



**Federation of
Veterinarians
of Europe**



**Newsletter
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EDITO

Quality of veterinary education in the EU

Over the past few months many people both from within and outside of the Federation, have participated in the development of our future strategy. People from all over Europe enthusiastically exchanged opinions and gave valuable input. Already by this process we have started to achieve one of our goals - better communication and better cooperation - even before it was put on paper!

One of the issues that kept coming back from these strategy discussions is the quality of veterinary education. Adequate pre- and postgraduate training and continuous professional development are essential to fulfill the task society has conferred on to the veterinary profession: the care for animal health, animal welfare and veterinary public health. Nevertheless, from the visitations and evaluations of veterinary schools and faculties, we know that a number of establishments do not meet the minimum requirements set out by the EU legislation and suffer from serious deficiencies. In some Member States the situation is of grave concern to the profession.

This is one of the main reasons why we have put a lot of effort in to convincing members of the European Parliament of the need to incorporate the evaluation of veterinary schools in the proposed Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications. While they accepted our arguments and tabled amendments on this item, other legislators on the other hand remain against such amendments. In their view the quality of education is the responsibility of the competent authorities in the Member States.

They are of the opinion that it is up to each individual Member State, to make sure that the minimum requirements for veterinary training are met.

An alternative way to approach the problem, is to make the Commission more aware of the fact that some of the Member States seriously fail in implementing the EU legislation on veterinary education. Thus the Commission, in its role as guardian of the treaties can take the necessary steps against these Member States.

Furthermore, FVE together with the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) have started to review their current system for the evaluation of veterinary schools. The objective is to make the system clearer, more transparent and really focused towards the quality of young veterinary graduates produced. Their knowledge, skills, attitude and their ability to oversee the consequences of their work are of paramount importance. By making the system more transparent, it will become more credible and more acceptable so that veterinary schools will no longer be able to evade their responsibilities. Finally, the system should evolve into a central accreditation system.

Jan Vaarten
Executive Director

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Animal health & Medicines

Technology platform on global animal health

FVE to nominate experts

The first stakeholders meeting of the EU Technology platform on global animal health was held on 24 February. This Technology platform, chaired by industry, aims to bring together stakeholders at national and EU level and to “facilitate and accelerate” the development and distribution of the most effective tools for the control of animal diseases of major European and global importance (i.e. vaccines and diagnostic tests). It intends to boost research performance, increase competitiveness and combat fragmentation by concentrating efforts within the EU.

In the meeting, it was decided that FVE would be a member of the Platform’s Steering Group.. Other members of the steering group include CEVA Santé animale, International Association for Biologicals, Intervet, Institute for Animal Health UK, Facultad de veterinaria, Universidad Madrid, Merial, European Association of Bio industries, OIE, International Livestock Research Institute and IFAH. FVE also became a member of the ad interim executive Committee.

At the meeting, three working groups were created, on research, technology transfer and horizontal issues, for which FVE is to nominate experts. The next meeting of the interim executive committee will be held on 17 May.

EU Animal Health Strategy

FVE to give input in evaluation phase

DG Sanco is currently developing an animal health strategy for 2007-2013, in the framework of the Community Animal Health Policy (CAHP). The strategy will be based on three phases: the preparation phase (July 2004-April 2005), the evaluation phase (April 2005-November 2006) and the dissemination and drafting phase (November 2006-mid 2007). At the end of 2006, a seminar will be planned under the Finnish Presidency to present the results of the evaluation group and allow discussion by stakeholders

On 23 March, FVE met with Dr Eric Marin (DG Sanco), who is responsible for the preparation and evaluation phase.

The Animal Health Policy will mainly focus on animal health; food safety will be covered only where it is linked with animal health (MRLs, zoonoses, etc). A strategy for Animal Welfare will be developed separately, outside Animal Health.

Topics to be evaluated are: eradication programmes, animal nutrition, medicines (research, pharmacovigilance, availability, import/export, MRL) and will cover both production animals as companion animals. FVE was asked to indicate the main concerns regarding animal health, and to give suggestions for their improvement.

Animal welfare

OIE working group on animal welfare

Reports up for adoption at the OIE GA in May

The OIE Working Group on Animal Welfare held its third meeting at the OIE Headquarters in Paris on 7-9 December 2004. The Working Group then examined the guidelines proposed by each of the four ad hoc groups that had met to date:

- Slaughter for human consumption
- Land transport of animals
- Transport of animals by sea
- Humane killing of animals for disease control purposes.

