



Federation of
Veterinarians
of Europe

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EDITO

From history to future

This year, the OIE regional commission for Europe met in Lyon (Fr), the city where, in February 1762, the first school for veterinary medicine opened its doors. Claude Bourgelat together with the French minister of finances, Henri-Léonard Bertin, managed to convince King Louis XV to invest in a school in which *"the principles and the methods of curing livestock diseases would be publicly taught"*.

In those days, animal diseases such as bovine plague were very common. Millions of animals lost their lives and the impact on society was enormous. Although people had some ideas about avoiding contacts with suspected animals, destruction of sick animals and even the use of 'disinfectants' (strong alcoholic drinks!), there still was a lot of ignorance.

It also was the time that people in Western Europe became aware that one could protect animals against a disease by the inoculation through the skin of pustule material from another sick animal. Geert Reinders, farmer and cattle trader in the Netherlands, carried out many experiments and reported positively about these vaccinations *avant la lettre*. The authorities of the Republic however did not accept his practices and in 1799 they even decided that it should be stopped immediately! Sick and suspected animals had to be culled and a fund to compensate the farmers was established. Almost in the same years the British physician Edward Jenner discovered that one could safely use cow-pox to protect people against smallpox; unfortunately too late for Louis XV.

For us it is difficult to imagine how these people lived and worked. By trial and error and with hardly any knowledge about microbiology - people like Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch were not even born - they tried to develop best practices. Fortunately, much has changed now. Science has made an enormous progress. The number of veterinary schools in Europe has grown from 1 in 1762 to approximately 100 now. Together with other research institutes, they make an enormous contribution to understanding animal diseases and the way to control them. The amount of scientific information that becomes available every day is gigantic and with modern technology it can be spread to almost every corner of the earth.

However, we have not been able to solve all our problems. Some still have to deal with problems not very different from the ones our forefathers faced centuries ago. Biosecurity on farms, illegal transport and smuggling, costs for the prevention and control of diseases, the quality of veterinary education, and many others are still on our agendas. Much has been achieved but in some fields there still is room for improvement. You can read more about several of these items and also about the development of a 21st century Community Animal Health Policy in this edition of FVE's Newsletter. I wish you much pleasure and inspiration.

Jan Vaarten
FVE Executive Director



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Animal Health

Bluetongue in Western Europe

BTV-8 mainly affects cattle and is probably spread by a local vector

Between mid-August and mid-October, bluetongue outbreaks have been reported in farms in Belgium (424), Germany (238), the Netherlands (212) and France (5). What is remarkable in these outbreaks — apart from the distance covered by the virus, until now confined to Southern Europe — is the presence of clinical signs in infected cattle, the preferred host of BTV-8. Although general clinical signs (hyperthermia, depression and a drop in milk yield) often pass unnoticed, local signs are more visible and include ulcers in the mouth and nostrils and on the muzzle, periocular oedema, teat ulcers, udder oedema and skin lesions on the back.

The clinical infection is followed by a long convalescent period, death or even euthanasia on welfare grounds. In all, morbidity (2.9% in the 45 Belgian bovine outbreaks identified early September) and mortality (0.38%) are low. In sheep, morbidity and mortality are higher (3.8 and 0.5%, respectively).



Although the virus has been sequenced as a serotype 8, its geographical origin remains a mystery. Preliminary results of the research of the culicoides vector of the bluetongue virus currently affecting Western Europe indicate that “another than the *C. imicola* seems to be the culprit”, according to professor Thiry (Dept of Virology, Liège Veterinary Faculty). In the Netherlands, preliminary results of insect trappings and PCR test carried out by the CIDC Lelystad have shown presence of bluetongue in *Culicoides obsoletus* subspecies *Dewulfi* insects.

On 13 October, The European Commission adopted a Decision to extend the Bluetongue restriction zone¹, which will now cover all of Rhineland Palatinate and more areas in Lower Saxony. The restriction zone has also been expanded to cover more areas in Northwest France due to new cases of the disease in Belgium, close to the French border. In addition, the Commission decided to slightly adapt the restrictions on the movement of ruminants in order to reduce unnecessary burdens on farmers in these areas, and to reflect certain animal health and welfare considerations.

