

NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2011

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EDITORIAL



No one can deny that the antimicrobial resistance is a difficult, multifactorial, technically and scientifically complex issue. Some people have already found the solution by saying « *one should ban or do ...* » or by blaming one profession with a potential conflict of interests in order to avert suspicion of misuse by one's own profession. A single, simple and speedy solution is unfortunately an illusion. And there is no point blaming one profession in particular, because we are all involved and committed to maintain the efficacy of antimicrobials, whatever our profession, from pharmaceutical firms to end users like farmers, pet owners and citizens, from veterinarians to doctors and pharmacists, not forgetting the food industry and the national medicine agencies. And veterinarians and the FVE, this goes without saying, are ready to collaborate with all stakeholders and the Commission for the development

of an effective common approach.

Nowadays the EU society is aware that it has been made to face some risks, especially with the crisis of food products and of sanitary systems. BSE and FMD have stroke the public opinion; the avian influenza has then shown that animal health could become dangerous for human health, all the more so that clear explanations were never given to the public when the crises were over. Antimicrobial resistance has become a societal issue which must not itself turn into a crisis. People must not forget that antimicrobials are still effective and fully belong to the therapeutic arsenal of doctors and veterinarians to save lives and keep people as well as animals in healthy condition. When treating animals, veterinarians are protecting the population, and society must be confident in the role of the veterinarians to keep animal health and welfare at the highest level, as well as public health, and to guarantee a safe and healthy food to people on our planet. The availability of effective antimicrobials, their proper use, and measures to avoid or limit the occurrence of resistance

Joint Statements

Federation of Veterinarians of Europe



&

American Veterinary Medical Association



1. Animal Welfare
2. Responsible and judicious use of antimicrobials
3. Veterinary education

<http://www.fve.org/news/papers.php>

is therefore a true “*One Health*” issue contributing to the Public Good.

The European veterinary profession embodied by the FVE, has always believed in its mission as a health profession, and constantly claimed for several years that veterinarians always took their responsibilities and wished to contribute to the solution. The FVE is presently working on practical proposals - some of them were presented last month at the EMA meeting in London - in order to maintain the initiative on this issue, not least to counter those who would hold the veterinary profession solely responsible for the problems and who would wish to impose solutions on us. These proposals are based on risk management measures further to adequate risk analysis, responsible and appropriate use of antimicrobials by all parties as John Dalli mentioned last June in Paris, good animal husbandry practices, and international cooperation. For these reasons, on 18th November 2011 in Brussels, the FVE is organising a seminar called « *Antimicrobials: a true One Health issue. Challenges and opportunities in the medical and veterinary fields* », to coincide with the EU Antibiotic Awareness Day. This seminar is supported by the Polish Council presidency and the EU commission, and has been Vet 2011 accredited. The very same day, Mr. John Dalli will present the Commission Communication to tackle the antimicrobial resistance. I am convinced that not only will we share many initiatives in common, but it will clearly show that veterinarians remain determined to keep antimicrobials effective and safe now and for the future.

ANIMAL HEALTH

EU ANIMAL HEALTH

AHL proposal expected for Q3 2012

An update on the development of the new EU Animal Health Law was given by Barbara Logar (DG Sanco, European Commission), at the Animal Health Advisory Committee meeting on 28 October. The impact assessment has now been completed and adopted. The drafting of the legal proposal is still ongoing.

The law will provide a framework with general principles, rules and responsibilities, while technical details will be worked out in delegated acts. It will also lay down principles for disease categorisation and EU intervention. These will be based on several aspects, including the impact of diseases and control measures on animal health, public health, economy, the society and environment.

National, intra-EU and international movements of live animals will also be covered by the new law. As Mrs Logar explained, the Commission has chosen to work with the concept of “*intra EU movements*” instead of “*placing on the market*”. In recent years the overall intra-EU trade of pigs, sheep and poultry has increased, but only 7 of 27 Member States are responsible for 75% of all consignments sent or received.

The proposal of the new Animal Health Law, expected for the third quarter of 2012, will be in the form of a single legislative package, together with three other proposals (Regulation 882/2004 on official controls for feed

and food; plant health; and seeds). FVE will monitor the developments closely. In particular, it intends make sure that the focus of the new legislation remains on the improvement of animal health, public health and animal welfare, rather than on the facilitation of trade.

ELECTRONIC IDENTIFICATION

Strengthening traceability of cattle and bovine products

On 30 August, the European Commission adopted a proposal to introduce electronic identification (EID) for cattle, on a voluntary basis. Bovine EID is already used in several EU Member States, mainly at private level, for farm management purposes.