The Working Group has planned to meet again in December 2005, to allow time to review the work of the ad hoc animal welfare groups during the year and to draft a work plan for 2006.

Members of the WG on Animal Welfare include David Bayvel (New Zealand, chair), David Fraser (Canada), Andrea Gavinelli (EU), Tore Håstein (Norway), Walter Masiga (Kenya), Sira Abdul Rahman (India), Hassan Aidaros (Egypt) and David Wilkins (ICFAW).

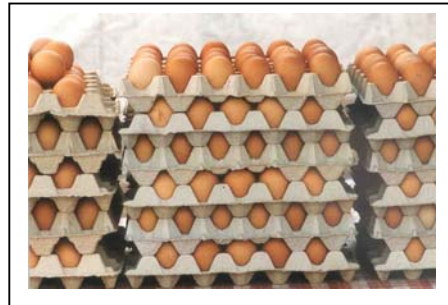
The Terrestrial Code Commission proposes to submit the four texts unchanged for adoption during the upcoming OIE General Session to be held on 22 to 27 May 2005.

As a stakeholder, FVE has been invited to make comments.

Welfare of laying hens

EFSA publishes scientific opinion

The Scientific panel on Animal Health and Welfare of the EFSA (European Food Safety Authority) has published its opinion of the welfare aspects of the various systems of the keeping of laying hens¹, enriched cages in particular. The three categories of housing systems considered by the experts were conventional cage systems, furnished (enriched) cage and non cage (alternative) systems.



Each housing system has its set of drawbacks for bird welfare. For example, although research in the 1990s showed that welfare in aviaries allowed specific behaviours such as foraging and dust bathing, it is difficult to avoid injuries due to pecking without beak-trimming, which is a painful procedure. Keeping birds outdoors presents a risk of exposure to infectious agents (Salmonella), wildlife and chemical contamination (dioxins), while furnished (enriched) cages are reported to have a higher level of eggshell contamination.

In all cases, hens should be provided with sufficient space, while pecking should be minimised by appropriate housing and genetic selection. Any beak-trimming should be permitted only if significant pecking behaviour would otherwise result.

¹ http://www.efsa.eu.int/science/ahaw/ahaw_opinions/831_en.html

Ban on battery cages for laying hens

Study examines the socio-economic consequences

A study was carried out on the potential implications of the 2012 ban on traditional caged egg production². The study examines the structure of the egg production sector in the EU, the current trend in production systems, both in the EU and in third countries, the costs of production by type of production system as well as trade and market demand.

Regarding the assessment of the likely impact of a cost increase if there were to be a shift into alternative egg production systems, the model indicates a 20% increase in such costs, leading to a potential loss of producer surplus of €15 million (EU-15) or €354 million (EU-25). Authors of the 400-page document stress that this would not “significantly affect the overall scenario results because the quantity of eggs traded is very small in relation to the size of the overall egg market”. In this context, they recall, it should be borne in mind that the estimations of producer and consumer surplus “do not take into account the potentially much larger non-market benefits that society derives from improved animal welfare”.

Public health

Implementing measures of the Hygiene package

Considerable impact of new Hygiene package

The impact of the new Hygiene package will be considerable. It will lead to a shift of the responsibility for safe food from the authorities to the producer, while the role of the official veterinarian will change from inspecting to auditing and the transfer of information (food chain information, feedback to farmers...).

Legislation of the “Hygiene package” was adopted in 2004, and while all concerned are preparing for its coming into force on 1 January 2006, the Commission is finalising

some implementing measures such as HACCP rules, antimicrobial treatment of carcasses, the Food chain information (FCI), Trichinella testing and the transitional arrangements.

The FVE Hygiene working group met on 22 February and the FVE was also represented at the stakeholders meeting with DG Sanco on 23 March. The FVE was asked to give its opinion on the various parts of the draft Regulation describing the implementing measures³.



² http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/animal/welfare/farm/socio-economic_study_en.pdf

³ SANCO/55/2005 Rev. 2



HACCP in small food businesses

The FVE welcomes the Commissions working document on the facilitation of HACCP in small food businesses⁴, and considers it gives a “*very practical approach to the implementation of HACCP based systems in small businesses*”. As for the latter, FVE suggests that each sector should agree to its own definition for small businesses, in collaboration with the official authorities.

