



Federation of  
Veterinarians  
of Europe



Newsletter - March 2006

# EDITO

Avian influenza, classical swine fever, foot and mouth disease, these are only a few of the plagues that threaten the health and welfare of animals and which may cause large socio-economic implications. Especially in cases like avian influenza where the virus might change into a new strain that could be transmitted easily between humans, the effects on our daily lives can be huge.

According to a recent publication<sup>1</sup> humans are affected by an impressive diversity of pathogens; 1407 pathogenic species of viruses, bacteria, fungi, protozoa and helminthes were recognized.

Of this total, approximately 13% were considered as emerging or reemerging, and it is interesting to note that they share some common features. (Re-) emerging pathogens are not strongly associated with particular host types; in general they have broad host ranges. Secondly they relatively often are viruses, especially RNA viruses. These viruses are genetically variable, which makes them highly skilled at taking advantage of new epidemiologic opportunities and adapting to new hosts. The authors of the article identified several drivers for the (re-) emergence of pathogens. On the top of the list are: changes in land use or agricultural practices, changes in human demographics and society, poor population health, hospitals and medical procedures, pathogen evolution, and contamination of food sources or water supplies.

It is clear that (re-) introduction of pathogens in the human population is a complex issue. Constant surveillance and monitoring of trends in developments of infectious diseases is needed and good co-operation between medical and veterinary experts is crucial. Or to say it in the words of the Director for Veterinary Medicine and Public Health of the US National Center for Infectious Diseases to the Financial Times of last week: "the animal and human health sectors, which have historically been separate, must find new ways to do business together" and "veterinarians must be part of the public health team. While most medics traditionally work with individual patients of one single species, veterinarians are trained in multi species approaches and used to work with outbreaks of disease in herds".

Re-emerging pathogens are a great challenge for the profession. Veterinarians, independently of their position can participate in taking up this challenge: doing examinations, making diagnosis, spreading information to the public, doing research, developing new strategies, etc. Synergy is our strength; let's use it.

Jan Vaarten  
Executive director

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.CDC.gov/ncidod/EID/vol11no12/05-0997.htm>

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### Avian influenza now well established in Europe

#### Enhanced biosecurity essential; France and the Netherlands to vaccinate

At the time of going to press, highly pathogenic strains of H5N1 avian influenza had been in more than 10 European countries, and this number will probably increase in the coming weeks. Luckily most outbreaks occurred in wild birds, however some in backyard poultry, a few in commercial poultry establishments and even four cats were diagnosed positive. In view of the seasonal migration behaviour of wild birds and the high density of poultry kept for food production, it is essential to lay down measures that avoid all possible contact between the two types of birds.



Preventive measures include increased biosecurity, such as keeping birds indoors or separated from wild birds through nets and roofs, in particular in areas frequented by migrating waterfowl, which are likely to spread the disease. Yet a one-size-fits-all measure for all regions and different holding systems in Europe seems illusory and every possible option to protect poultry from this virus should be examined.

#### Vaccination: in certain cases only

On 22 February, a Commission proposal was adopted allowing France and the Netherlands to carry out targeted preventive vaccination campaigns on poultry. The vaccination programmes are authorised only for specific birds in specified regions, and are subject to rigorous surveillance and control requirements, including movement restrictions, strict monitoring of vaccinated flocks and careful record-keeping.

Vaccinated poultry must also be able to be differentiated from poultry and birds with the avian influenza virus. This can be achieved through the DIVA (Differentiating between Infected and Vaccinated Animals) strategy. The Commission proposals to authorise the vaccination plans also lay out conditions and limits for the trade of the vaccinated birds and their products.

In France, vaccination is allowed in ducks and geese in the departments of Landes, Loire-Atlantique and Vendée. In these high-risk areas of avian influenza, many ducks and geese are kept in farms where they cannot be separated effectively from potentially infected wild birds. Vaccination will be carried out until 1 April.

