



Federation of European Equine Veterinary Associations

FEEVA Bulletin November 2008

Please find enclosed the second FEEVA Bulletin, full of interesting information namely:

- Next FEEVA General Assembly 5 November 2009 Ireland
- Past FEEVA Board meeting in Liverpool
- Horse Identification: regulation adopted but not yet implemented
- Disease surveillance: FEEVA Enquiry
- Thesis "The Equine Vet" by Joop Loomans
- Transportation of horses: Regulation should be simplified
- Horse dentists: are they regulated?
- Equine Veterinary Medicines: easier to use products without an MRL
- FEI tool box
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Enjoy your reading!

Next FEEVA General Assembly: Thursday 5 November in Ireland

FEEVA will hold its 2009 GA at the Royal Marine Hotel in Dun Laoghaire - a marina and ferry port with magnificent views of Dublin bay - in conjunction with the Irish Equine Veterinary Conference. This congress will feature three days of wet-labs and presentations with Irish and international speakers. With an average attendance of 160 veterinarians this is a relatively intimate, and very friendly event and the Equine Group of Veterinary Ireland looks forward to welcoming delegates, veterinarians and partners for a feast of "caint, ceol agus craic" - literally translated as "talk, music and fun".

There will be plenty of opportunity for the exchange of views on topics related to equine practice and the veterinary profession, as well as learning opportunities in the fields of equine medicine and surgery. Though the format might be fairly formal by day, invariably the most important nuggets of information are exchanged over a few pints of Guinness later at the bar.

A car ferry service operates from Dun Laoghaire to the UK but the most convenient travel route will be by plane to Dublin Airport; there is an hourly direct bus connection (The Patton Flyer) to the Royal Marine (a 50 minute journey).

So make a note in your diary - November 5-9, FEEVA's European Equine Veterinary Meeting of the Year for 2009 - at Dublin.

FEEVA Board meeting in Liverpool on 10 September

The FEEVA Board met in Liverpool on 10 September last, at the occasion of the congress of the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA).

Topics included the identification of equidae, MRL legislation, the transport of horses, the trade of slaughter horses, surveillance of emerging diseases, the Veterinary Act and Code of conduct.

Horse identification: Regulation adopted but not yet implemented

On 6 June 2008 a Regulation was published regarding the identification of horses. All horses registered after June 2009 will need to be identified by microchip and have a passport. Member states may authorize other 'suitable alternative identification methods' to a silhouette i.e. use of a photograph, providing they allow for correct identification of the horse without double issuing of identification documents. Member States may also authorise other methods of permanent means of identification to a microchip, i.e. branding, iris scanning. Currently all countries are formulating legislation to implement this Identification Regulation.

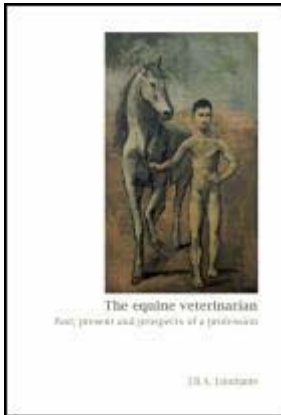
FEEVA has consistently requested that a central database (of microchip numbers) be a statutory requirement rather than an option but unfortunately this was not agreed upon. FEEVA board members discussed how the Regulation is implemented in their respective countries.

It became clear that some outstanding questions remain such as how to be certain to have unique numbers and prevent double registrations, and who can access the database. The FEEVA Board will continue to monitor this issue.

Disease surveillance: FEEVA enquiry

Perhaps the major welfare and economic challenge facing the international equine industry is the control of contagious and infectious disease. Therefore, FEEVA would like to establish a database of those endemic disease surveillance programmes that currently operate in order that we may assist those countries without surveillance schemes in place. A survey will be forwarded to you soon, please assist us with completing it!

“The equine veterinarian : past, present and prospects of a profession” by Joop Loomans



Joop Loomans, long term FEEVA delegate for the Netherlands, has recently published a collection of research work concerning the practice of equine veterinary medicine in the Netherlands. It is highly informative and makes stimulating reading. FEEVA congratulates him for undertaking this task!