Both the “full” HACCP system and the guidelines based on HACCP should give an equivalent level of consumer protection. According to FVE, each industry sector should develop its own guidelines in coordination with the competent authorities of the Member States. If no guidelines are agreed upon, the producer should apply a full HACCP plan.

But independent of the size of the business, and of whether HACCP or guidelines is used, some form of record keeping would be required.

Antimicrobial treatment

According to the FVE⁵, the antimicrobial treatment or decontamination of carcasses “can never replace good hygiene practices in slaughterhouses and in farms”. As the decontamination process may remove the normal competitive microflora, this could render the surface of the carcass susceptible to preferential growth of pathogens, which are either present or which appear by recontamination after treatment. The FVE therefore recommends that the decontamination of carcasses should not be allowed unless it has been demonstrated that such techniques are effective and safe and its use controllable, taking into consideration the potential pathogenic microflora involved.

For this reason, FVE has proposed to amend the text of the draft Regulation⁶ by stressing that the antimicrobial treatment of food should be used “only by way of exception on a case-by-case basis”, and be defined in the HACCP plan.

Food Chain information

The Commission has decided to delete the need for a certifying signature by an Official veterinarian from the Regulation altogether, thereby relieving the OV of a responsibility of certifying information he or she could not verify. However, a lack of reliable information over the health status of the slaughter animals would not improve the efficiency of meat inspection, which was the initial objective, and more information about the FCI principles is needed. According to FVE, if no quality assurance scheme is in place, a system would be needed where veterinary practitioners could supply FCI. In the current text, the FCI will be the entire responsibility of the farmer, while it will initially only apply to the poultry and pig sector.

Training

The Hygiene III part of the hygiene package only mentions the need for training, but does not give details or learning objectives. The FVE hygiene working group agreed that some form of post graduate training would be necessary in order to carry out the inspection duties of an Official veterinarian. DG Sanco has published prior notice to a call for tender for the organisation of training programmes for OVs⁷. The services required concern in particular “*the organisation and*


⁴ SANCO/3069/2004

⁵ Position paper FVE/99/020

⁶ Annex II, chapter 1, paragraph 3.

⁷

http://ted.publications.eu.int/official/Exec?DataFlow=call_one_detail.dfl&Template=TED/result_one_detail.xml&TableName=TED_EN&TocQuery=ND:%2262178%202005%22&Lang=EN&StatLang=EN



delivering of a series of training courses on food and feed control procedures based on HACCP principles and on audit techniques to verify implementation of HACCP systems”.

Trichinella

The trichinoscopic method, today the method of choice, will no longer be used as standard method for the detection of *Trichinella* in meat (except in wild boar and domestic pigs under certain conditions). The new legislation calls for a risk based approach, with larger sample size for meat from at-risk animals. It also introduces the concept of *Trichinella*-free farms.

FVE & Professional matters

Member survey, regional meetings, stakeholder interviews...

Preparing FVE for the future

During its November 2004 General Assembly in Brussels, the FVE adopted the board's plan for the development of a future strategy for the Federation. The plan consists of two stages. During the first stage - until June 2005 – an outline of a strategy will be developed at Federation level. This will be presented to the GA of June 2005. During the second stage, from June to November 2005, the draft will be amended according to recommendations of the GA, and action-plans will be drawn up. These will then be presented at the November GA for final discussion and adoption.

Questionnaires inside and outside

As part of the first phase of drafting a strategic plan, questionnaires were sent out to all FVE member associations. Regarding the “mission” of the Federation, respondents underlined the FVE's role in enhancing the health and welfare of humans and animals. As strengths of the FVE, respondents mentioned the advantages of a small, efficient and independent organisation which disposed of a good network of experts. Its relatively small size was also seen as a handicap, as its financial and human resources were seen as a limiting factor when lobbying or communicating. Furthermore, to obtain an “outside view” of the FVE, a number of stakeholders, such as BEUC (consumers), Copa-Cogeca (farmers), the OIE and the Commission, were interviewed. These interviews confirmed that the veterinary profession of tomorrow is unlikely to be the same as yesterday. Therefore, FVE's role is to enable its members to consider and determine what changes need to be made, and how to make them.

The evidence suggests it will be important for the profession to develop beyond the delivery of technical knowledge and competence. This is not to sacrifice the scientific base of the profession but to complement it with powerful ethical and moral arguments for the use of medications. In this scenario, the vet is seen as the professional who is best placed to negotiate with all stakeholders in order to determine the ‘right approach’.

