



NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2012

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EDITORIAL

Working together



One of the Federation’s greatest achievements over the last few years has been to get the diverse veterinary family – 42 organisations representing 200,000

vets – to speak with ‘One Voice’. Collaborate working, between veterinarians with different disciplines and with other stakeholders, is a common thread running through the new animal health legislation currently under discussion and in the EFSA opinion on the modernisation of pig meat inspection, published October 2011.

The latter document is to be welcomed for both its general approach and its recognition of the important role of veterinary ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection in surveillance (see article on page 6). Like the new animal health legislation, it recognises the importance of animal health and husbandry practices on farm, but this time for public health reasons. While in both proposals the

farmer is firmly responsible for the health and welfare of his animals, the veterinary practitioner has a key role to play in assisting the farmer in the discharge of this responsibility. At the simplest level this could be through advice on herd or flock health.

However, the opportunity exists for the private veterinary practitioner to play a pivotal role in collaborating with the farmer to develop health and welfare plans and at the same time verify to the slaughterhouse owner, the Official Veterinarian and the competent authority that the standards required by legislation have been met.

The challenge to the profession is to ensure that we are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to rise to this challenge. Together with the other stakeholders the profession can make the vision of ‘farm to fork’ reassurance a reality.

Robert Huey, FVE Board

SPECIAL FOCUS

CALLISTO

Think tank on diseases shared by people and pets

Increasingly higher numbers and different species of animals are kept as pets. Although there are numerous well-documented positive effects of the human-animal interaction, these don't come without certain risks. Callisto, *the companion animal multisectoral interprofessional interdisciplinary strategic think tank on zoonoses* focuses on the risks of infectious diseases associated with pets. The project funded by the EU Commission (DG Research FP 7) aims to find the proper balance of the beneficial contact with pets while minimizing the risks of transmitting diseases to owners and food-producing animals.

To do so, it will form a multidisciplinary, multisectoral and interprofessional network of experts representing the major relevant stakeholders.

By end 2014, Callisto will give an overview of the current situation of the role of companion animals as a source of infectious diseases for people and food animals. Knowledge and technology gaps will be identified for the most important diseases and targeted actions will be developed to reduce the risks of diseases transmitted by companion animals.

The education of stakeholders and the general public is essential, and results will be communicated to help improve the uptake of the proposed actions and to promote risk-awareness in healthy human-animal relationships. This education should aim to find the right balance between warning of the dangers and convincing owners of the importance of hygienic and veterinary measures.

Callisto will install seven expert advisory groups (EAG), each chaired by one of the official Callisto partners. Each EAG consists of experts and leading contact persons that will meet at regular intervals in order to exchange perspectives, knowledge and ideas and to produce expert documentation. This will serve as input for the joint meetings of all seven EAG chairs, to produce the Cross EAG Synthesis report for the Callisto Conferences. These conferences will allow experts from all EAGs and invited experts to meet and discuss. Conferences will result in a common Callisto strategy report, which will be widely disseminated. A total of three conferences will be organized during the 36 months of the project. The first conference will be on 25 October.

The following Expert Advisory Groups have been installed:

EAG I (User Community) represents stakeholders such as pet owners, veterinarians, doctors and the pet food industry. This group will address the issues from the perspective of the recipient groups of the proposed actions.

EAG II (Policy Actions) consists of several European organizations related to the keeping of companion animals, e.g. animal welfare, animal health industry, veterinarians or pet trade organizations. Each member of this group will have specific knowledge of the legislation concerning companion animals. The group will focus on how technical knowledge about pathogens and diseases can be translated into effective policy actions.

EAG III, IV and V (Pathogens) consists of leading academic researchers, bringing together state-of-the-art knowledge the three main relevant categories of zoonotic pathogens: viral infections, bacterial infections and parasitic infections.

EAG VI (Epidemiology and underlying factors) will focus on the interactions between companion animals, food animals and humans at the population and ecosystems level.

EAG VII (Sociology and Welfare) includes academic experts in human-animal relations, sociology, psychology, veterinary medicine and animal welfare. Experts in this group were selected for their understanding of the broader issues involved in human animal interactions and companion animal ownership.



In January, Callisto held its kick-off meeting followed by the first round of Expert Advisory Group meetings and is working towards the first large Conference on 25 October 2012. The Callisto website will become available end March.

FVE is the Callisto coordinator, which has many partners, including the International association of human-animal interaction organisations, the World Small Animal Veterinary Association, the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations and the Universities of Copenhagen, Rotterdam, Bristol and of Jerusalem.