Common Animal Health Policy

Evaluation report recommends clear strategy and “stronger culture of biosecurity”

on behalf of DG Sanco The Food Chain Evaluation Consortium (FCEC) carried out an external evaluation of the EU Common Animal health Policy (CAHP). FVE was one of the stakeholders that were consulted. The final report has now been published.

The report notes that, over the period covered by the evaluation (1995-2005), the overall results can be considered positive. For example, there has been a “*considerable reduction*” in the prevalence of animal diseases and a “*considerably better structured response*” to crises, the evaluators note. The evaluation identified a need for “*a clear and transparent strategy*”, accompanied by good communication. The report suggests that improved consistency could be achieved by ‘simplified rules and better regulation and by carrying out impact assessments before introducing new legislation’. The full report can be read through the link at the bottom of the page, and the following interview with Bernard Van Goethem, Acting Director of Directorate D (Animal Health and Welfare) at DG Sanco, will give you more insight in the Commission’s thinking about the further development of the CAHP. On 7 November, the Austrian-Finnish Presidency together with DG Sanco, will organise a CAHP Conference in Brussels² to present and debate the evaluation results, including options for the future. FVE Executive Director Jan Vaarten will take part in the panel discussion on the topic of biosecurity improvements.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/controlmeasures/bluetongue_en.htm

² http://ec.europa.eu/comm/food/animal/diseases/strategy/draft_agenda_en.pdf

“Much has been achieved, but there is still room for improvement” Interview Bernard Van Goethem on the CAHP

On the occasion of the publication of the CAHP evaluation report, FVE had an interview with Bernard Van Goethem, Acting Director of Directorate D (Animal Health and Welfare) at DG Sanco

- **What are your views on the developments in the field of animal health in the EU so far? From where do we come, what is the most important achievement so far and, what changes do you see in the political thinking about Animal Health?**

It is worth reminding ourselves of the animal health status in the early 1960s. FMD, CSF, Rabies, Brucellosis sp and Tuberculosis sp were widespread within Europe and Member States were forced to apply restrictions disturbing animal production, trade and therefore farmers' income. Then, it became obvious that it was necessary to adopt common measures to enhance efficiency and replace the national regulations for the marketing and trading of animals and animal products. Animal health measures have contributed to eliminate or to keep these diseases under control. The current avian influenza situation is a good example of a sound domestic approach within Europe allied to a co-ordinated international outlook.



“Veterinarians have proven their sense of organisation and competence”

A major breakthrough was achieved in 1993 when the Single Market was created and the objective of a high health status was reached at all stages in the production of food of animal origin. Member States harmonised their systems of disease surveillance, diagnosis and control and co-operated with other national services and the Commission. Now the whole chain from “farm/stable” to table is covered throughout the Community by harmonisation of the relevant legislation for all meats, fish and seafood, milk, eggs, honey and all products thereof, and intra-EU borders and trade barriers are removed. All this has made it clearer to the public that animal health does not only concern farmers, but the whole society.

As the largest importer of food and feed in the world, the WTO/SPS agreement (since 1995) has also increasingly shaped the Community approach on animal health policy. The continuous enlargement of the Union had also presented new challenges for the Community Animal Health Policy (CAHP) in terms of the nature of its external border and the range of production systems and administrative structures it now encompasses.

It is fair to acknowledge the achievements of the CAHP over the years. However, it is true that animal disease outbreaks can be costly. There are also ethical issues related to the mass slaughter of animals to control an outbreak. Added to this, there is growing concern about the potential impact that animal diseases can have on human health and the possibility of a new pandemic.

- **What were the reasons for the Commission to initiate the on-going evaluation of the EU Animal Health Policy?**


Independent evaluation constitutes a routine part of good management within the Commission. The strategic evaluations are intended to provide elements which will be useful in defining the Commission's future policy guidelines.

The main objective of the evaluation has been to assess the performance of the CAHP over the last decade and its coherence with other EU policy interventions. The evaluation team has also been requested to assess the option of an EU harmonised "cost sharing scheme" which would better consider the responsibilities of all parties.