The strength of the veterinary reputation at the local level must be increasingly projected onto the global stage in order to keep pace with the globalisation of livestock production and livestock based threats to animal and human health and well-being. To achieve this, the profession may need to develop new skills such as Public Relations that, traditionally, have not been among its strengths.



Regional meetings

Furthermore, three regional strategy meetings were held over the past months, in Slovenia (for the Alpine and Mediterranean countries), in Copenhagen (Northern and Western European countries) and in Ohrid (FYROM) (Eastern Europe and Balkan states). The FVE was pleased with the positive participation and “*open and friendly atmosphere*” in which the meetings took place, and is particularly grateful to the Slovenian, Danish and Macedonian associations for hosting the meetings. The issues discussed during these meetings included the mission of the FVE, its vision and objectives, as well as topics such as membership fees, composition of the GA and the board and communication. Although on the whole, there was a large overlap in opinions, it also transpired that new and recent FVE members, in particular in South Eastern Europe, have special needs and expectations.



And now...

Spokespersons of the three regional meetings met mid April in Brussels with the FVE board and representatives of the FVE sections to discuss the outcome of the various meetings and FVE's future strategy. Several important issues such as the role of the veterinary profession in society were discussed. Moderator of the meeting was the external consultant Rodger O'Connell. The FVE Board and staff are currently preparing a first draft of the strategy paper, which will be presented at the next general assembly in Nice.

Services Directive

Internal Market Committee presents draft report.

On 19 April 2005, the Internal Market Committee (European Parliament) held a major debate on how Parliament should alter the controversial Services Directive at first reading. The EP rapporteur, Evelyne Gebhardt (PES, DE), presented the first part of her report, which proposes major amendments to the Commission's proposals, in particular to the scope and the controversial country of origin principle.

Meetings & Miscellaneous

FVE General Assembly

Spring meeting in Nice (France)

The spring General Assembly of the FVE will be held in Nice, on 3 and 4 June. Guest speakers at the GA include Dr Bernard Vallat (Director General OIE) and Dr J. McEvoy (Food and Veterinary Office, Ireland). Main agenda points: the election of a new board (2005-2007), presentation of the FVE strategic plan and proposals for a new section for veterinarians from research, industry and education.



The Brussels GA will be held on 18 and 19 November 2005, with sections meeting on 17 November. For further information, please contact the FVE office.

For an improved input in legislative proposals

FVE member of the Advisory group on the Food Chain and Animal and Plant Health

The FVE is now an official member of the Advisory group of the Food Chain and animal and Plant health⁸. On 21 April, the European Commission published the list of members in the Official Journal of the European Union. Besides FVE, 35 other stakeholders have been nominated members of the Advisory group, including BEUC (consumers), Copia-Cogeca (farmers), Eurogroup for Animal Welfare and IFAH (industry).

Foreseen in the General Food Law Regulation of 2002, the Advisory Group will provide input into the preparation, revision and evaluation of legislative proposals. As part of the public consultation process, members can ask the competent Commission services about issues of particular relevance to their sector. This consultation process will play a key role in the development of Commission policy in the areas of food and feed safety, animal health and welfare, plant health and human nutrition and on the main legislative proposals within these fields. The group will meet at least twice a year and be chaired by the Commission.

Meeting of Europe's equine associations in Amsterdam

A new Board for FEEVA

Members of the Federation of European Equine Veterinary Associations met in Amsterdam on the occasion of the FEEVA congress, held jointly with the FECAVA congress, on 14-17 April. Founded in 1998 by a small group of equine practitioners concerned with the decreasing medicines availability for horses, FEEVA has been active in lobbying the various EU institutions through UEVP and FVE.

⁸ http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/committees/advisory/index_en.htm

A new board was elected in Amsterdam, with Alistair Barr (UK) replacing Jacques Bardiès (France) as president, with Jesper Moller Nielsen (DK) as secretary, Michael Düe (DE) as treasurer and Marco Eleuteri (IT), Dominik Burger (CH) and Joe Collins (IE) as vice presidents. At the meeting, Talina Sterneberg (FVE Office) gave updates on horse passports and medicines availability, and the rules that apply under the cascade for food and non-food producing horses. Other agenda points included doping control, transport, complementary medicine, welfare and a presentation by the American Association of Equine Practitioners. The next FEEVA congress, hosted by the French association of equine veterinarians (AVEF), will be held in Versailles, on 12-14 October 2006.