The French plan outlines the monitoring and control measures that will be taken in relation to the vaccinated birds. These include a pre-vaccination examination of flocks to ensure health and bio-security standards are adequate, monthly clinical surveillance of the holdings, the use of sentinel birds (i.e. unvaccinated control birds) to monitor for an avian influenza outbreak in the vaccinated flock.

The Dutch vaccination plan applies to hobby poultry and to free-range laying hens throughout the whole country. There are between 1-3 million hobby birds in the Netherlands, and around 5 million free-range laying hens. The vaccination will be provided on a voluntary basis, as an alternative to the requirement that these birds be kept indoors. All bio-security measures, such as the feeding of poultry under cover, will still have to be applied, regardless of whether owners opt for vaccination or not. Detailed surveillance and control provisions are outlined in the Dutch plan. Monitoring for an outbreak of avian influenza in the vaccinated flock will be done using sentinel birds and veterinary tests, vaccinated poultry will be distinguishable from non-vaccinated birds, records will be kept of all vaccinated holdings and bio-security measures will continue to be applied.

For updated information on avian influenza, see the News section of the FVE web site: [www.fve.org/index.html?home/changefts.htm&3](http://www.fve.org/index.html?home/changefts.htm&3)



## Critically important antimicrobials in veterinary medicine

### List compiled by FVE now online

Last autumn, the OIE started compiling a list of critically important antimicrobials in veterinary medicine (VCIA). Aim of the list is to safeguard the efficacy and availability of veterinary antimicrobial products for diseases for which there are no or few antimicrobial alternatives.

At the November GA of the FVE it was decided that FVE would contribute to this initiative by sending a consolidated list. Part of the list compiled by the FVE can now be viewed on-line<sup>1</sup> (substances list, animal species concerned, name of the disease, causative microbial species).

OIE member countries were requested to send their national lists to the OIE, where a consolidated list will be drawn up to complement the OIE guideline for the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials in veterinary medicine (OIE Terrestrial Code Appendix 3.9.3).

## Substances considered essential for the treatment of horses

### FVE consulted on draft Regulation

The Commission is currently examining the so-called positive list of medical substances considered 'essential' for the treatment of food-producing horses and is preparing a legislative text accordingly. To this end, FVE recently received the draft Commission Regulation establishing a list of substances essential for the treatment of equidae, for consultation. This 'essential list' of medicines for horses should not be confused with the list of critically important antimicrobials (see article above).

Regarding this draft, FVE was pleased to note that a Regulation was chosen as legal framework, with the list of essential products as an annex, making it much more flexible and allowing new products to be included when and if necessary. However, FVE regrets that the right to propose such new substances is a prerogative of the Member States, as they do not have a direct interest in keeping the list up-to-date. The list might therefore not get the attention and priority it deserves, warns FVE.

FVE suggests to extend the right to propose new substances to the Committee for Veterinary Medicinal Products of the EMEA, which could forward proposals to the Commission that have already undergone a careful screening.

As for the Annex, the FVE is glad to see that it largely covers the list of medicines drawn up by the CVMP, with a few omissions. FVE has asked for reasons behind these non-inclusions.

As the number of products available for the treatment of horses intended for slaughter is limited, the substances considered 'essential' for the treatment of horses were identified. A list of substances was drawn up in collaboration with the Federation of European Equine Veterinary Associations (FEEVA) and submitted to the Committee for Veterinary Medicinal Products (CVMP), which advised the Commission to retain 76 substances on this positive list.

Once adopted, the new Regulation, including the 'positive' list would give veterinarians more leeway in the treatment of food-producing horses where no legally authorised product is available or where the cascade offers no alternative.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.fve.org/news/pdf/fve\\_news/papers/06\\_01\\_10\\_antimicrobials.pdf](http://www.fve.org/news/pdf/fve_news/papers/06_01_10_antimicrobials.pdf)

## Medicines for food-producing animals

### Exemption criteria for the prescription of veterinary products to be decided

A veterinary prescription will be required for the dispensing of medicines to food-producing animals, according to art. 67 (aa) of the veterinary medicines Directive<sup>2</sup>. However, Member States may grant exemptions from this requirement, according to criteria which still need to be established by the Commission. These criteria need to be adopted through the comitology procedure by December 31, 2006 at the latest. The Draft Commission Decision establishing these criteria is now under discussion in the Committee.