ANIMAL HEALTH

SCHMALLENBERG VIRUS

FVE calls for increased vigilance

FVE calls all veterinarians for increased vigilance of a previously unknown disease in ruminants, caused by the so-called Schmallenberg virus. The virus affects sheep, goats and cattle and is primarily spread by biting midges. It causes congenital deformities and nervous defects in newborn lambs, goat kids and calves. Clinical signs in cattle include fever, reduced milk yield and diarrhoea.

The disease, named after the German town where it was first observed in August 2011, has been reported in several European countries including the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, the UK and France. Susceptible animals imported from the affected areas are considered to be at risk.

Even though the disease is not legally notifiable, FVE President Christophe Buhot urges all practitioners to report any outbreak: *"All veterinarians observing suspicious clinical signs on their client's farms should immediately report these to their competent authorities for further investigation."*

Veterinarians – both private practitioners and officials – and farmers need to work together to fight this new challenge. A well-functioning network of veterinary services that is nationwide, including remote areas, is essential to detect and control known and emerging disease, such as this one. Due to their unique position, veterinary practitioners are at the frontline of new diseases and form an essential

link in the chain of veterinary services – considered a Global Public Good¹."

According to the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention², the risk for humans by the Schmallenberg virus cannot be excluded, although it is unlikely, as other viruses of the same family (Orthobunyaviruses) do not pose a risk to human health. A reliable and simple serological test for the disease is not yet available. Development of a vaccine to combat the disease may take at least 2 years.

HONEY BEES

New FVE working group

An FVE working group on honey bees has been set up³, with the aim to collect information regarding the health



of the honey bee sector and to recommend ways for a closer involvement of the veterinary profession in this sector. It also aims to help the FVE Board provide science-based input to national and EU decision makers about honey bee health. Finally, it will provide guidelines on the training of veterinarians in honey bee medicine.

The group's mandate will terminate end 2013, and their first re-

port to the FVE general assembly is planned for June 2012.

PET TRAVEL SCHEME

Tapeworm treatment remains required

Since 1 January, the movement rules for pets entering the UK regarding rabies and ticks have been harmonised with the rest of Europe.

Due to the significant public health risk posed by the tapeworm *Echinococcus multilocularis*, the British Veterinary Association and the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe continued to lobby for the maintenance of tapeworm control. Tapeworm controls remain to keep certain EU Member States free from the tapeworm *Echinococcus multilocularis* (UK, Ireland, Finland and Malta). Dogs must be treated by a veterinary surgeon 1-5 days before entering one of the listed countries.

All pets are still required to be vaccinated against rabies but those coming from other EU countries now only have to wait 21 days after vaccination before travel. Furthermore, the FVE urges all pet owners to have their animals identified by microchip and registered, in particular when travelling.



For more information, see http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/liveanimals/pets/index_en.htm

1 http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Media_Center/docs/pdf/Fact_sheets/GOUV_EN_FS_01.pdf

2 <http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/press/news/Pages/News.aspx>

3 Nicolas Vidal-Naquet (France) – chair, Giuliana Bondi (Italy), Barbara Bernhart (Austria), Matthew Sharman (UK), Heike Aupperle (Germany), Mariano Higes Pascual, Martin Hernandez (Spain) and Francesco Proscia (FVE Office)

EU VETERINARY WEEK 2012

Economics of animal health

The 5th edition of the EU Veterinary Week will take place in the week of 11 to 15 June. It will be opened with a conference that will deal with the economics – investments and benefits – of veterinary services assuring the health and welfare of animals and people. The venue for the conference is the Charlemagne building in Brussels. The EU Veterinary week was organised for the first time in 2008 by the Commission's DG Sanco and the Federation of veterinarians of Europe (FVE).

EU ANIMAL HEALTH LAW

FVE: 'Prevention, not trade should be focus of new law'

The European Commission is working on a proposal for a new EU Animal Health Law. Consultations with stakeholders and meetings with Member States representatives have already taken place. At its 31 January working group meeting, FVE discussed the latest version of the draft proposal. The Federation remains convinced that the basic principles of the 2007 Animal Health Strategy "*prevention is better than cure*" should be maintained. "*The emphasis of the new legislation should therefore be on the promotion of animal health and welfare – instead of trade*", argues the working group.

There is also a need for an overall view on the functioning of Veterinary Services and for clear definitions of the role and responsibilities of all actors (including all parts of the veterinary profession). The intrinsic link between animal health, welfare and public health

must be recognized and respected.

