



Federation of
Veterinarians
of Europe



Newsletter July 2008

EU Veterinary Week: 10-16 November 2008!



Although the weather is not yet what it should be, the summer has arrived and within a few weeks many of you will enjoy a well-deserved holiday, away from the daily routine. An important step to make it a success is to communicate well with the other members of your party. What do they prefer: should there be a playground, a disco bar or should it be somewhere remote and quiet? Even relatively simple things like putting up a tent, require good communication, otherwise what should become a nice holiday might easily turn into a small disaster.

Recognising the importance of good communication and co-operation, especially when it comes to more complicated projects, the EU Commission (DG SANCO) wrote in the Community Animal Health Strategy: "The strategy can only bring about real change if everyone involved in animal health works together and with all interested citizens".

The newly established Animal Health Advisory Committee provides for an interesting forum to bring together ideas and initiatives. A very exciting one is the European Veterinary Week, a communication project of DG SANCO and FVE together with other stakeholders, about the value of good animal health. It will be held from 10 to 16 November and follow up events are planned from the end of 2008 into 2009 throughout Europe.

The motto of the Week is: "Where prevention is better than cure". In the first place because keeping animals healthy will save them from discomfort and pain. Secondly because good animal health has a big impact on public health. It is estimated that 60% of all infectious diseases in people are zoonotic, which means that they can be transmitted from animals to people! Disease prevention will also help to reduce the need to use medical products and to save these for more serious cases. Last but not least, good animal health will be advantageous for the owners and keepers of animals, as well as for competent authorities and other bodies who carry a responsibility in disease control.

The Veterinary Week will focus on biosecurity, both at farms and on the borders. The goal simply is reducing the risk of spreading infectious diseases. Even small measures, when consistently taken, can already have great effects. Farmers, together with their veterinarians, will be encouraged to have a closer look at their own situation and to see what can be done. At the borders travellers will be reminded about the risks they take when bringing animals or animal products into the EU.

You can read more about the Veterinary Week in this issue of our Newsletter and after the summer we will come back to you with more detailed information. For now however we wish you a very good and relaxing summer holiday.

Jan Vaarten
FVE Executive Director

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Animal Health

Community Animal Health Strategy

Who does what – and when: Commission reveals ambitious Action Plan

The “non paper” Action Plan on Animal Health – or how the European Commission intends to turn the vision of the EU Animal Health Strategy (CAHS) into action in the coming years – was presented to its Advisory committee of stakeholders on 19 May. It outlines 30 actions to be undertaken, which Commission Service is responsible for the ‘delivery’ of the action and what ‘milestones’ (more than 120) they aim to achieve and in which timeframe.

Like the CAHS, the action plan has four major pillars (prioritisation of EU interventions; EU animal health framework; prevention, surveillance and preparedness; and science, innovation and research). The Action Plan sets out some ambitious aims, not just for the Commission but for all those involved in animal health, and the Commission encourages all partners in the strategy to consider how they may contribute. The Commission also plans to publish an annual report, to “*explain how the strategy evolves over time and will reflect any possible changes in priorities*”.

“We also need to communicate clearly what we are doing and why. The publication of this plan is a new and important step forward”. A key component of communication is the Veterinary Week on biosecurity (see also article on page 10), which, “*in partnership with FVE*”, aims to “*make citizens/farmers more aware of their responsibilities*”.

The ‘masterwork’ of the Animal Health Strategy will be the preparation of the EU Animal Health Law. It will re-define interfaces with the *acquis* on animal health, welfare, animal nutrition, food safety, public health, environmental protection, pharmaceutical products, common agricultural policy legislation and rules established by relevant international organisations (OIE, Codex) as well as responsibilities – all this having an impact on subsequent financing rules. In the preparation of the Animal Health Law, the Commission will consider the recommendations from the other EU

institutions, such as obligations of animal owners (including pets), diseases prioritisation on pets, the insurance that products from vaccinated animals are not discriminated in the internal market, the possible introduction of a system of audits for farms and the accreditation of veterinary schools (see also article on page 8).