FVE considers that these criteria should only apply to products that:

do not fall under any other restrictions (e.g. narcotics)

do not carry a particular risk for the animal, the administrator or the environment

do not need a specific diagnosis;

Furthermore, such products should have no residues that are potentially harmful to public health and have no potential to cause resistance in target species.

## Animal welfare

### Improving animal welfare

#### EU Action Plan adopted

Concrete measures to improve the protection and welfare of animals over the next five years are outlined in a new Action Plan on the protection and welfare of animals<sup>3</sup>, which was adopted by the Commission on 23 January. The Action Plan aims to ensure that animal welfare is addressed in the most effective manner over the coming years, in all EU sectors and through EU relations with Third countries.

For the first years (2006-2010), five main areas of action are set out: upgrading minimum standards for animal welfare; promoting research and alternatives to animal testing; standardised animal welfare indicators; improved communication to animal handlers and the general public on animal welfare issues; and supporting international initiatives for the protection of animals.

A Eurobarometer opinion poll last summer and an Internet consultation held this winter by the Commission have revealed widespread public support for EU action on animal welfare. Over 44 000 respondents participated in the Internet consultation, with a relatively large proportion of replies from Germany (25.3%) and the Netherlands (12.7%). A relatively low participation was registered for the UK (5.8%), Italy (3%) and Ireland (0.6%). Nearly two-thirds (64.4%) of respondents considered the level of farm animal welfare to be 'poor' or 'very poor' in the EU, with worst conditions perceived for fur animals, broilers and laying hens.



<sup>2</sup> Directive 2004/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 amending Directive 2001/82/EC on the Community code relating to veterinary medicinal products

<sup>3</sup> See

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/64&type=HTML&aged=0&language=FR&uiLanguage=en>



## Raising standards

The Action Plan proposes that current minimum standards for animal welfare be upgraded across the EU, in line with latest scientific information and public demand. It suggests expanding these minimum standards to include species currently not covered by EU provisions.

The possible establishment of a European Centre or Laboratory for animal welfare is proposed as a potential reference point for the coordination, collection and exchange of information on research and activities related to animal welfare. The Action Plan pays great attention to the “3Rs” principle (replacement, reduction and refinement of the use of animals in experiments) and states that further research and support should be ensured to foster this principle.

The Action Plan foresees a classification system for animal welfare practices, to differentiate between minimum standards applied and cases where even higher standards are used. The option of an EU label for animal welfare is put forward, to promote products obtained in line with certain animal welfare standards.

## Training and informing

The Action Plan highlights the importance of training personnel involved in animal handling/keeping. It also proposes common initiatives, such as an Information Platform for Animal Welfare, to facilitate dialogue and the exchange of best practice. By educating citizens on the various farming practices, and the costs and benefits of applying higher animal welfare standards, they will be able to make more informed purchasing decisions.

The Commission will remain committed to working with international organisations such as the Council of Europe and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) on the health and welfare of animals, while pressing for greater acceptance of animal welfare policies at World Trade Organization (WTO) level.

## Broiler welfare

### MEPs back better conditions for poultry

In adopting a report on the welfare of chickens, the European Parliament agreed on tighter rules on broiler welfare than the Commission had proposed originally. For example, MEPs came out strongly against beak trimming and the castration of cocks and called on the Commission to standardise penalties for chicken farmers who do not comply with EU rules.

The consultation report approved the general rule to limit stocking densities to 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> per unit. However, a derogation — under certain conditions — to this rule should only be possible until January 1, 2013. After this, stocking densities should not exceed 34 kg/m<sup>2</sup> under any condition.