By mid 2007, the Commission will present a Commission Communication on the Community Animal Health Policy and its strategy for the period 2007-2013, based on the evaluation results and the conference conclusions.

- **What do you see as the most interesting result(s) of the work done by the Food Chain Evaluation Consortium? And what is your opinion about the points that were made on moving the strategic focus?**

First of all, I would like to stress the active stakeholders' collaboration during this evaluation process. This extensive review comprised of an EU wide survey (over 100 respondents), a separate survey of 34 third countries, and more than 100 interviews with national authorities and stakeholders.



Stakeholders made very interesting and challenging proposals regarding the prevention of animal diseases, the development of biosecurity concept at borders and at farm level, the simplification of the legislation and a better alignment to international rules (OIE, WTO).

This evaluation has also demonstrated the need to develop a clear and transparent strategy which improves stakeholder engagement and involvement in decision-making.

We will have to present clear objectives reflecting stakeholders' priorities aimed at minimising the regulatory burden. It is also important to ensure the implementation of our international commitments derived from WTO and the coherence between the Community Animal Health Policy and other EU policies such as the Common Agriculture policy, Public Health, Animal welfare, Sustainable development, External Aid, and of course, Research.

The latest EU preventive and control measures with regard to avian influenza or fish diseases are already important steps in this direction.

➤ **What are your ideas about a future EU animal Health Policy, do you foresee major changes and if so in which area?**

We must take further coordinated actions to strengthen disease surveillance and diagnostics, develop much-needed capacity in human and veterinary health systems, increase public awareness, and address social and economic impacts, particularly in countries that are at especially high risk of infection and that have the greatest resource needs. Efficient standards also need to be more flexible and should take into account regional factors.

From an organisational point of view, I am glad that the evaluation has highlighted the effective network developed in the animal health field. The existing co-operation channels between Member States and the Commission appear to work effectively. One challenge for the future policy is to provide better opportunities to discuss issues with stakeholders at an earlier stage of the legislative process. We also have to increase citizens' understanding of the complex interactions related to animal health. Communication will remain a key issue.

➤ **What do you think will be the greatest challenge for the realisation of the future animal health policy in the enlarging EU?**

From a global perspective it is vital to work in partnership with countries outside of the EU. The nature of many of these problems, and the scale and complexity of animal health issues means that solutions will not be very effectively produced or very robust if developed exclusively for and/or in Europe. In this context, the future animal health strategy must not be seen as a defensive tool to protect our borders.

Border controls have been reinforced, as well as becoming more standardised and harmonised across the EU. However, there is still room for improvement, particularly in addressing illegal trade. To this end, the EU may not need more and more rigid controls, but a clearer legislative framework, flexibility to react to new patterns of trade and greater co-operation between different competent authorities. A systematic risk-based approach, linking customs and veterinary risk analysis, would certainly maximise the effectiveness of controls. Controls could then focus on high risk origins, animals and products.

Live animal trade is another issue. It is a significant factor in increasing the risk of disease spreading. Minimising such movements (also for animal welfare reasons), as well as increasing preventive measures (bio-security) against diseases, are key steps in reducing such risks.

Nature also creates new problems every day: for instance the unexpected occurrence of Blue tongue in Central Europe. The European Community will still have to face "emerging diseases" which have a serious effect on livestock production, create great trade problems and call for new legislation with the focus on disease prevention and control measures. These diseases have in common that the timing and nature of their occurrence is hardly predictable and likewise their consequences.

Finally, the evaluation has indicated that a system of harmonised schemes sharing the responsibilities and costs of epidemic livestock diseases could help prevent major financial risks for Member States' and Community budgets, enhancing the welfare of operators and providing incentives for disease prevention. Whether these benefits can be achieved in practice depends on the details of the operational principles that have to be defined at EU level, and on their implementation at Member State level. It would be without doubt the greatest challenge of the future policy to put in place such a scheme in an enlarging EU. This is a complex issue that needs to be duly addressed at all levels - political, economic and legal.