FISH HEALTH

'A fish is not a cow'

"Fish should no longer be considered as terrestrial mammals by the European Commission", stresses Pier Antonio Salvador (Italy), Chair of the fish Health Commission of the Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP). "There are many fish species with different lifecycles, living in different waters, different temperatures, having different needs, farmed in different environments. For example, sea bass could be reared in extensive lagoon/wetland farms, intensive land based farms, off shore cages. Fish is not one species but includes salmon, trout, sea bass, sea bream, carp, sturgeon, etc. which all should be considered separately."



According to FEAP, Codes of practice are the best options to ensure good fish health and welfare and offer both consumer and producer a transparent and objective quality assurance system, based on an understanding of the interactions between husbandry practices and a range of welfare indicators. Other topics currently addressed by the FEAP include veterinary medicines availability in aquaculture, farmed fish health (during farming, transport, stunning and killing) and the uniform implementation of the Fish health directive (2006/88/EC).

The Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP) is an international organisation composed of the national aquaculture associations in Europe. It has 28 different associations from 23 European countries. At present, the FEAP is primarily composed of associations concerned with finfish production. For more information, see www.feap.info

ANIMAL WELFARE

ANIMAL WELFARE STRATEGY

FVE regrets 'lack of ambition'

On 19 January, the European Commission adopted the 2012-2015 Animal Welfare strategy paper⁴. The main objectives include a reinforcement of current EU legislation and the announcement of a proposal for comprehensive EU animal welfare law.

"The veterinary profession welcomes the paper and its aim of improved guidance and stricter enforcement of existing animal welfare legislation", commented Dr Christophe Buhot, FVE president. "After all, even the best laws are of little use if they are not enforced."



"The FVE is pleased that several of its recommendations⁵ have been taken into consideration in the strategic actions outlined by the Commission," said Dr Buhot. The FVE particularly welcomes the Commission's announcement of a consumer study on 'providing the relevant information' with respect to the stunning of slaughter animals.

"The protection of animals during slaughter, and the practice of stunning in particular, is essential to safeguard the welfare of slaughter ani-

4 http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/actionplan/docs/aw_strategy_19012012_en.pdf

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

mals. Relevant labelling would enable consumers to choose meat and meat products from animals that were unconscious at the time of slaughter. We are therefore pleased that the Commission has decided to investigate this possibility,” Dr Buhot said.

The continued action towards education and training of all professionals and staff involved in animal handling is also welcomed by the FVE. Dr Buhot observed: *“Proven skills and competencies of animal handlers and of professionals will strongly contribute to animal welfare.”* He added that the FVE has already been collaborating with the Commission in this respect: *“In 2011, two successful animal welfare workshops⁶ were organised for veterinarians, in Hungary and in Spain.”* The next workshop is planned in Latvia, on 19-20 April.

The FVE regrets that the Commission paper is not more ambitious in its objectives and planned actions, and that it lacks any reference to guidelines on the welfare of dairy cattle *“for which a EU-wide legal framework is so urgently needed”*. Also, the strategy *“could have gone further”* in the field of companion animals, which are often largely ignored in EU legislation on animal health and welfare, Dr Buhot added.

A conference to launch the new EU animal welfare strategy will be co-organised by the Danish Presidency and European Commission in Brussels on 29th February and 1st March⁷. FVE is member of the steering committee of this conference.

WELFARE DURING TRANSPORT

FVE co-produces Fitness for transport guidelines for cattle

‘Extremely visual’ guidelines offering help and advice to professionals involved in the transport of adult cattle have recently been published by the FVE, together with other organisations with an interest in animal welfare and transport.

Drawn up jointly by Eurogroup for animals, Animals’ Angels, the European Livestock Trading Union, the International Road Transport Union, the European Livestock Transporters and the FVE, the guidelines are designed to provide practical advice to professionals involved in the transport of cattle. The guidelines are well illustrated, with photographs and concise texts to help operators decide on the fitness of an adult bovine animal for transport.

“Improving the welfare of animals during their transport is in everyone’s interest,” stresses Christophe Buhot, FVE president. *“Transporting animals that are unfit not only causes animal suffering but could also lead to penalties, financial losses and the withdrawal of the permit of the transporter and/or the driver”*.