FVE is delighted that all proposed FVE amendments were included in the report. However, this legislation falls under the consultation procedure and the European Parliament has no decisionary weight on the outcome. The adopted amendments to which FVE attached a particular importance are those on biosecurity, monitoring and general housing conditions such ventilation, temperature and lighting.

Regarding biosecurity, following depopulation, the building should be cleared of all litter, thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Clean litter should be provided to the new birds.

All establishments falling within the scope of this Directive should be monitored for poultry welfare, even establishments with lower stocking densities, since welfare is not guaranteed by stocking density alone.

In addition, some of the Commission's welfare criteria regarding ventilation and temperature limits would be extended to all holdings, regardless of whether they were operating under the derogation. This means that all establishments should provide non-flickering light of at least 50-lux intensity on a 24-hour rhythm; a relative humidity of maximum 70% (when the outside temperature is -10°C); a temperature of maximum 3° higher than the outside temperature (when this is > 30°C) and sufficient ventilation. Such ventilation should ensure that the NH<sub>3</sub>-

concentration does not exceed 20 ppm and the CO<sub>2</sub>-concentration does not exceed 3000 ppm, measured at breathing level of the chickens.

MEPs also called for a uniform classification scheme for symptoms of illness in chickens, harmonized penalties for infringements, as well as a common system of labelling chicken meat for consumers. Labels should also indicate the animal's age and the stocking density at which the chickens are kept, the report suggested.

The proposal has now been forwarded to Council, which is expected to vote on the issue in the coming weeks.

## Welfare of laboratory animals

### EFSA report: octopuses and fetuses feel pain, too

A scientific opinion on the welfare of laboratory animals was adopted by on 14 November by the Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW). EFSA was invited by the EU Commission to produce a scientific opinion concerning the revision of the 1986 Directive on laboratory animal welfare<sup>4</sup>.

The opinion covers three issues:

The need for protection of invertebrate species and embryonic forms. Based on recent findings on pain perception, the scientists consider that all cephalopods (such as octopus and squid) and decapod crustaceans (such as lobster and prawns) should '*fall in the same category as those that are at present protected*'. Foetuses from both mammals and birds are considered sentient from the start of the last third of development (within the egg or the mother).

The need for purpose breeding of laboratory animals. Ideally, all animals used for experiments should be purpose-bred, and the experts add a number of species to this group. Genetically altered animals should also be protected.

Humane killing of laboratory animals. The report deals with the various methods of killing, with recommended methods for each species. The report also addresses issues such as the training of personnel and the killing of animals for tissues.

## Public health

### Food safety

#### The EU 'hygiene package' has come into force

The first of January 2006 marked a significant milestone for food safety in the EU, with the entry into force of a large updated body of food and feed legislation. This Food "Hygiene Package", which includes five Regulations, one Directive and several implementing measures on Trichinella, food chain information and microbiological criteria, constitute a complementary set of rules to tighten and harmonise EU food safety measures, in line with the EU's "farm to fork" approach. A key aspect of the new legislation is that all food and feed operators, from farmers and processors to retailers and caterers, will have primary responsibility for ensuring that food put on the EU market meets the required safety standards.



<sup>4</sup> Directive 86/609/EEC on the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes



## Operators responsible for food safety

Adopted in 2004, the “Hygiene Package” is a streamlined body of legislation that sets down stricter, clearer and more harmonised rules on the hygiene of foodstuffs, specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin, and specific rules for controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption. General rules are laid down for all food, while specific measures are included for meat and meat products, bivalve molluscs, fishery products, milk and dairy products, eggs and egg products, frogs’ legs, snails, animal fats, gelatine and collagen.

Under the food hygiene legislation, the responsibility is placed on food operators to ensure that food reaching EU consumers is safe. They will have to apply compulsory self-checking programmes and follow the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles in all sectors of the food industry, and all food operators will have to be registered. Imported products will be required to meet the same standards as EU goods under the new rules.