➤ **What specific message you would like to give to the colleagues working in the different areas of Animal Health?**

The success of the animal health policy could not have been achieved without the veterinary network. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all colleagues for the tremendous work done in the central, regional and local veterinary services, the border inspection posts, the laboratories and not least in the field. They have proven their sense of organisation and their competence, especially in the detection and prevention of exotic, zoonotic, and emergent diseases.

One key of this success is our permanent attention to answer the public interest. We will have to remain alert. Without any doubt, our contribution to improve public health and animal welfare standards will still increase. Veterinarians have also a key role to play in the implementation of biosecurity measures, especially at farm level. I encourage them to enhance their expertise in order to remain effective partners in the livestock sector. I strongly believe that these are the keys to success and to building our EU animal health strategy for the future.

22nd Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe

European representatives discuss illegal trade and disease surveillance

The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) held its regional European conference from 25 to 28 September in Lyon, France. Representatives of the Member States and various international organisations attended the meeting. FVE was represented by its President Dr Tjeerd Jorna and Executive Director, Jan Vaarten.

Two technical items were discussed during the Conference: the illegal smuggling of animals and animal products; and the role of veterinarians and livestock owners in the early detection of and rapid response to animal diseases.

Illegal smuggling of animals a source of fraud and disease import

Participants recalled the role played by legal trade and illegal trade in poultry and poultry products for human consumption in the spread of H5N1 virus and emphasized the need for countries to strengthen their controls at borders and to reinforce their Veterinary Services. Recommendations were adopted during the conference, one dealing specifically with illegal smuggling of animals and animal products. The role played by the OIE at global level in the control of avian influenza was highly appreciated, particularly its capacity to go beyond the specific veterinary framework to encompass public health and other social and environmental issues.



Bernard Vallat, OIE Director

Surveillance and disease control: veterinary network needs support

The recent outbreaks of bluetongue in the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Germany have again stressed the importance of having effective national surveillance systems to be able to detect early and respond rapidly to an unexpected disease event.

Regarding epidemiological surveillance and on-farm inspections, FVE pointed out that the functioning of the Veterinary Networks is at risk, in particular in remote areas. Less and less young graduates entering large animal practice combined with an increased pressure on the existing practitioners have resulted in serious network gaps, according to FVE.

The FVE also stressed “the need for good cooperation between private veterinarians and the national veterinary services”. All parties involved should invest in their relations and work together. The Federation also expressed its concern about the quality of veterinary undergraduate education. Several EU veterinary faculties and schools currently do not meet the minimum requirements, often due to a lack of funds necessary for the required facilities. Nevertheless the diplomas they issue enable new graduates to obtain a license to practice and to start working as a veterinarian. On the base of Directive 2005/36, all EU Member States have to recognise the diplomas; a situation which clearly “undermines the quality of the veterinary service”, according to FVE.

The next conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe “Practical application of the concept of compartmentalisation” will be held in September 2008 in Vilnius in Lithuania.

Highly pathogenic avian influenza

Commission gives green light for veterinary vaccines against avian flu

On 11 September, the European Commission gave EU-wide authorisation to two avian influenza vaccines. This allows effective vaccines to be available for use throughout the EU during the autumn/winter, the greatest risk period of a bird flu epidemic.

Both vaccines reduce mortality and virus excretion in vaccinated poultry exposed to infection. The two vaccines concerned, Nobilis Influenza H5N2 (Intervet) and Poulvac FluFend H5N3 RG (Fort Dodge AH), are inactivated, adjuvanted avian influenza vaccines for administration by injection. Nobilis Influenza H5N2 is for use in chickens and Poulvac FluFend H5N3 RG is for use in both chickens and ducks.

The use of these authorised vaccines will be restricted to Member States national competent authorities that have submitted a vaccination plan to the Commission. So far, Italy, France, Netherlands and most Germany have received authorisation to vaccinate against avian influenza.