The guidelines do not represent the real situation in Europe today but provide a comprehensive list of situations that might occur and the conditions that might result in an animal being classed as unfit to transport. The guidelines are available in English, German, Spanish and French, while Italian and Portuguese translations will follow in the coming months. Other language versions are currently being considered. Veterinarians can request a copy through their national veterinary as-

sociation⁸. Other professionals can request a copy at info@uecbv.eu

HORSE WELFARE

Alexander Rabitsch wins equine transport award



Dr Alexander Rabitsch, a practising veterinarian from Austria, received the FVE /BEVA Trust Equine

Transport Enforcement Award 2011 on 19 November, at the FVE general assembly. The annual award was introduced by the BEVA Trust late 2010 in recognition of the individual or group working in the field, doing the most to improve enforcement of the current transport Regulation.

For the past 13 years, Dr Rabitsch has carried out random checks on transporters of live animals to assess compliance with the current Regulation (EC) 1/2005. He works in cooperation with the Federal Police, taking the necessary actions required to safeguard the welfare of the animals, supervising the unloading and the care of the animals in case of emergencies, reporting to the court and notifying the Austrian competent ministry.

Nominations for the annual BEVA Trust Equine Transport Enforcement Award 2012 are open and can be made via the FVE and the BEVA Trust.

⁶ <http://www.onetec.be/animalwelfare/>

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/welfare/seminars/index_en.htm

⁸ FVE members can download their copy from the restricted FVE website

BARCELONA AW WORKSHOP

Practical farm animal welfare

'Improving animal welfare, a practical approach' was the title of the second



workshop on animal welfare which took place on 1-2 December in Barcelona, Spain. Organised jointly by FVE, the *Consejo General de Colegios Veterinarios de España*, Barcelona University and the European Commission (DG Sanco), the workshop was mainly targeted at veterinarians from Spain but some places were reserved for delegates from Italy, Portugal, France, Greece, Cyprus and Malta.

Four break-out sessions were organised, on poultry, cattle, pigs and wild animals kept in captivity. Presentations, photographs and videos of this conference and the previous one, held in Budapest, are now available online⁹.

The next animal welfare workshop will be held in Latvia (Riga) on 19-20 April. The meeting will have the same theme and format as the previous workshops. Speakers include Andrea Gavinelli (Head of the Animal Welfare Unit, European Commission), professor Chris Wathes (professor of animal welfare, Royal Veterinary College London) and professor Teresa Giménez Candela (Autonomous University of Barcelona). To see the programme and register (available from the 18 February) see <http://www.onetec.be/animalwelfare/>

PUBLIC HEALTH

MEAT INSPECTION

From palpation to carcass safety assurance schemes

FVE vice-president Robert Huey explains how European moves to modernise the process of meat inspection aim to protect the consumer from politics¹⁰. The basic principles of meat inspection – the visual inspection of surfaces, and palpation and incision of tissues, particularly lymph nodes, to detect 'abnormalities' – date back to the mid 19th century. Initially, these abnormalities primarily included abscesses, tuberculous lesions, parasitic cysts and unusual colours, consistencies and odours.

Over the past 30 years, it has become apparent to most authorities on the subject, and to government and international organisations, that the procedures that have served public and animal health well for over a century are in need of a radical overhaul. However, it is essential that any alterations to the existing systems are based on sound scientific principles of meat hygiene and risk analysis.

In 2004, a radical new suite of food safety regulations simplified and updated EU legislation on the subject. During drafting and negotiation of these regulations, the issue of meat inspection protocols was purposefully laid to one side, as to begin discussions on this difficult topic risked derailing the entire process.

In 2008, the EC was asked to 'prepare concrete proposals allowing the effective implementation of modernised

sanitary inspection in slaughterhouses while making full use of the risk-based principle'. The Commission, in turn, asked the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to 'evaluate meat inspection in a public health context'. As the body representing the veterinary profession across Europe, the FVE drew up a list of basic principles against which, it suggested, the emerging EU policy should be measured (see the box).

EFSA's opinion on pigs

The EFSA produced its opinion on the inspection of pigs, in October 2011. The experts identified *Salmonella species*, *Yersinia enterocolitica*, *Toxoplasma gondii* and *Trichinella* species as the only hazards currently of public health significance in slaughter pigs. While this conclusion could be questioned, it is likely that interventions to control these four pathogens will also reduce the risk to public health of many others. Further, as these pathogens cannot be identified by palpation or incision, it is logical that the EFSA recommends that this method of inspection should be omitted in pigs subjected to routine slaughter, because the risk of microbiological contamination is higher than the risk associated with potentially reduced detection of conditions targeted by these techniques.