Microbiological criteria are used to measure the safety of foodstuffs based on absence, presence or the number of microorganisms present. The new Regulation harmonises and modernises EU microbiological criteria for foodstuffs, with the aim of increasing consumer protection and reducing food-borne disease. Microbiological criteria are set for certain bacteria, such as salmonella and listeria, in the main food categories. Other pathogens may be added in the future, following evaluations by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

## Enhancing enforcement

New rules for controls on all food and feed production also apply since 1 January 2006, both in the EU and in third countries wishing to export to the EU. The Official Food and Feed Controls Regulation sets out harmonised EU control systems, covering both food and feed safety, and animal health and welfare standards. Member States will be required to draw up annual control and contingency plans which will be evaluated by the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO). The new legislation provides for enforcement measures, including actions for non-compliance with EU food safety rules.

The Hygiene Package and Official Food and Feed Controls Regulation are completed with a series of implementing rules, which aim to ensure that the new food hygiene rules can be implemented without excessive burden to food operators and businesses. The Commission also produced 3 guidance documents and a DVD, to provide advice and direction to food business operators and Member States.

## Antimicrobial resistance

### EU ban on antibiotic growth promoters enters into effect

The EU-wide ban on the use of antibiotic growth promoters (AGP) in animal feed has entered into force on January 1. The ban was the final step in the phasing out of antibiotics used for non-medicinal purposes. It is part of the Commission’s overall strategy to tackle the emergence of bacteria and other microbes resistant to antibiotics.

Antibiotics have been widely used in animal production for decades worldwide. Added in low doses to the feed of farm animals, they improve their growth performance. However, due to the emergence of microbes resistant to antibiotics which are used to treat human and animal infections (“anti-microbial resistance”), the Commission decided to phase out, and ultimately ban, the marketing and use of antibiotics as growth promoters in feed. Antibiotics can now only be added to animal feed for veterinary (therapeutic) purposes. This decision was based on opinions from the Scientific Steering Committee, which recommended the progressive phasing out of antibiotics used for growth stimulation, while still preserving animal health.

The EU had already banned antibiotics used in human medicine from being added to animal feed. Since January 1 2006, the four remaining substances were removed from the EU Register of permitted feed additives: monensin sodium (used for cattle), salinomycin (pigs), avilamycin (pigs and poultry) and flavophospholipol (pigs, poultry and cattle).

## Zoonoses and antimicrobial resistance

### EFSA publishes report on EU situation in 2004

Zoonoses, diseases transmissible from animals to humans, affected over 380 000 EU citizens in 2004. Many zoonoses are transmitted through contaminated food. According to the EFSA's report on zoonoses and antimicrobial resistance<sup>5</sup>, which was published in December, the two most frequently reported zoonoses in humans were *Salmonella* (192 703 cases) and *Campylobacter* infections (183 961 cases).

The report includes information on eleven zoonoses (*Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, *Listeria*, verotoxigenic *E. coli*, tuberculosis, brucellosis, *Yersinia*, *Trichinella*, *Echinococcus*, *Toxoplasma*, *Cysticerci sarcocystis* and rabies), antimicrobial resistance in zoonotic agents and foodborne outbreaks.

*Yersinia* bacteria were reported to have caused over 10 000 human cases in the EU, and the other bacterial zoonoses - listeriosis, verotoxigenic *Escherichia coli* (VTEC) infections and brucellosis - each accounted for approximately 1 000-4 000 cases. The numbers of reported listeriosis and VTEC cases seem to be increasing, while the reported numbers of brucellosis cases indicate a decline. Listeriosis accounted for the highest number of reported fatalities.