FVE and the EU Commission will organise the EU Veterinary Week to raise awareness about the importance of biosecurity

Other ‘activities and actions’ on the agenda include the categorisation of animal diseases, cost and responsibility sharing schemes, a possible EU membership of the OIE, funding to finance and promote on-farm biosecurity (to include risk management at farm level, epidemicsurveillance and animal welfare), the interoperability for national animal identification databases and ‘better training for safer food’.

Community Animal Health Strategy: position paper

FVE & UEVP recommend regular farm health visits

In their joint position paper on the Community Animal health Strategy (2007-2013), the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners (UEVP) and the FVE welcome the CAHS and its motto “*prevention is better than cure*”. They also list a number of recommendations.

For optimal biosecurity, farms “*should be regularly visited by the veterinarians in order to prevent animal health problems occurring or rectify them quickly and effectively.*” The paper also stresses the need for the official recognition of the veterinary school accreditation system. Veterinarians who qualified from non-accredited

schools “*should not be granted automatic recognition*”.

Furthermore, the development of a “*reliable system for identification and registration*” for animals – including companion animals – is seen as an essential requirement for monitoring the movement and health status of animals.

Draft EU Waste Directive

Swill feeding amendment rejected

The waste directive¹ amendment proposing to allow the use catering waste (“swill”) for animal feeding purposes, as voted during the first reading of the European Parliament, has been rejected in second reading on 17 June. The amendment on catering waste (article 19c) proposed to permit the use of catering waste in pig feed, under certain conditions.

The FVE welcomes the rejection of this amendment, as swill harbours a huge risk for the health of animals and people. Since the FMD episode in 2001, the use of catering waste has been prohibited in animal feed.

Identification of horses

All horses born in the EU after June 2009 to be microchipped

All horses born after June next year will need to be identified by microchip and carry a single identification document (passport), according to the new EU Regulation on the identification on horses², which will apply from 2009. Member States may authorise “*suitable alternative methods*” as long as these allow a correct identification of the horse without the double issuing of identification documents. Transponders should be implanted “*between the poll and the withers in the middle of the neck, in the area of the nuchal ligament*”.

¹ proposed Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on waste and repealing certain Directives

² COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No 504/2008 of 6 June 2008 implementing Council Directives 90/426/EEC and 90/427/EEC as regards methods for the identification of equidae



Horses born after June next year will need to be identified by microchip and carry a single identification document from 2009

Foals will need to be identified by six months of age or by 31 December of the year of birth, whichever is earlier.

If the original identification documents are lost, a duplicate will be issued, but the horse will automatically be classified as “*not intended for human consumption*” unless the keeper can “*satisfactorily demonstrate*” that no medical treatment was given that could compromise human consumption. To prevent microchips from entering the food chain, meat from which it has not been possible to remove the chip at time of slaughter are declared unfit for human consumption. It is up to the Member State to lay down “*the minimum qualification required*” or designate “*the person or profession*” for the implantation of the microchip.

Animal Welfare

Animal transport

Travelling times, space allowances: Commission launches public consultation

Transport has always been a most controversial area of animal welfare policies. At the time of the adoption of Council Regulation No 1/2005 (on the protection of animals during transport), the part of the original proposal of the Commission to reduce travelling times and to define the densities for the animals on the vehicles was not adopted. Both the Commission and the European Parliament clearly expressed their disappointment at this outcome. Since then, several stakeholders and Member States authorities have pointed out the need for proper enforcement of the Regulation and the need to revise these standards.

The Commission therefore launched an on-line consultation³, in order to invite members of the general public, relevant stakeholders and national authorities to participate in the design of the review process, with a view to introducing into the legislation new travelling times and space allowances and to strengthening enforcement. The consultation questionnaire is open until 7 August 2008 and consists of two parts:



EU Commission public consultation on animal transport is open until 7 August 2008

Part one, addressed only to transport companies, aims to obtain information on the economic aspects concerning transport of animals.

³

<http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=animaltransport>

Part two, addressed to general public, stakeholders, national authorities, invites views on the potential impacts of the revision, from several angles (welfare, economical, environmental, social or administrative impacts).