Key to the abandonment of incision and palpation is the ability to categorise the

livestock and carcasses according to risk, based on verifiable 'food chain information'. This is built on the foundation of the report's 'big idea', that of a comprehensive pork carcass safety assurance system. The EFSA suggests that 'a comprehensive pork carcass safety assurance, combining a range of preventative measures and controls applied both on farm and at

10 This is a summary of the article by Robert Huey published in the *Veterinary Record* of 21 January 2012, doi: 10.1136/vr.e81

9 <http://www.onetec.be/animalwelfare/barcelona.html>

abattoir in a longitudinally integrated way is the only way to ensure effective control of the main hazards in the context of meat inspection.'

Pigs from farms that implement verifiable controls and are categorised as low risk in terms of on-farm practice and the results of sampling on farm or at the slaughterhouse, may be subjected to the new palpation- and incision-free inspection protocol if the livestock and farm practices meet specific standards of a type suggested by the EFSA, known as Harmonised Epidemiological indicators (HEI).

Next steps

The EC will now progress to drafting a legislative proposal on the review of meat inspection for pigs by June 2012, taking into consideration the EFSA opinion, the conclusions of a number of round table conferences with stakeholders, the outcome of a number of questionnaires completed by stakeholders and competent authorities, and the results of the official Commission evaluation of the new food hygiene legislation.

EC officials have indicated that they consider the role of the slaughterhouse Official Veterinarian in public health, animal health and animal welfare to be key. While this is appreciated by the many thousands of veterinarians across Europe who perform this role, the proposed moving of food safety controls onto the farm presents a real challenge and opportunity to pig sector veterinarians to demonstrate that they understand the needs of the consumer, as well as those of the farmer, and that they have the knowledge and competence to add real value to food safety as well as animal health and welfare. What is essential is that the proposed new inspection system keeps science and the wishes of the consumer to the fore.

Modernising the system: FVE's basic principles

- There must be veterinary leadership, which focuses on reassurance of the consumer;
- It is important that it is emphasised that the veterinarian adds value to the process;
- Veterinarians must engage fully with the modernisation process and seek to direct change in the direction of the public good and not just self-interest;
- The best way to protect the profession and veterinary jobs is to open new doors through retraining, and creating new roles, not by resisting change;
- It must be recognised that the hygiene inspection system has changed dramatically in the past 10 years – and should continue to evolve;
- We need to emphasise the four pillars of the veterinary role – animal health, animal welfare, public health and the environment;
- Involvement of the veterinarian from 'farm to fork', especially pre-harvest, is central to a process control approach to food hygiene;
- For a number of reasons, including socioeconomic factors, there is no one global answer to modernisation. Each member state, compartment or region, may have its way to deliver the equivalent 'food safety objective'
- Inspections required for trade should be seen as being additional to those required by the EU for safety;
- Food safety controls are, at least in part, for the public good. The charging system should reflect this.

ELECTIONS

New board for the UEVH

At its November 2011 general assembly, the Union of European Veterinary Hygienists (UEVH) elected its new board (2011-2013): Sean O'Laoide (Ireland, the first from the left of the picture) – president; Henning Knudsen (Denmark, the third from the left) – senior vice president; Bernhard Ursinitsch (Austria, the second from the left) – junior vice president; Günter Klein (Germany, the fourth from



the left) – treasurer and Jason Aldiss (UK, the fifth from the left) – Secretary - general.

At the meeting of its general assembly the UEVH celebrated its 45th anniversary. Founded in Paris in 1966, the organisation was originally called *Association européenne des directeurs d'abattoirs publics* (European Association of Public Slaughterhouse Directors), but adopted its current name in 1976.

MEDICINES

FVE CONFERENCE

"Antimicrobial resistance: a true One-Health issue"

"Appropriate use of antimicrobials is the key to mitigating the risk of antimicrobial resistance". So said Christophe Buhot, FVE president, speaking at the occasion of the Antimicrobial conference organised by the FVE on the occasion of the European Antibiotic Awareness Day 2011. He added that Antimicrobial resistance was a true "global - One Health" issue.

The event, held in Brussels on 18 November, attracted over 300 participants (European institutions, national authorities, veterinary associations, scientists and stakeholders) from more than 40 countries. In conclusion of the conference, the FVE announced that the veterinary profession wishes to collaborate with other stakeholders and contribute their share of the solution through actions such as :

- Implementation of good farming practices and development of herd health plans based on biosecurity measures and vaccination programmes
- More emphasis on veterinary prescription for all antimicrobials
- Development of guidelines, protocols and formularia
- Development of alternatives of antimicrobials
- No incentives on buying / selling large quantities of antimicrobials
- Raising awareness, education and training of all 'prescribing' professions
- Stricter conditions, and clear justification for the use of critically important antibiotics and off label use.