We highly recommend you to have a look at this work via the following link, where a printed copy may be ordered or a pdf downloaded:

<http://igitur-archive.library.uu.nl/dissertations/2008-1030-200724/UUindex.html>

Transportation of horses: Regulation should be simplified

FVE has recently undertaken a process of examination of EU Regulation 1/2005 concerning the Welfare of Animals in Transport. The FEEVA President has been a member of the FVE working party which has been adopted as an FVE policy document by the FVE General Assembly, November 2008. The full details can be accessed at http://www.fve.org/news/position_papers/animal_welfare/fve_08_016_transport.pdf

Specifically in relation to horses this document promoted the simplification of rules and improved enforcement. As an example of unnecessary complication, the existing Regulation makes a distinction between “registered” and “non-registered” equidae. FVE can see no justification for treating the welfare of different categories of equidae differently; the provision merely causes confusion and uncertainty both for transporters and for those charged with enforcing the Regulation, especially in the light of Regulation EC 504/2008 regarding the permanent identification of all horses.

Further to the above, the European Federation of Thoroughbred Breeders Associations (EFTBA) recently wrote to the FEEVA Board requesting their views on the welfare of horses during transport (prompted by the EU Commission’s review of Regulation 1/2005), and, more specifically, the traveling of young horses in groups. The FEEVA Board’s reply can be found at Annex II and summarized as follows:

FEEVA believes, as a general principle, that Regulation 1/2005 should be simplified to ensure minimum welfare standards for all equidae; and that there should be more focus on better enforcement and the removal of loopholes that may be exploited by unscrupulous operators rather than imposing unreasonable conditions on those already operating in such a manner as to ensure appropriate standards of care. FEEVA believes that minimum legislative standards should be set that apply to all horses, and

encourages transporters to adopt even higher standards for the welfare of horses during transport on a voluntary basis.

Specifically relating to the issue of traveling “unbroken equidae” in groups, a balance must be struck between horses’ need for companionship and the risk of injury being sustained by physical contact with cohorts - the result either of aggressive or accidental contact. Our knowledge of the Thoroughbred industry leads us to believe that it is common practice to transport weanlings in groups of up to four (many traveling to the country of origin of the dam for economic reasons), but that from approximately 12 months of age the normal practice is for individual stalls with the animals restrained by the head, and this is the practice that we support on welfare grounds.

Horse dentists: are they regulated?

Catherine Roy (France) presented the outcome of a survey she conducted regarding “equine dentists” during the General Assembly of the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners (UEVP) on 13 November in Hannover, Germany. She undertook this survey because the French Order of Veterinarians is involved in legal action with the European Association of Equine Dentists. An overview of the results of the survey can be found in Annex III.

From the survey it became immediately clear that not only France had problems with “Equine dentists”. In many countries; equine dentists are not regulated and often they have received no formal training. Although they are only allowed to do non-invasive acts and are not allowed to use prescription-only-medicines, they often break these rules. The general public is sometimes misled as they think these equine dentists are veterinary surgeons, which they are not. If they want to complain about the service provided, there is no place where they can go to complain! And in case of an accident or mal-practice, usually these persons do not have (appropriate) liability insurance. “Equine dentists” started to organise themselves on a European level and submitted a complaint - consisting of 38 arguments - both to the European Court of Justice and the French and Belgium competition authorities. The commission is currently looking into these files. Catherine Roy proposed to organise a harmonised answer, on behalf of equine practitioners, to counter the arguments of the European Equine dentists.

If you have more information about the situation in your country, it would be very helpful if you could forward it to nancy@fve.org !

Equine Veterinary Medicines: easier to use products without an MRL

This remains a core issue for FEEVA and the Board has been working with relevant parties to address the (lack of) availability of licensed medicinal products and the narrowness of scope of the "Essential Substances list". This process is still underway but some positive developments can be reported:

1. The Commission will present in 2010 an assessment of the problems in the application of the veterinary medicinal products directive with a view to making, where appropriate, legal proposals in order to address the objectives of consumer safety and animal health protection, competitiveness of the veterinary industry and reduction of administrative burden.
2. It is proposed that the "Essential Substances list" for horses might be expanded to allow for the inclusion of medicinal agents that can be shown to bring "added clinical benefit" compared to other treatment options available for equidae, and for which the withdrawal period shall not be less than six months.