## Feed and food

### Maximum levels set for dioxins and PCBs

On 3 February, the European Commission adopted new legislation setting maximum levels for the sum of dioxins and dioxin-like Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) in food and feed. Maximum levels for dioxins in food of animal origin and all animal feed have been applicable since July 2002. However, due to lack of sufficient data and scientific information at the time, no levels were set for dioxin-like PCBs. Since 2002, new data on dioxin-like PCBs has become available, and the legislation adopted today lays down mandatory limits for the combined level of dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs

From November 2006, any food or feed in which the sum of dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs exceeds these maximum levels will not be allowed to be marketed in the EU. Dioxins and PCBs have toxic properties that can provoke a series of health problems, including cancer, immune and nervous system disorders, liver damage and sterility.


## Hygiene matters

### New composition FVE working groups

Two ad hoc working groups on hygiene have been established by the FVE. The main group ('group 1') consists of Robert Huey (Chair; UEVH president, UK), Cornelia Rossi-Broy (EASVO president, Germany), Henning Knudsen (UEVH junior vice president, Denmark), Gundega Micule (FVE vice-president, Latvia), Noortje Reeuwijk (NL), Thierry Chambon (UEVP delegate, France), Iakovos Zarzouras (Greece).

The consultation group ('group 2'), consists of Thomas Jemmi (Switzerland), Walter Holzhaecker (Austria), Seán 'O Laoide (Ireland, FVE Vice-president, previous Chair), Kenneth Clarke (UK),

<sup>5</sup> EFSA's First Community summary report on trends and sources of zoonoses, zoonotic agents and antimicrobial resistance in the European Union in 2004, [www.efsa.eu.int/science/monitoring\\_zoonoses/reports/1277\\_en.html](http://www.efsa.eu.int/science/monitoring_zoonoses/reports/1277_en.html)



Margareta Widell (Sweden, UEVH senior vice president), Jorunn Vormeland (Norway, UEVH secretary-general), Kristina Lukoseviciute (Lithuania), Irfan Erol (Turkey), Romano Zilli (Italy), Giancarlo Belluzzi (Italy).

This composition is valid until May 2008.

## FVE & Professional matters

### Services on the Internal Market

#### **European Parliament makes Commission's Proposal less explicit**

On Thursday 16 February 2006, the European Parliament voted upon amendments on the Commission's proposal for a Directive on Services in the Internal Market. The aim of this Directive is to open the internal market for services and to provide a legal framework that will eliminate obstacles to the freedom of establishment for service providers and the free movement of services between Member States.

The vote in the Parliament was a vote in first reading. Following the common position that will be taken by the Member State representatives in the Council a second reading in Parliament will take place. This might be followed by a third and last round. Therefore the current version of the proposed Directive is not the final text and further changes of the text are likely to occur.

In general the amendments adopted by the Parliament will make the initial Commission's proposal less explicit. Many exemptions on the general principals are introduced and the amended text leaves much more room to the individual Member States.

The biggest change in the proposed Directive as is now proposed by the Parliament is the removal of the Country of Origin principle, which stated "Member States shall ensure that providers of services are subject only to the national provisions of their Member State of origin which fall within the coordinated field.....". It is replaced by: "For the services that fall under the scope of the Directive, Member States shall respect the right of service providers to provide a service in a Member State other than that in which they are established and they only can make access to or exercise of a service activity in their territory subject to compliance with any requirements, provided that these are not discriminatory, justified by certain reasons, and proportional".

## Education

### Brussels, 29-30 March

#### **FVE conference on veterinary education**

On 29 and 30 March, FVE will hold a conference on veterinary education in Europe at the International Auditorium in Brussels. Chaired by Dr Douglas Aspros (member of the AVMA Accreditation Council).

The presentations fall under three sessions:

The current situation, including the minimum requirements for veterinary training, the license to practices and an update of the evaluation system of veterinary schools

The future needs for veterinary education, including expectations from the public, day-1-competences and undergraduate 'tracking'

The 'Bologna declaration', with background, objectives and possible consequences of the 'bachelor/master' system for veterinary training.

After each session, a panel discussion will be held. The conference is organised in co-operation with the Technical Assistance Information Exchange (TAIEX). Delegates from each of the ten new Member States and from Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia/Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania and FYROM will be invited by TAIEX.