With a wide-scale implementation, the European Commission aims to strengthen the traceability of cattle and food products, by making identification faster and more reliable.

The proposal has now been submitted to the European Parliament and to the EU Council; the implementation date will depend on the time needed for these two institutions to reach an agreement.

IDENTIFICATION & REGISTRATION

EP calls for compulsory ID&R of dogs

European Parliament has called for the compulsory identification and registration of dogs. By adopting a Written Declaration¹, MEPs urged the Commission and Member States

to develop a cohesive policy for dog population management and compulsory identification and registration of dogs. This reinforces the message sent earlier by the Council, calling on the European Commission to include the welfare of companion animals in the second EU animal welfare strategy. FVE welcomes



the adoption of the written declaration. *“Effective and reliable systems of dog identification and registration are crucial for successful animal health and welfare management, not only to reunite lost dogs with their owners, but also to help prevent illegal puppy trading and to promote responsible ownership”*, stresses Christophe Buhot, FVE President.

ANIMAL WELFARE

BARCELONA AW WORKSHOPS: REGISTRATION OPEN

Measuring farm animal welfare in practice

“How can veterinarians improve the welfare of animals in a practical way?” was the topic of the first workshop on animal welfare organised for veterinary practitioners on 26-27 September, at the Budapest Veterinary Faculty of Hungary. Around 100 participants from 15 countries discussed the critical issues regarding animal welfare in pigs, poultry, cattle and wild animals in captivity².

Prof Wathes, Chair of the Farm Animal Welfare Council in the UK, explained how we should move beyond the ‘five freedoms’, by trying to measure the welfare of an animal from birth to death, and aim to give all animals a ‘life worth living’ Critical welfare issues in cattle, pigs, poultry and captive wild animals in captivity - and possible solutions – were discussed in workshops by practitioners, who were also introduced to the Welfare Quality assessment system.

On the second day, all participants had the chance to test their theoretical knowledge in practice. Farms were visited, the animals (cattle, poultry and pigs) were assessed and possible improvements were discussed. Participants applauded the simple and practical approach on how to measure farm animal welfare. “This objec

¹ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONGML+WDECL+P7-DCL-2011-0026+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>

² For images and documents, please see www.onetec.be/animalwelfare/budapest.html



From the left: R. Van dobbenburgh (Uevp), Z. Pinter (Uevp Pres.), H-J Gotz (FVE vice pres.), T Chambon (Uevp) at the Animal Welfare workshops in Budapest.

tive, science-based tool empowers me to more easily show the farmer the strengths and weaknesses of his farm and to openly discuss possible improvements" concluded one participant.

This Budapest workshop was the first in a series of workshops organised jointly by FVE and DG Sanco of the European Commission. The Hungarian Ministry and the Hungarian Veterinary Chamber gave their full support.

The next workshop will take place on 1-2 December in Barcelona, Spain, and is mainly targeted at veterinary farm animal practitioners from Spain but some places are reserved for delegates from Italy, Turkey, Switzerland, Portugal, France, Greece, Cyprus and Malta. It is organised jointly by FVE, the Consejo General de Colegios Veterinarios de España, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and the European Commission, Health and Consumers Directorate General. Registration is now open³

3 www.onetec.be/animalwelfare/register.asp

ANIMAL TRANSPORT

Enforcement level varies greatly between Member States

On 10 November, the European Commission published the impact report of the transport Regulation. It shows that, although the Regulation led to an increase of administrative costs for transporters (mainly due to the authorization of transporters and the costs involved with upgrading vehicles), the overall volume of trade in live animals has continued to rise. The report recommended that the transport time for horses for slaughter should be shorter, that the space allowances should be re-calculated based on the animals' size in comparison to their weight and that specific provisions should be foreseen for fish.

In line with feedback from FVE members, the report confirms that interpretation and the level of enforcement varies significantly between Member States. The Commission recognizes this remarking that *"Often, poor compliance appears to be related to improper enforcement"*. The Commission will aim to improve interpretation and enforcement such as by increasing co-operation and communication with competent authorities of Member States and stakeholders. FVE welcomes this very much as it already called upon the Commission to coordinate such a regular meetings. At its 19 October meeting, the FVE working group on transport called upon all EU Member States to adopt a sanction system that covers all infringements of the Regulation. These sanctions should be *'proportional, effective and dissuasive'*. Law enforcers should be able to fine foreign perpetrators on the spot and demand immediate payment. Inspectors should be able to increase the fine based on the additional profit the perpetrator

was set to earn by disrespecting particular provisions (e.g. overloading). The European Commission should ensure that the sanctions are indeed effective, proportionate and dissuasive.