More information on the supply and use of equine veterinary medicines can be found in Annex IV.

FEI toolbox

The FEI is now publishing drug detection rates, a policy which the German Society of Equine Medicine considers irresponsible. The detection time is the approximate period of time for which a drug (or its metabolite) remains in a horse's system such that it can be detected by the laboratory.

The publication of these detection rates makes it possible to treat horses shortly before a competition, possibly allowing physical illness and psychological distress to be masked by suppressing symptoms. This possibility is especially relevant for the use of glucocorticoids, considering the way these drugs are mentioned in the current list of detection times.

The German Society of Equine Medicines have sent a letter (see Annex 1) regarding this to the FEI and ask whether FEEVA members could support this open letter. Feedback may be directed to nancy@fve.org

To see the detection rates:

http://www.fei.org/Athletes_AND_Horses/Medication_Control_AND_Antidoping/Horses/Pages/Information.aspx

Future FEEVA and other Equine meeting

3rd SIVE RESORT MEETING

Date: 11-13 December 2008

Location: Selva di Valgardena (BZ), Hotel Antares

More info: www.sive.it

XV European SIVE Congress

Date: 23-25 January 2009

Location: Bologna Zan Hotel Meeting Centergross, Italy

More info: www.sive.it

Voorjaarsdagen European Veterinary Conference

Date: 23-25 April 2009

Location: Amsterdam Rai, The Netherlands

More info: <http://www.voorjaarsdagen.org/content.php>

BEVA Congress

Date: 10-12 September 2009

Location: International Conference Centre, Birmingham, UK

More info: www.beva.org.uk

WEVA Brazil

Date: 24-27 September 2009

Location: Sao Paolo, Brazil

Info: <http://www.weva2009.com.br/>

FEEVA European Equine Meeting of the Year and General Assembly 2009

Date: 5-8 November 2009

Location: The Royal Marine Hotel, Dublin, Ireland

Annex I: Open letter of German Equine Veterinarians to FEI



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Open letter

German equine veterinarians demand change of regulations at the FEI

The positive doping cases in horses during the Olympic Games at Athens and Hong Kong, as well as the current publication of detection times of important drugs, induced the GPM (Gesellschaft für Pferdemedizin; "society for equine medicine") in Germany to repeatedly critically discuss the regulations of the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI).

After 2004 the regulations, concerning medication of horses before and during international competitions had been changed drastically. In this context, among other things, the "medicine box" as well as detection times for some drugs were defined and published (last updated: June 5th 2008).

As a result of these changes the possibility to use drugs in horses, just before a competition, which are able to mask physical illness and psychical distress by covering its symptoms, was made capable. This fact is highly important for the use of glucocorticoids, considering the way these drugs are mentioned in the current list of detection times.

That means: Due to glucocorticoids, symptoms of chronic, but also of acute illness, are suppressed. These effects of glucocorticoids are lasting both, during training and competition. Among other things, this leads to the fact, that horses do not receive enough time to recover until they are sound.

According to the Code of Conduct of the FEI, the welfare of the horse is the paramount concern in equestrian sports. The changes of the Veterinary Regulations of the FEI, mentioned above, and their effects, are not in accordance with the veterinarian's goal of animal welfare

With regard to the health and welfare of the horse the GPM appeals to the FEI, to reflect upon it's regulations and - in accordance with the up-to-date level of veterinary scientific knowledge - to formulate the regulations appropriate to the horses demands.

The GPM is considering, among other things, as it's task, to cooperate with the equestrian organisations and to contribute to the solution of acute problems, as it did in the past.