"Good health and safe food have a price", emphasized Christophe Buhot. *"Funding and support for taking the necessary actions is an".*

investment in our future. Antimicrobial resistance is a great challenge to all of us and gives us the opportunity to show how much we care. For this reason, 'Veterinarians care for animals and people' is the main message of the 2011-2015 FVE strategy

VETERINARY PRESCRIBING BEHAVIOUR

Internet based survey

What are the main food-producing animal species in your practice? What are the most common diseases for which antibiotics are prescribed? On what is your choice of antibiotics based? These are a few examples of questions likely to be included in an internet-based survey, jointly drawn up by the European heads of medi-



cines agencies (HMA) and the FVE.

The survey, which aims to "map" the antibiotic prescription habits of veterinarians in the EU, is part of the HMA action plan¹¹. A pilot study of the survey is currently underway.

Mid February, the final version of the survey will become available in five languages (English, French, Spanish, German, Polish). All veterinary practitioners will be invited to participate in the survey, which takes about 10 minutes and is anonymous.

¹¹ http://www.hma.eu/uploads/media/HMA_AMR_Action_Plan_Feb_2011.pdf

DANISH EU PRESIDENCY

Focus on antimicrobial resistance

Antimicrobial resistance is a 'main priority' for the Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU, according to Mette Gjerskov, Denmark's Food and Agriculture Minister. *"Antimicrobial resistance is on the rise in many parts of Europe and every year, more than 25,000 Europeans die due to antimicrobial resistant bacteria,"* she recalled at an international press briefing on 11 January¹².

"In Denmark, we have been successful in the combat against the increase of antibiotic use by not letting veterinarians make money on the prescription of antibiotics. I am aware that the system cannot be used in all of EU, but it shows that the combat of increased use of antibiotics is not in vain."

At a conference on 14 and 15 March, the Danish Presidency will focus on the challenges of antimicrobial resistance in a European and an international context. The conference, to be held in Copenhagen, will aim to address the challenges of antimicrobial resistance and how to tackle it at EU level. Approximately 300 participants are expected from the fields of human and veterinary medicine, as well as stakeholders and experts. Unfortunately, the number of places at the conference is limited, and only one seat could be made available for the veterinary profession. Christophe Buhot will attend on behalf of the FVE.

¹² <http://www.fvm.dk/nyhedsvisning.aspx?ID=46946&PID=416031&year=2012&NewsID=6889>

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (2)

Data on antibiotic sales published

Antimicrobial use in food-producing animals in 2010 went up by 1.3 per cent over 2009, according to new estimates from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Over the past year, half of the antimicrobials saw reduced use, while the other half saw increased use. Furthermore, new US federal rules will further restrict use of cephalosporin-class antimicrobials¹³ in most food animals starting April 5, 2012.

In the UK, the annual sales of veterinary antibiotics showed a net increase of 45 tonnes in 2010, according to data recorded by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD)¹⁴. The VMD's report, the 13th in a series intended to provide information about UK sales of veterinary antimicrobial products, shows that a total of 447 tonnes of veterinary antibiotics were sold in 2010, compared with 402 tonnes in 2009.

Year-on-year fluctuations seen are most likely to reflect natural changes in the incidence of disease in animals over that period.

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (3)

Debate over the role of food-producing animals

Scientists at the University of Glasgow are urging policymakers to reconsider priorities in efforts to understand and

control antimicrobial resistance. Antimicrobial resistance in humans is frequently attributed to veterinary use of antimicrobials, but the relative contribution to the problem from animals and humans is poorly understood at the population level¹⁵. Despite this, proposals are under consideration by the European Parliament to phase out the precautionary (or prophylactic) use of some antibiotics in animals in the hope that the rate of increase in the occurrence of antimicrobial resistance would be slowed. The plan has been opposed by the British Vet-



erinary Association, which said that a ban would compromise animal health and welfare¹⁶. However, WHO advisor professor Collignon was not convinced by the study. *"It is good to see that more research is conducted to estimate the risk of antimicrobial resistance passing from animals to humans"*, said Christophe Buhot, FVE president. *"A better understanding of the role of local animal populations in antimicrobial resistance in humans could help to draw up better policies"* he added. *"This research and the debate it fuels show the complexity of the issue. More information is urgently needed on the spread of antimicrobial resistance in order to take efficient measures. What is clear is that a unilateral focus on restricting antimicrobials in animals only is too simplistic. The European veterinary profession is ready to take its responsibility and to contribute its share in solving the issue. But this is a true 'One*

Health' issue, and other stakeholders should also contribute their share."