The report also recognised that few competent authorities use (or are able to use) the data collected via the navigation system to carry out checks. Implementing measures will be proposed. Overall, the Commission emphasized that *"it does not see that an amendment of the Regulation would be the most appropriate approach to address the identified problems"*. Instead it suggests correcting them at this moment via guides of good practice.

LAYING HENS

Twelve countries in non-respect of the 2012 battery cage ban

After 1 January next, poultry can no longer legally be kept in battery cages in the EU⁴. According to data provided to the Commission, the majority of Member States have already changed their battery cages to other systems. However, seven countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Finland, Poland, Portugal and Romania) will not have completed the change by that date, while five countries (Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Estonia and Greece) have forwarded no information at all.

This means that after 1 January, eggs from twelve Member States might still be produced in outlawed battery cage systems – in spite of the fact that the sector had 12 years to adjust their production.

FVE strongly urges the competent authorities and the European Com-

4 http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/farm/laying_hens_en.htm

mission to ensure full compliance with the EU ban on battery cages. Allowing the continued sale of battery-cage produced eggs after 1 January will commercially penalise the producers who made the effort and investments to comply with legislation. It will also seriously undermine the legislation-setting capacity and credibility of the EU and the functioning of its internal market.

PIG WELFARE

Sows to be kept in group housing from 2013

From 1 January 2013, group housing of sows will become compulsory in all



EU pig holdings with 10 sows or more. This requirement was adopted in 2001 and the EU authorities have no intention to postpone the legal deadline. In July, the European Commission asked all Member States to provide data on the implementation and the enforcement in case of non-compliance. FVE calls on all veterinary practitioners to ensure their producers are well informed and to support them making the switch to group housing

PUBLIC HEALTH

FOOD HYGIENE WG

Decontamination of carcasses 'should not replace GHP'

At the October meeting of the FVE food hygiene working group, the FVE position paper '*Decontamination of carcasses*' was revised. The ESFA opinion on the matter⁵ adopted by the Panel on Biological Hazards (BIOHAZ), describes the treatments consisting in the use of 2 % to 5 % lactic acid solutions at temperatures of up to 55 °C applied either by spraying or misting. In its up-to-date position paper, the FVE working group emphasizes that such additional treatment should under no circumstance replace good hygiene practices and should only be allowed in specific cases, on the provision that the treatment is mentioned on the label of the end product.

This was one of the topics discussed at the meeting '*Meat safety prevention is better than cure*'⁶, organised by the European Meat and Livestock Trading Union (UECBV) and the University of Liege. The rationale behind the EFSA opinion on lactic acid and recycled hot water to treat carcasses was explained by Koen Van Dijck (EU Commission, Head of Unit - SANCO G4 Food, alert system and training).

At the FVE Hygiene working group meeting the draft briefing paper called '*Vets adding value*', which

clearly explains the key role of official veterinarians at the slaughterhouse, was discussed and some changes provided: the paper will now be circulated within the FVE forthcoming GA for feedback and comments.

The EFSA opinion on the modernisation of pig meat inspection was also deepened and discussed: a keynote was drafted to serve as a basis for the next roundtable conference on 14 December, which will be attended by FVE Vice president Robert Huey.

MEDICINES

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (1)

EP: 'Don't restrict effective drugs'


FVE welcomed the adoption by the European Parliament of a '*Motion for resolution on antimicrobial resistance*' on 27 October⁷. FVE is particularly pleased that European Parliament has taken on board several suggestions made by FVE and other stakeholders to consider antimicrobial resistance as a '*One Health issue*' affecting the health and welfare of people and animals.

The parliamentary motion clearly recognizes the need for effective antimicrobials in the medical field as well as in the veterinary field. However, according to the European Parliament, measures '*should not result in the imposition of restrictions on existing treatment options that are effective*'. Inevitably, this would lead to more animal health and welfare problems and the use of even more antimicrobials. Accordingly, FVE strongly rec-

⁵ Evaluation of the safety and efficacy of lactic acid for the removal of microbial surface contamination of beef carcasses, cuts and trimmings; <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/2317.htm>

⁶ http://www.uecbv.eu/doc/Copie_0001798_000_002_UlgUECBV%20AMT%20Seminar%20ULG-UECBV%202011-%20Rep.pdf

⁷ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+MOTION+B7-2011-0538+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>



ommends that any measure should be based on sound science evidence.