Prof. Dr. E. Deegen

Annex II: FEEVA letter to EFTBA

Mr J Hernon,
Chairman EFTBA

Date: 27 October 2008

RE: Your letter of 26 September 2008 on the transport of Equidae

Dear Mr Hernon,

Many thanks for your letter of the 29.09.2008 regarding the transport of equidae. This is one of the issues that was considered in depth by the board of directors of FEEVA (comprising six veterinarians each from a different EU Member State) at a board meeting held on September 10th 2008. We discussed what FEEVA's policy should comprise in the light of recent developments regarding horse transport regulations. As the EU Commission has proposed a review of the loading densities and traveling times of Regulation 1/2005, the FVE Working Group on the Welfare of Animals in Transport (of which I am a member) was activated to look into this issue. Several meetings have taken place and the working group has drafted a position paper.

In short, FEEVA believes, as a general principle, that Regulation 1/2005 should be simplified to ensure minimum welfare standards for all equidae; and that there should be more focus on better enforcement and the removal of loopholes that may be exploited by unscrupulous operators rather than imposing unreasonable conditions on those already operating in such a manner as to ensure appropriate standards of care. FEEVA believes that minimum legislative standards should be set that apply to all horses, and encourages transporters to adopt higher standards for the welfare of horses during transport on a voluntary basis.

Specifically relating to the issue of traveling "unbroken equidae" in groups, our knowledge of the Thoroughbred industry leads us to believe that it is common practice to transport weanlings in groups of up to four (many traveling to the country of origin of the dam for economic reasons), but that from approximately 12 months of age the normal practice is for individual stalls with the animals restrained by the head, and this is the practice that we support on welfare grounds.

A balance must be struck between horses' need for companionship and the risk of injury being sustained by physical contact with cohorts - the result either of aggressive or accidental contact. Our opinion is that the welfare of weanlings (approximately 5 to 12 months of age) is, on balance, enhanced by transport in small groups - these animals can be considered to be in a transition stage, with a social need for companionship to replace that of the dam. For animals greater than approximately 12 months of age however, we believe that the balance begins to shift toward a greater risk of physical injury during transport and we believe that the overall welfare of such animals is better protected by transport in adjoining stalls permitting visual, auditory and minimal physical contact with companions.

Sincerely,

JA Collins MVB CertEP CertVR MRCVS
FEEVA President

Annex III: Results survey "Equine dentists"

Belgium	- Complaint from ministry to Mr X for illegal use of medicine and illegal veterinary act : condemned on 5 November by the appeal court
France	- 2004 - 2006 = complaints from French Order, Syndicate and Equine Veterinary Association for illegal practice of veterinary act and the illegal use of veterinary medicine - complaints from European Equine Dentists to European Court of Justice: 30 mai 2008 : European Association of Equine Dentists (AEDE) for no respect of articles 81, 43 et 49 EC Treaty 2 juillet 2008: European Association of Equine Dental Practitioners and European School of Equine Dentistry (EEDE), established in Belgium, for no respect of community laws 30 may 2008: complaint against French Order and Syndicate for illegal agreement and harassing against equine dentists 2 july 2008 : complaint against Belgium Order and Syndicate for illegal agreement and harassing against equine dentists
Germany	- Profession"dental care for equine" in Germany - not regulated - not allowed to use POM's
Italy	- dental care for equine = part of the veterinary act - no recognised profession of non-vets - many illegal exercise is seen, complaints are received, very light sanctions are given
Latvia	- just few given this service - not regulated - not allowed to use POM's - no formal education
Netherlands	- Many equine dental technicians = "equine dentists" = protected title ? - Education in the US or in the Netherlands - Only allowed to abrade equine teeth with a file. - Not allowed to pull teeth or to administer sedative but in practice often they extract teeth and break the living tissue and administer sedative drugs IV - No success to convince government for years that they have to pursue these illegal "equine dentists" activities
Sweden	- not regulated - several complaints - started special CPD for vets on dentistry
UK	- No legal requirement for EDTs to undertake training in order to practise - Negotiations with Defra for years - No deregulation equine dentistry via a specific Exemption Order - Voluntary exam and accreditation scheme run by BEVA and the BAEDT - Non-invasive work, no sedation