OIE PRIORITIES

Focus on bio safety and antimicrobial resistance

At the annual New Year's greetings to the press on 11 January, Dr Bernard Vallat, Director General of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), presented the organisation's priorities for 2012 *'in the fight against biological threats'*¹⁷.

Misuse of antibiotics in human and veterinary medicine can hinder the effective treatment and recovery of illnesses in both humans and animals. *"Antibiotics are not ordinary products and their sale and use cannot be free. Appropriate use by stakeholders that avoids the appearance of resistance requires a long and complex scientific training"*, Dr Vallat said. *"That is why, in future, veterinarians will be requested to better supervise and implement the use of antibiotics everywhere in the world; if not, antibiotics could circulate with no control for example through massive direct purchases by private citizens in the Internet"*, he concluded.

In 2013, the OIE will convene a global conference in Paris on the prudent use and monitoring of antimicrobials in animals.

13 <http://www.avma.org/onlnews/javma/feb12/images/120215h-01.gif>

14 <http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/pdf/sale-santi09.pdf>

15 http://www.gla.ac.uk/news/headline_219604_en.html

16 <http://www.bva.co.uk/news/2646.aspx>

17 <http://www.oie.int/en/for-the-media/press-releases/detail/article/oie-dg-presents-the-organisations-action-in-the-reduction-of-biological-threats-to-the-press/>

EDUCATION

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL

Modernisation of Directive 2005/36/EC

The proposal for a revised Directive on the Recognition of professional qualifications was adopted by the European Commission on 19 December, after two years of consultations and an impact assessment. It is now being examined by the European Parliament and the Council. The main proposals with an impact on the veterinary profession are:

1. Update of the minimum training requirements, via a so-called “*Delegated Acts*”. This means that this will be dealt with separately, and by the Commission directly.

2. Notification procedure of diplomas. Member States should designate ‘an appropriate body such as an accreditation board’ to examine whether new teaching establishments comply with Directive 2005/36/EC. It is not clear yet whether each country or each profession should appoint its own accreditation board. “*The already existing European Committee on Veterinary Education, a joint initiative of the EAEVE and the FVE could play a potential role here,*” comments Karin Östensson, FVE vice president

3. Stricter language controls will be required for ‘Health professions’ although it is not clear yet whether the veterinary profession is considered a health profession under this directive.

4. Introduction of a European professional card. The card, in the form of an electronic certificate, will be introduced on a voluntary basis per profession. It will be linked to the use

of the internal market system (IMI), a secure online programme. For temporary providers of services, this professional card would replace the requirement of prior declaration.

5. Information points. All citizens applying for recognition of their professional qualifications may do so via so-called points of single contacts rather than through different administrations. These PSCs supply citizens information about the documents required for the recognition of their qualifications and perform online all the necessary procedures.

6. Continuing education. Every five years, the competent authorities should submit reports on their continuing education and training procedures, including for the veterinary profession.



Final adoption of the revised Directive lies with Council and European Parliament (EP), as it concerns a co-decision procedure. Both institutions are to produce a report. The EP’s Internal market and consumer protection (IMCO) is the responsible committee (rapporteur: Bernadette Vergnaud, France). To produce its report, it is to collect input from two other committees, Employment and social affairs (EMPL) and Culture and Education (CULT). This report will be voted on in July, with a plenary vote expected by end November 2012.

VETERINARY EDUCATION

FVE to draft model animal welfare curriculum



An ad hoc working group has been established by FVE to develop in collaboration with EAEVE and AWARE a draft model curriculum for animal welfare teaching in veterinary education. The group’s first task is to map animal welfare science, law and ethics teaching in undergraduate education (delivery: 2012). The mapping will be obtained by an online survey, to be completed if necessary by surveys or interviews.

This will be followed by the second task: drafting a model animal welfare curriculum for undergraduate veterinary education. The draft should take the current teaching in European veterinary faculties into account, propose core teaching subjects and possible ways of implementing it into the curriculum. Delivery: summer 2013.

The group, which will hold its inaugural meeting on 28 February, consists of the following persons: David Morton (UK), Frauke Ohl, (Netherlands), Borut Zemljic (Slovenia), Dirk Neuhaus, (Germany), Manuel Sant’Ana, (Portugal), Anna-Caroline Wöhr (Germany), Denis Simonin (France, European Commission), Linda Keeling (Sweden), Vlatko Ilieski (FYROM) and Nancy De Briyne (FVE Office).

