinguished speakers, including World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) director general Bernard Vallat, World Health Organisation general director Margaret Chan (via video) and representatives of the United Nations education, scientific and cultural organisation (Unesco) and of the international Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) highlighted the importance of veterinary medicine for the health and welfare of animals and people and society as a whole.

MISCELLA- NEOUS

veterinary practitioners in the entire German speaking area.

17-18 JANUARY 2011

FVE member secretariats' meeting

The FVE secretariats network group met in Brussels on 17 and 18 January and discussed a wide range of topics, including the new FVE strategy, a draft business plan, the FVE structure, the European board for veterinary professional development and various other ongoing FVE activities.



It was also discussed the relation between paraprofessionals and the veterinary profession in Europe and whether or not microchipping was considered a veterinary act. Meeting participants also reported on the current affairs regarding the veterinary profession in their country.

22-25 SEPTEMBER

Annual congress of the German veterinary practitioners

The annual congress of the German Association of Veterinary Practitioners (BPT) will be held from 22 to 25 September in Mainz (near Frankfurt am Main). An exhibition on veterinary medicine is also organised²². The BPT-Congress is the largest convention for

²² http://www.bpt-akademie.de/cgi-local/wPermission.cgi?file=/wDeutsch/akademie/kongress_2011/kg_start.shtml?navid=13

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The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) is an umbrella organisation of 46 veterinary organisations from 38 European countries and 4 Sections, regulated by the law on international societies in Belgium.

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