For further information, please contact the FVE Office.

## Miscellaneous

### European Food Safety Authority

#### Cathérine Geslain-Lanéelle nominated as Executive Director



Ms Cathérine Geslain-Lanéelle was nominated as the new Executive Director of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on 10 February. Ms Geslain-Lanéelle (France) is currently regional and inter-departmental Director for Agriculture and Forestry for the Ile-de-France region. Having held senior management and advisory positions at the French Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, she was General-Director of Food of that ministry from 2000 to 2003. In this capacity, she was responsible for the management of health risks from food. From 1991 to 1993, Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle worked for the European Commission in the area of risk management and risk assessment.

On 23 February 2006 Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle appeared before the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) Committee of the European Parliament in Brussels. The EFSA Management Board is currently awaiting the receipt of a letter from the President of the European Parliament. Taking into account the views of the ENVI Committee, the EFSA Management Board will move to the next stage and consider the formal appointment of Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle as EFSA's new Executive Director. It is expected that the earliest time for completion of this process will be mid-2006.


### Focus on veterinary nurses in Europe

#### European database of veterinary 'health care assistants' now online

A European database on 'veterinary health care assistants' has been set up. Funded as a EU Leonardo project in 2003, its aim is to 'obtain qualitative and quantitative data on employment profile, job profile, level of qualification and employment criteria' of these VHCA's.

A wide range of data have been collected and are available on-line ([www.focus-asv.fr](http://www.focus-asv.fr)), both in French and English. The website includes general data (population, livestock, pet numbers), data on the veterinary profession (number of practitioners in either general or companion animal practice, number of practices...) and, of course, detailed data on VHCA's (numbers, profile, training requirements, expectations, job satisfaction, CPD requirements, professional activities...). Data were collected in ten countries by the partners of the project<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> France (SNVEL, GIPSA, Ministry of Agriculture), Denmark (Special Committee for Vet Nursing), Finland (Ylä-Savon Ammattiopisto), Hungary (Magyar Állatoivosi Kamara), Portugal (Associação para o desenvolvimento das ciências veterinárias), Romania (Grupul Scolar Agricol), Slovenia (Srednja Agrozivilska Sola Ljubljana), Slovakia (Univerzita Veterinárskeho Larkársťva), Spain (Consejo general de colegios veterinarios), UK (Edinburgh's Telford College) and UEVP.



Future action includes updating the website, increase the number of contributing partners, offer more 'student oriented' information and define the minimum training requirements for veterinary nurses. The long-term aim is 'the harmonisation of qualifications to facilitate the mobility of the profession'.

## Events calendar

**13–15 September 2006, London**

### **Quality of Life: The Heart of the Matter**

The UFAW/BVA Ethics Committee organises a symposium at the Royal Society in London next September. For further information, see <http://www.ufaw.org.uk/> or contact [scioff@ufaw.org.uk](mailto:scioff@ufaw.org.uk)

**22-26 May 2006, Istanbul**

### **International Veterinary Clinical Biochemistry Congress**

The International Society of Animal Clinical Biochemistry (announces its 12th \*International Society of Veterinary Clinical Biochemistry Congress\* on 22-26 May 2005 in Istanbul, Turkey. For further information, see <http://www.isacb2006.org/>

**23-24 September, Gent**

### **European Congress on Behaviour and Welfare**

The Flemish Veterinary Working Group on Ethology (VDWE), the European Society for Clinical Ethology and Gent University, will be co-hosting the congress 'Behaviour and Welfare: The Science behind the Art'. For details, see [www.behaviour2006ghent.be/](http://www.behaviour2006ghent.be/)



### **Members**

Austria, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, FYROM, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia/Montenegro, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom

### **Sections:**

UEVP- Practitioners, EASVO-State Officers,  
UEVH-Hygienists, EVERI – Education, Research and Industry

### **Observer**

Ukraine

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