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (2)

FVE seminar during European Antibiotic Awareness Day

On 18th November, date of the European Antibiotic Awareness Day, FVE will hold a Seminar called *'Antimicrobials: a true One-Health issue - Challenges and opportunities in the medical and veterinary field'*, in collaboration with the Polish Presidency and the European Commission. The event will take place in connection with the FVE GA.

The event aims to tackle the issue of antimicrobial resistance through a holistic perspective and propose feasible and realistic practices. Experts from the medical and veterinary fields, policy makers and international organisations representatives are invited in the discussion with a view to exchange information on the ways antimicrobials affect the health of people and animals and to propose actions to assure their efficacy and availability. The meeting is an accredited Vet2011 event⁸.

REVIEW OF VETERINARY LEGISLATION

Stakeholders discussed revision of veterinary drugs regulations

In view of the upcoming revision of the EU legislation for veterinary medicinal products⁹, a stakeholder

meeting was organised by DG SANCO of the European Commission, on 23 September. FVE and other stakeholders had the opportunity to discuss the outcome of last year's public consultation and to give their input and proposals on key subjects, such as the availability of veterinary medicinal products, reduction of the administrative burden, simplification of packaging and labelling and strengthening of pharmacovigilance systems. Mario Nagtzaam (DG SANCO) informed participants that the Commission's legislative proposal is expected by the end of 2012.

EDUCATION

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

FVE: 'use accreditation system for reliable recognition of degrees'

Following the Green Paper *'Modernising the Professional Qualifications Directive'*¹⁰ issued by the Commission in July, the FVE clearly expressed its support for the free movement of equivalently qualified professionals throughout the EU. *"Such a Directive is in the public interest by a proper provision of safe services of quality"*, FVE pointed out. However, the Federation recalled the need to update the minimum training conditions according to scientific and progress knowledge.

The FVE also welcomed the concept of simplified procedures for the recognition of qualifications but emphasized that the automatic recognition based on harmonized training criteria

"needs to be reliable and allow verification". FVE is therefore still pushing for the inclusion of an accreditation system, like the one run jointly by the FVE and the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE). *"This system is based on a process of peer review that is independent, objective, and impartial"*.

Concerning the professional card, the FVE warned that competent authorities and statutory bodies could incur significant costs for additional IT systems especially with up-to-dating such a tool. FVE noted that a full impact assessment and cost benefit analysis had not been carried out and supported the IMI extension with perhaps a link to an electronic certificate.

On 7 November, the seven European Sectoral Professions¹¹ issued a joint statement, calling on the Commission to preserve the integrity and quality of qualifications. In the conference, FVE represented by Stephen Ware and Francesco Proscia pointed out that the veterinary profession should be considered a health profession, since veterinarians play a critical role in public health as well as animal health and welfare. A legislative proposal on the Professional Qualifications Directive is expected by Dec 2011

EBVPD

Setting standards for the level of acknowledged veterinarian

At the FVE General Assembly in Palermo last June, the creation of a European board of veterinary professional development (EBVPD) was announced, with delegates from the UEVP, EAEVE, EBVS and vet-

8 <http://www.vet2011.org/calendrier3.php?mois=11>

9 http://ec.europa.eu/health/veterinary-use/rev_frame_index_en.htm

10 Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications http://www.fve.org/about_fve/workinggroups.html

11 Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications http://www.fve.org/about_fve/workinggroups.html

erinary statutory bodies, to set European standards for the level of European acknowledged veterinarian. *"Its aim is to evaluate and approve postgraduate courses for the level of this 'acknowledged vet'",* explained Andrew Robinson (UK), secretary general of the UEVP. *"We would like to develop a blueprint for European acknowledged veterinarians to be recognised throughout Europe".* This would not be a new degree but rather a European standard for practitioners keen to validate their level of postgraduate training. Andrew Byrne (Ireland), FECAVA and UEVP board member, had been appointed EBVPD chairman;

FVE & PROFESSIONAL MATTERS

ELECTIONS

FVE Board 2011-2013

A new FVE board (2011-2013) was elected in Palermo, and Christophe Buhot (France) took over as presi



From the left-side of the picture: Mr H-J Götz, Ms K Ostensson, Mr C Buhot (President), Mr R Huey and Mr R Laguens

dent from Walter Winding (Austria). The other new board members are Robert Huey (UK), Karin Östensson (Sweden), Rafael Laguens (Spain) and Hans-Joachim Götz (Germany).