Consumer attitudes to avian flu

European consumers are well informed about avian influenza (AI) and have confidence in the actions of EU and national authorities to tackle it, but significant gaps in knowledge remain about the risks, according to a special Eurobarometer³ survey on AI published this summer. Most respondents (between 70% and 80% according to the type of measures) correctly identified specific surveillance, control and eradication measures taken to prevent and contain avian flu outbreaks. However, the survey revealed that a significant percentage of Europeans remain unsure about certain basic facts on AI. For example, 28% do not know that AI cannot be transmitted through properly cooked eggs and poultry meat. Most EU citizens replied that they had not reduced their consumption of poultry products, and those that did indicated they had done so “only as a precaution”.

Animal Welfare

FVE-TAIEX Conference on animal welfare

Meeting helps Balkan countries reflect on EU animal welfare challenges



“Animal Welfare should be an integral part of the undergraduate curriculum” Prof. J. Webster

How can animal owners, children, the media and even veterinarians learn more about animal welfare? How do European attitudes to animal welfare change? How can new animal welfare legislation in the Balkans be enforced? These and other questions were discussed recently at an animal welfare conference in Belgrade, organised by the FVE in cooperation with DG Enlargement (TAIEX) and attended by over 100 participants from Central and Eastern Europe. Aim: to discuss how best to help veterinary surgeons in non-EU Balkan countries to familiarise themselves with European animal welfare legislation and the challenges of its transposition, implementation and control.

“Animal welfare faces similar challenges across all these countries”, said Gordana Blitva, veterinary practitioner from Serbia. “On the one hand, citizens need to be more informed about animal welfare principles, for which veterinarians would be the best source of information. On the other, animal welfare is rarely included in the very demanding veterinary education syllabus, making this conference an excellent tool for training and increasing awareness in the veterinary profession in the region”.

³ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_252_en.pdf

Animal welfare and veterinary training

Professor John Webster (University of Bristol, UK) recommended that animal welfare be an integral part of the veterinary undergraduate syllabus in both pre-clinical and clinical training for both farm and companion animals. He also presented a distance-learning package developed in Bristol in association with the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA).

FVE Deputy Executive Director, Nancy De Briyne suggested the creation of a European College of Animal Welfare according to the principles of the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS) and that animal welfare research should increase in veterinary faculties. "This would allow the education of more veterinary experts in animal welfare", she added.

Participants agreed that animal welfare education should not only be part of veterinary studies but also of related degrees such as agricultural sciences. Similarly, citizens, pet owners and especially children need an education in animal welfare. Furthermore, the media in the region should also be trained in animal welfare principles as a way of generating public awareness. "The Council of Europe could develop a strategy to tackle the problem of stray dogs faced by many Balkan countries to ensure that humane killing of stray dogs was enforced", Gordana Blitva suggested.

EU citizens' concern

Regarding the implementation and enforcement of animal welfare legislation, such legislation is either very recent or non-existent in this region. Legislation without effective enforcement is futile, highlighting the need for a more efficient cooperation between all bodies in charge of supervision.

"Eighty-two percent of EU citizens say we have a duty to protect animals whatever the cost", recalled Cornelius Rhein, of unit D2 (Animal Welfare and Feed) of DG Sanco during his presentation, referring to the Eurobarometer survey. Regarding the treatment of the various livestock species, "58% consider laying hens' welfare as bad". Animal welfare, concluded Mr Rhein, was no longer an option, but an obligation.

But although legislation could achieve a lot, humanity and courage were sometimes called for, according to John Webster. "We should act according to what is right, not simply that which is regulated".

Other speakers at the Belgrade conference included Dil Peeling (Eurogroup for Animal Welfare), Jasmijn de Boo (WSPA), Paul Bours (Ministry of Agriculture, the Netherlands) Gianluca Frinzi, (Food and Veterinary Office), and Birte Broberg (Danish Veterinary and Food Agency).

Community Action Plan on the Protection & Welfare of Animals

EU Parliament calls for stricter animal protection and welfare rules

On 12 October, Parliament adopted by a large majority a report calling for stricter animal welfare rules in the EU. The report, written by Elisabeth Jeggle (EPP-DE), welcomes the Community Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2006-2010, which for the first time translates the Protocol on protection and welfare of animals (annex of the Amsterdam Treaty) into an integrated approach to developing animal protection in Europe.