*The new FEEVA Board.
From left, Marco Eleuteri, Jesper Moller Nielsen, Alistair Barr,
Joe Collins, Jacques Bardiès (old Board) and Dominik Burger.
(photo: K. de Lange/Anamnese)*

European Board for Veterinary Specialisation

Sjeng Lumeij is the first President who can benefit from the change in the EBVS constitution


Following a change in the EBVS constitution, it is now possible for a president to be re-elected for a second one-year term. Professor Sjeng Lumeij (ECAMS, the Netherlands) is the first President who can benefit from this increased continuity. Electronic elections will take place in 2 months.

Special dossier: Education

Audits, proof of training quality and language skills

Recognition of professional qualifications: MEPs to vote on amendments

The second reading on the Directive regarding the recognition is now well underway. FVE welcomes the Council Common Position reached by Member States on 21 December 2004, in particular regarding the free provision of services. During their vote on 26 April, the IMCO committee – responsible for this dossier - adopted several amendments answering remaining concerns of FVE with the Council Common Position such as that it did not leave enough room for regulators to request a service provider to demonstrate its language proficiency prior to registration and the introduction of a professional ID card. Another amendment adopted improves



the involvement of European professional association in the consultation mechanism, a request not only coming from our organisation but also from the six other European professional organisations covered by a Sectoral Directive. Regrettable is that amendments tabled, referring to the evaluation system of veterinary faculties and the challenging of certain degrees, were not adopted. This, while the veterinary profession is faced with a number of veterinary faculties that clearly do not fulfill the minimum training requirements as set down in the professional recognition Directive. Apparently, European decision makers want to turn a blind eye. A vote in EP plenary is planned for 10 May.

From evaluation to accreditation?

The joint FVE/EAEVE evaluation system of veterinary teaching establishments, initially set up by the Advisory Committee on Veterinary Training “*to ensure a comparably high standard of veterinary training*” throughout the EU, is working well. However, in spite of repeated lobbying at the various EU institutions, such audits will not be taken into account in the new Directive on professional recognition.

In order to evaluate and when necessary to enhance the working of the system, a joint FVE/EAEVE Task Force has been set up. Remit of the Task Force was to examine the current Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and to make sure that these standards “are transparent and applied evenly and fairly to all colleges/schools seeking recognition”. If possible, this revision would lead to a system that meets the requirements of present international quality systems and that is both efficient and cost effective. Certain private accreditation systems such as that of the (non-European) AVMA are already being used in Europe.

The report of the Task Force - Heriberto Rodriguez-Martinez (SE), David Taylor (UK), Olivier Glardon (CH) and Bernd Hoffmann (DE) - is to be submitted to the FVE and EAEVE Boards in the coming months.

The “positive list”

The list of teaching establishments without so-called category 1 (major) deficiencies — the so-called “positive list”, later renamed “list of visited and approved institutions” — includes the following schools on 8 March, 2004⁹: Barcelona (ES), Bari (IT), Berlin (DE), Bern (CH), Bologna (IT), Bristol (UK), Brno (CZ), Bucharest (RO), Budapest (HU), Copenhagen (DK), Dublin (IE), Edinburgh (UK), Ghent (BE), Giessen (DE), Glasgow (UK), Helsinki (FI), Kosice (SK), Leipzig (DE), Ljubljana (SI), London (UK), Lugo (ES), Lyon (FR), Madrid (ES), Munich (DE), Murcia (ES), Nantes (FR), Oslo (NO), Thessaloniki (HE), Toulouse (FR), Turin (IT), Uppsala (SE), Utrecht (NL), Vienna (AT), Warsaw (PL), Wroclaw (PL), Zagreb (HR).

Competent authorities responsible for professional recognition

If you want to establish yourself or provide a service in another country as a veterinary surgeon, you should contact the competent authority of the country of destination. FVE recently updated the list of competent authorities¹⁰.

⁹ Several schools are in the process of having reports assessed, while three further schools — Hannover (DE), Lisbon (PT), Milan (IT) — were visited during the pilot study, and have either not been visited since, or, if visited, are still in the process of final assessment.

¹⁰ http://www.fve.org/faqs/pdf/eu_auth.pdf



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Sections: UEVP- Practitioners, EASVO-State Officers, UEVH-Hygienists

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Federation of Veterinarians of Europe - AISBL
rue Defacqz, 1 B – 1000 Brussels
Tel: +32.2.533.70.20 - Fax: +32.2.537.28.28
E-mail: info@fve.org - Internet: www.fve.org