Members of the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners (UEVP) re-elected its entire board for a second 2-year mandate, including Andrew Robinson (UK) as its secretary general. In his election speech¹² Christophe Buhot outlined his six objectives for the coming mandate:

- Maintaining an independent and pro-active Federation
- Turning the cultural and professional diversity of its members into a strength
- Focus on five issues: undergraduate education, medicines directive, antimicrobial resistance, the new Animal health law and One Health
- Internal and external communication
- Development of the FVE network
- Recognition of the veterinary profession by society.

FVE NEW STRATEGY 2011 - 2015

Updated FVE strategy published



The FVE strategy for 2011-2015 has now been published. It consolidates the progress made over recent years, making the Federation more professional, more effective and more efficient. It builds on the Federation's previous strategy, while taking on board new and emerging challenges for the veterinary profession. A brochure has been produced outlining the goals for the next five years as well as the plan of action to achieve them. The brochure is available on the FVE website¹³

FEEVA

European equine vets to survey antimicrobial use in horses

The Federation of European Equine Veterinary Associations (FEEVA) held its general assembly in the brand new large animal clinic of the Veterinary Faculty in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 3 November. Rens van Dobbenburgh, interim Chair of the FVE Working Group on medicines, gave an overview of the latest developments at the European level in the field of medicines.

FEEVA will set up two subgroups: one to look into the prescribing behaviour of equine vets regarding antimicrobials and to develop prescribing guidelines, while a second subgroup will look into a European Acknowledge vet based on the work already done by the French Equine Veterinary Association (AVEF).

A new FEEVA Board was also elected, consisting of Josh Slater (UK-President), Erik Gostelie (Netherlands-treasurer), Jesper Møller Nielsen (Denmark, Secretary General), Vivienne Duggan (Ireland), Miguel C. Llorca (Spain) and Orsolya Kutasi (Hungary). The next FEEVA General Assembly will take place on 28 November 2012 in Vienna.

¹² <http://www.fve.org/news/presentations.php>

¹³ <http://www.fve.org/news/publications.php>

MISCELLA- NEOUS OBITUARY

Henk Vaarkamp



It is with deep sadness that we report the passing away of Henk Vaarkamp (61), on 13 October. His unexpected passing came as a shock to all of us. After many years in farm animal practice, Henk Vaarkamp joined the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in 1999 as a lecturer for the four-year elective course General Management. In 2001, he was appointed as Professor of Veterinary Pharmacology. Since 2004 he has served on the Faculty Board as Vice Dean. Henk performed a variety of duties in the veterinary community and in society at large, including as chairman of the Dutch Council of Animal Affairs, and representative of the veterinary profession on the management board of the European Medicines Agency (EMA). More recently, he also served on a committee to monitor how euthanasia was carried out for the compulsory culling of goat farms in the wake of the Q fever outbreaks in the Netherlands.

Henk Vaarkamp was an FVE and UEVP delegate for the Netherlands for several decades. His enthusiasm, knowledge, honesty and above all his sense of humour have inspired many of us. His contribution towards the veterinary profession has been invaluable.

Peter Storie-Pugh



The FVE is saddened to learn of the death of Dr Peter Storie-Pugh (91) CBE MC FRCVS, on 20 October, founder president of the Federation

of Veterinarians of the EEC (now FVE) from 1975-1979. He also served a term as a member of the Economic and Social Committee in Brussels. Dr Storie-Pugh was within a few days of his 92nd birthday at the time of his death.

He was twice President of the British Veterinary Association, as well as president of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons from 1977-1978.

Dr Storie-Pugh attended the University of Cambridge until 1939, when war and military service interrupted his studies. He took part in the Dunkirk evacuation and, following a number of successful escape attempts from German imprisonment, was incarcerated in Colditz for the remainder of the war. He was awarded the Military Cross and, later, an MBE for his military actions. After the war, he resumed his veterinary education, graduating from the Royal Veterinary College in 1948 to pursue a lifelong interest in farm animal practice.

"The College is saddened by the death of this brave man and outstanding veterinary surgeon," says RCVS President Jerry Davies. "In particular, his work in setting up what is now the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe continues to be of great value today."

At the 2002 FVE General Assembly in Belfast, Dr Storie-Pugh had been awarded honorary FVE membership, together with Alastair Porter, registrar of the RCVS 1966-1991 and FVE's first Secretary-general.

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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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