The report points out that "animal protection and animal health impact closely on each other." It therefore calls on the Commission to "take greater account of animal protection aspects in the fight against animal diseases." MEPs also noted that, "in practice, EU rules on the transport of animals [...] are frequently disregarded." In order to strengthen incentives for better treatment of animals, the report supports the development of "animal protection labelling" as well as voluntary private labels that would guarantee even higher standards of animal protection.

However, the Parliament also considered that new rules and labelling requirements could "lead to a decline in the competitiveness of Community production," and to "animal protection dumping" by third countries. For this reason, the report "urges the strengthening of animal protection within the framework of the WTO" to raise animal welfare standards all over the world.

MEPs also expressed their regret that "the focus of European policy on animal welfare has so far been almost exclusively on the welfare and protection of farm animals." The report suggests widening the scope of EU legislation on animal testing, calls on the Commission to make permanent



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the ban on EU imports of wild birds, and to also ban seal and 'cruelty products' imports. The report furthermore calls on the EU to bring an end to dog and cock fighting, although a similar plea to end bull fighting was rejected by MEPs during the vote.

Earlier this year, the Commission adopted the Action Plan with the aim to “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”.

Welfare Quality© project

FVE appointed member of the Advisory Committee

FVE has just been approved as member to the Advisory Committee of the Welfare Quality© project⁴. Welfare Quality© is an EU-funded project on the integration of animal welfare in the food quality chain: from public concern to improved welfare and transparent quality.



A total of 39 institutes and universities with specialist expertise from 13 European countries participate in this integrated research project. The primary aims of the Welfare Quality© project are:

- To develop practical strategies/measures to improve animal welfare
- To develop a European on-farm welfare assessment standard
- To develop a European animal welfare information standard.
- To integrate and interrelate the most appropriate specialist expertise in the multidisciplinary field of animal welfare in Europe

Cloning of farm animals

Stricter regulations for ethical reasons?

“Cloning in Public” is an initiative that aims to facilitate a public debate on the ethical and societal consequences of farm animal cloning, and to make recommendations on the regulation and applications in this field⁵, held a workshop in Brussels, on 5 and 6 October.



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The meeting was the last of its kind and conclusions of previous research were presented. The meeting examined the various applications for cloning, which can be divided into basic research; medical use and reproductive purposes in farm animals. Regarding the latter, it was recalled that a clone is not simply a copy of the original, but actually can differ greatly from the original animal. A clone of an extremely successful racehorse, for example, will not necessarily have the same potential.

Even though so far “there is no evidence that products from cloned animals or their progeny constitute a risk to human health”, the cloning of animal gave rise to “serious concerns regarding animal welfare”. Developmental abnormalities, neonatal mortality, a limited lifespan and obesity are only a few of the negative aspects often observed in cloned animals. Although these problems are likely to decrease as the technology develops, there is currently no knowledge about the long-term effect of cloning in farm animals. This raised ethical questions on the boundaries of the use man can make from animals. Farm animals are already highly selected genetically and cloning could well be seen as the next step of “industrialising” animals, participants suggested.

The project “Cloning in Public” was organised under the 6th Framework and coordinated by the Danish Centre for Bioethics and Risk Assessment (CeBRA), involving five European institutions as partners.

⁴ <http://www.welfarequality.net>

⁵ <http://www.sl.kvl.dk/cloninginpublic/>

FVE supports call for a permanent ban on wild birds imports

Mortality of captive birds during import can reach 60%

During its meeting on 2 October, the FVE Board decided to support the British Veterinary Association's (BVA) position statement⁶ on the import of captive live birds. The statement calls for a permanent ban on captive wild bird import from countries outside the EU, based on concerns for the welfare of the birds during capture and transit. Mortality rates associated with the trade can be as high as 60% before they reach the pet shops.

In addition to calling for a ban on the wild bird trade, the position statement urges tighter controls on the import, quarantine and identification of captive bred birds for the pet trade, as there is "an urgent need for improved border controls across the EU to stop illegal trade from third countries".