Annex IV: Further information on the supply and use of Equine Veterinary Medicines

The supply and use of equine veterinary medicines is controlled both by European medicines regulations (designed to promote responsible safe and responsible use of medicines) and European residues regulations (designed to improve food safety and protect consumers by ensuring that animal food products do not contain residues of the active substances contained in medicines). Because the horse is classed as a food producing animal the residues regulations (2377/90/EU) have had a major impact on the range of medicines that can be used in horses: only substances with known persistence times in meat animal products (food, egg and milk) are permitted in horses intended for human consumption. Whilst the equine veterinary professions in all member states strongly support measures to protect consumers, the residues regulations have had the unintentional consequence of threatening the continuing availability of equine veterinary medicines. This is because many of the substances commonly used to treat horses do not have sufficiently well defined persistence times (residue limits) to meet the licensing requirements for food producing animals. Added to this, the high costs of licensing medicines (€20-40million) and the strict regulatory frameworks that have been put in place across Europe to safeguard the safety of medicines have further threatened the range of medicines that can be used to treat horses. Simply put, pharmaceutical companies will not spend the large amounts of money required to bring the regulatory data for existing medicines in line with the new regulations or develop and license new medicines if there is insufficient sales volume across Europe. FEEVA's position is that ensuring the continuing availability of veterinary medicines is vital for equine health and welfare: veterinary surgeons must have a sufficient range of medicines available to treat diseased horses and alleviate suffering.

An important FEEVA-led initiative to extend the range of veterinary medicines that can be used in horses was the List of Substances Essential for the Treatment of Equidae (European Regulation 1950/2006/EU) that was adopted in December 2006. The Essentials List extends the list of substances that can be used to treat horses intended for human consumption beyond those listed in Annexes I-III of 2377/90/EU. The use of substances on the Essentials List follows the principles of the Cascade and requires direct veterinary supervision.

A further initiative which may have a significant impact on equine veterinary medicine availability is the current review of the residues regulation (2377/90/EU). In April 2007 the European Commission adopted a proposal to amend the Regulation on maximum residue limits (MRLs). The aim is to simplify the existing regulations with a view to improving the availability of veterinary medicinal products. The Commission recognises that whilst the existing legislation protects consumers against possible harmful effects resulting from the exposure to residues of veterinary medicinal products present in foodstuffs, the regulation is too complex and while succeeding in guaranteeing a high level of public health protection, it has contributed to a decrease in availability of medicines for users in food producing animals in the EU. Led by rapporteur Mrs Avril Doyle, MEP, proposed amendments to allow greater flexibility in the setting, adoption and extrapolation of MRLs have been submitted to the European Parliament and the Council and have received preliminary approval by the Council. The key feature of the proposed equine amendment of the proposal is that it would allow the use of substances not included in the Annexes I-III or Annex IV of 2377/90, or on the Essentials List, under the cascade in horses intended for human consumption, subject to a six month withdrawal period and provided those substances are not administered by subcutaneous or intramuscular injection. The latest version of the proposed amendment adds that this use would be allowed for substances that bring added clinical benefit compared to other treatment options available:

"3. By way of derogation from Article 11, and in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 89(2), the Commission shall establish a list of substances:

- which are essential for the treatment of equidae, or
- which bring added clinical benefit compared to other treatment options available for equidae,

and for which the withdrawal period shall not be less than six months according to the control mechanisms laid down in Commission Decisions 93/623/EEC and 2000/68/EC."

Whilst FEEVA strongly welcomes all initiatives to increase the availability of equine veterinary medicines and believes that amendment of 2377/90 is one appropriate route for achieving this aim, FEEVA is concerned that the terms of reference for demonstration of added clinical benefit for substances needs clarification and may, in practice, present difficulties for establishing the list of substances referred to in the amendment. Since the amendment is based on scientific evidence for persistence times of active substances, FEEVA is keen to collate scientific information on known persistence times in horses that would inform the decision making on setting standard MRLs following all routes of administration for substances for which specific MRLs have not been determined.