ECOVE

Updated list of approved veterinary schools

The European Committee on Veterinary Education (ECOVE) - a Committee made up of representatives of the European Association of Veterinary Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) and the FVE met in Vienna on 29-30 November.



The following Veterinary schools were approved at the meeting: Dublin (Ireland), Camerino (Italy), Jerusalem (Israel), Nottingham, London (UK), Elazig (Turkey). The updated list of approved Veterinary Faculties across Europe is available on the EAEVE website¹⁸.

¹⁸ <http://www.eaeve.org/evaluation/establishments-status.html>

FVE & PROFESSIONAL MATTERS

TRANSLATION

FVE strategic plan in French

The FVE announces that its Strategic plan 2011-2015 is now also available in French¹⁹.

FIELD TRIP

Danish Veterinary Employees visit the FVE Secretariat

During a study trip to Brussels end October, the board of the Danish Veterinary Employees' Association (Ansatte Dyr lægers Organisation, ADO) visited the FVE secretariat in Brussels. The board was interested in learning more about the work of FVE and how the Federation seeks influence on the international political scene.

"It was very interesting to learn more about how FVE approaches the work with the new Animal Health Law and the Animal Welfare Law," observed Rikke Hansson, ADO president. "We had a very lively debate. It was also nice to meet our FVE representatives in the European system and to get an idea of how Danish veterinarians might influence the political process", he added.

¹⁹ http://www.fve.org/news/publications/pdf/bro_fve_2011_FR_03.pdf

MISCELLANEOUS

TAIEX

Valuable tool for the 'Exchange of experience and best practices'

The Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument (Taiex) has been an integral feature of the European Union enlargement strategy since 1996. In 2006, it was extended to cover also the EU neighbouring countries. Taiex is managed by the Institution Building Unit of the European Commission (DG Enlargement), and provides short term technical assistance in the form of seminars/workshops, study visits and expert missions. Between 2000 and 2011, Taiex mobilised more than 50,000 Member State experts to participate in 12,000 events reaching 330,000 officials from beneficiary countries.

Taiex is demand-driven and delivers peer-to-peer assistance. It shares the expertise of EU Member State public officials with beneficiary countries to "fill the gaps" in their knowledge and understanding of EU rules and procedures. Through the exchange of experience and best practices, this instrument aims to strengthen institutions and align beneficiary's laws in fields like justice and home affairs, internal market, transport, environment, agriculture and food safety. There are several sectors within Taiex, and the Agricultural and Food safety team deals with the veterinary and phytosanitary sectors, of which Animal Health, Animal Welfare and Zootechnics constitute the core subjects.

Taiex mainly engages EU experts from the public sector, with the idea to create and foster networks between of-

ficials in EU Member States and partner countries.



Technical knowledge and expertise for the requested assignment is the main criteria when

Taiex looks for an expert. The main source of information and identification of experts is the Taiex Expert Database which is accessible online²⁰. The website also contains a consolidated pool of EU-wide expertise in the *acquis communautaire* in all chapters of the legislation.

WORLD VETERINARY ASSOCIATION

First meeting of the new Council

The World Veterinary association (WVA) is a Federation of national veterinary medical associations throughout the world and is recognized as the global representative of the veterinary profession. The mission of WVA is *"to assure and promote animal health, public health and animal welfare at a global level"*.

On the 7 February the first meeting of the new Council of the World Veterinary Association (WVA)²¹ took place in Prague, chaired by its president, Dr Faouzi Kechrid from Tunisia. The Council is made by the representatives from the regions and from groups of specialist associate members: it acts on behalf of the Presidents of the Assembly in order to implement the decisions taken.

The Council was informed about the evaluation of the World Veterinary Congress, the global summit on antimicrobials and the Vet-2011 closing ceremony which were held last October in Cape Town. A working group on WVA Constitution and By-laws was established and it will be chaired by Dr. René Carlson, current AVMA President. This working group will deliver recommendations to amend the current WVA constitution.



WVA Council in Prague

Besides the establishment of a working group on WVA structure and the discussion of future development of WVA position and policy papers, the Council gave some provisions for the organisation of future meetings and conferences: it was decided to organize by the end of 2012, a World Conference on Veterinary Statutory Bodies, the 3rd Global Conference on Veterinary Education (2013) and the next Global Summit during the 2013 World Veterinary Conference in Prague.

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²⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/taiex/experts/edb/index_en.htm

²¹ <http://www.worldvet.org/node/8389>