Stricter identification and certification measures should be encouraged to allow traceability of individual birds and to ensure that buyers have confidence that they are actually purchasing captive bred birds and not illegally imported.

Public Health

Meeting of the FVE Hygiene working group

The role of the private practitioner and fighting fraud in food hygiene

Veterinary practitioners have an important role to play in on-farm Food Hygiene controls. This was one of the conclusions of the meeting of the FVE working group⁷ on public health, held in Brussels on 2 October. The main role of private practitioners was the advice and assistance of the farmer as a food business operator, according to the working group. Other roles include the ante-mortem checks on farm, when animals are slaughtered at the holding of provenance, the analysis of post-mortem information and the official controls of raw milk and dairy products. A paper outlining the exact role of the private veterinary practitioner in food hygiene will be finalised during the upcoming FVE General Assembly.

At the meeting, it was also suggested that FVE propose the Commission to develop specific training for veterinary practitioners in relation to the food hygiene package in the concept of "Better training for safer food". This Commission initiative⁸ is aimed at organising an EU training strategy in the areas of food and feed law, animal health and animal welfare rules and plant health rules for staff of competent authorities of Member States and Third Countries involved in official control activities.

The FVE working group furthermore voiced its concern on fraud in food, especially in cold stores and warehouses. Fraud can occur by declaring a food as something else or as originating from another country, so as to get a smaller tariff, to avoid sanitary checks or to avoid anti-dumping duties. To find out more, the FVE working group set up a survey on the audit frequencies in cutting plants, of which the results are expected to be available by November.



"Veterinarians must lobby for inclusion in the multi-annual plan of official controls" R. Huey, Hygiene WG Chairman

⁶ http://www.bva.co.uk/policy/issues/captive_birds_import.pdf

⁷ Robert Huey (Chair, IRE, UEVH President), Thierry Chambon (FR, UEVP delegate), Henning Knudsen (DK, UEVH Vice President), Gundega Micule (LV, FVE Vice president), Noortje Reeuwijk (NL), Cornelia Rossi-Broy (DE, EASVO President) Iakovos Zarzouras (GR)

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/food/training/qanda_training_en.htm

Medicines

Standing Committee on Veterinary Medicinal Products

Major step forward on positive list for food-producing horses

In its meeting of 10 October, the Committee took two important decisions; one on the “positive list” for horses and one on criteria for exemptions on the general rule of prescription of veterinary medicines for livestock. FVE is very satisfied with the outcome of the debates and both decisions of the Committee. They are “major steps forward” on two dossiers of great importance to the veterinary profession and in which FVE, together with UEVP and FEEVA, has put a great deal of effort over the past years⁹.

“Positive list” for food-producing horses adopted without change

The Committee adopted the proposed Commission Regulation¹⁰ without changes. The proposal has now been sent to the European Parliament for scrutiny. If there are no objections from the Parliament, it will go into the adoption procedure. It will then be published in the Official Journal and it shall enter into force on the third day thereafter. From that moment onwards, veterinary practitioners will be allowed to make use of the listed products for the treatment of horses and other equidae intended for human consumption. The administration of these products will need to be registered in the horse passport and the withdrawal period for all products is 6 months. Horses NOT intended for human consumption according to their passport can already be treated with these products following the so-called cascade for non-food-producing animals – provided the national authority has implemented this possibility in the national legislation.



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“Many more medicines for horses will be available” J. Vaarten FVE Executive Director

Exemptions on prescription-only medicines for food producing animals

After a long debate, the Committee also adopted, with some changes, the proposed Directive on the criteria exempting certain veterinary drugs for food producing animals from the need for a veterinary prescription¹¹. This document will also be sent to the Parliament, and if without objections, it will go into the adoption procedure by the Commissioners. In case of objections from the Parliament, it may be extremely difficult to stay within the deadline for finalising this piece of legislation (31 December 2006).

Once the proposed Directive comes through, Member States will have until 31 March 2007 to decide if they want to make use of the possibility to grant exemptions on the general rule of prescription of veterinary medicines for food producing animals. If they do, they will have another 6 months to adapt their national legislation. If they do not, no exemption on the general rule will be allowed from 1 April onwards.

Meeting FVE-UEVP Working Group on Veterinary Medicines

Positive list for horses, POM exemption criteria and Internet drug sales


The FVE-UEVP Medicines group met in Paris on 20 September. Chairman Christophe Buhot (France) welcomed three new members: Maria Leonor Meisel (Portugal), Martin Brügger (Switzerland) and Olli Soininen (Finland). A fourth new member, Ljiljana Markus-Cizelj (Croatia) representing EVERI (veterinarians in education, research and industry, another FVE section) was unable to attend.

Main agenda point was the EU legislation on Veterinary Medicines, in particular the expected Commission Regulation establishing a list of substances essential for the treatment of horses. The group voiced its

⁹ Link to the full report: http://www.fve.org/papers/pdf/vetmed/fve_06_085_horse_list_and_pom.pdf

¹⁰ COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No /, establishing, in accordance with Directive 2001/82/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Community code relating to veterinary medicinal products, a list of substances essential for the treatment of equidae

¹¹ COMMISSION DIRECTIVE of [...] implementing Directive 2001/82/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the establishment of criteria for exempting certain veterinary medicinal products for food-producing animals from the requirement of a veterinary prescription



satisfaction with the newest draft for the Regulation and looks forward to its adoption which will allow the use of the listed products in food producing horses. Other agenda points included the exemption criteria for prescription-only medicines in livestock and the sales of veterinary drugs on the Internet.

FVE & Professional matters

Collaboration of European and international professional bodies

Proposal for the FVE to represent its members at a global level

At its October board meeting, the FVE Board discussed the proposal for the Federation to request membership of the World Veterinary Association (WVA). It was suggested that, in the long term, FVE would take over the national WVA representation and membership of all its members. The member fee to the WVA would then be paid by FVE, and no longer directly by its individual members. In the short term, FVE could apply for a temporary seat in WVA as a regional representative or observer.

At European level, FVE is the only non-governmental organisation (NGO) to be recognised as sole representative body of the veterinary profession, in particular by the EU institutions and the Council of Europe. At a global level, the WVA is the NGO recognised as representing the veterinary profession internationally by organisations such as the OIE, the WHO and the FAO. A closer collaboration between the two NGOs would therefore seem logical. Similarly, other regional representations could represent their national members on a global level, changing the WVA into an international federation of regional bodies. This would not only be more cost-effective but also give better conditions for real progress in emerging global issues.

The Board decided that the proposal, put forward by the presidents of the Nordic veterinary associations, would be put up for adoption on the November FVE General Assembly agenda.

Services Directive

Second Reading underway in European Parliament

Following the adoption of the Common Position on the proposed Directive on Services in the Internal Market¹² by the Council last June, the Directive is currently undergoing its Second Reading in the European Parliament.

Rapporteur for the Directive, MEP Evelyne Gebhardt (PES, France), presented her draft report for the Second Reading on 13 September. She was proposing just 11 amendments, "to avoid the need for conciliation". In the meanwhile, another 32 amendments have been tabled, bringing the total number of amendments to 43.

The vote in the Parliamentary Committee is scheduled on 23rd October and in plenary in November. It is expected that the Directive will be adopted before the end of the year, with possible publication in the Official Journal of the EU in early 2007.

¹² http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/services/services-dir/proposal_en.htm

Meetings

17-18 November

FVE General Assembly in Brussels

The FVE will hold its general assembly on 17-18 November next in Brussels. Mr Leif Nielsen (ECOSOC), Dr David Wilkins (OIE Animal Welfare Committee) and Andrea Gavinelli (DG Sanco) have been invited as guest speakers.

The meeting will adopt a new format: on Friday afternoon, following the general part of the meeting (activities report, membership applications...) delegates are invited to participate in one of the following three workshops: Structure of the FVE and FVE GA, Involvement of the veterinary practitioner in public health and Universal declaration of animal welfare & Animal Welfare Action Plan. Conclusions and recommendations from the workshops will be presented to the GA on Saturday morning.



Copies available upon request at info@fve.org

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UEVH-Hygienists
EVERI – Education, Research and Industry

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