For extended comments or suggestions, please contact

SANCO-ANIMAL-TRANSPORT@ec.europa.eu

Commission launches feasibility studies

Stakeholders to give views on welfare labelling

The European Commission has launched a feasibility study on animal welfare labelling and on the establishment of a Community Reference Centre for Animal Protection and Welfare. The initiative is a result of the Community Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals, adopted in January 2006. Civic Consulting, commissioned to carry out the study, has drawn up a questionnaire that has been sent to stakeholder organisations.

Questions on welfare labelling include general issues (main problems of current situation, existing labelling schemes...) and the assessment of options (mandatory vs. voluntary, impact on welfare, impact on consumers...), while respondents are also invited to voice their views on the set-up and role of a Community Reference Centre.

Stakeholders have been invited to reply by 11 July 2008. The FVE has a working group on animal welfare labelling which will be preparing its proposals.

EFSA opinion on avian influenza

Racing pigeons, duck meat and illegally imported birds identified as risk factors

Good biosecurity and border control are essential to prevent introduction of the avian influenza virus into poultry holdings. This transpired from the scientific opinion on the animal health and welfare aspects of avian influenza and the risk of its introduction into the EU poultry holdings, published on 5 June by the Animal health and welfare panel of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).



Latest EFSA scientific opinion says importation of fresh meat has the highest risk of introducing of avian influenza, with emphasis on duck meat

Passive surveillance proved to be an important tool for the detection of H5N1 HPAI infections in wild birds. However, it was not possible to estimate the exact prevalence of the H5 and H7 AI subtypes in poultry farms, “*due to the small sample sizes and the design of the surveillance strategy*”.

While pigeons were previously thought to be relatively resistant to infection and were therefore regarded as a low risk in the spread of HPAI H5N1, recent experimental studies have shown that they are susceptible and may act as carrier of the virus. “*The sport pigeon racing over large [international] distances combined with the procedure of gathering them together for release*

represents introduction risks that are unique to these birds”, the experts warn.

Wild captured birds also pose a risk of introduction of HPAI. Import and quarantine provisions for captive birds have been revised and strengthened and are now restricted to birds bred in captivity from approved breeding establishments from a limited list of countries. Therefore only illegal importations would pose a risk.

Importation of fresh meat has the highest risk of introducing of avian influenza with emphasis on duck meat, due to the fact that the disease might not have been apparent before slaughter.

The scientists furthermore noted that “*check points at the EU borders have been improved over the last years but there are still many deficiencies*”. Also, “*the TRACES system is not fully implemented and therefore does not give the real time data of movements of live animals*”. Its active implementation across the EU is a high priority, they conclude.

EFSA publishes EU-wide survey on salmonella levels in slaughtered pigs

One in ten slaughter pigs infected with Salmonella, survey finds

Salmonella is estimated on average to be present in one in ten pigs slaughtered for human consumption (10.3%). This was found by the recently published survey of the Salmonella levels detected in slaughtered pigs across the European Union in 2006-2007, by a special Task Force of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)⁴.

Levels for Salmonella detected in pigs varied from 0% to 29% between Member States. *Salmonella* Typhimurium and *Salmonella* Derby, two common Salmonella types found in human infection cases, were detected in 4.7% and 2.1% of pigs, respectively. Salmonella is the second most reported cause of food-borne diseases in humans in Europe with 160,649 people suffering from Salmonella infections in 2006⁵. Risks for

⁴ Task Force on Zoonoses Data Collection on the Analysis of the baseline survey on the prevalence of Salmonella in pigs in the EU, 2006-2007

⁵ EFSA Community Report on Zoonoses 2006

consumers are typically linked to under-cooked pig meat or cross-contamination to other foods. Thorough cooking and strict kitchen hygiene will prevent or reduce the risk posed by Salmonella contaminated pig meat.

Testing of slaughter pigs (ileocaecal lymph nodes) across the 25 Member States participating in this survey was based on a randomly selected sample drawn from slaughterhouses representing 80% of the pigs slaughtered in each Member State.

EFSA has already published a series of other baseline surveys on Salmonella⁶ and in the future will publish further surveys on both Salmonella and Campylobacter in animal populations and food. In the case of Salmonella, baseline surveys such as these will assist the European Commission in setting reduction targets.

Stakeholder survey

Fees for official controls: Commission invites comments

The fees collected by the Member States to cover the costs for official controls, as outlined by Regulation 882/2004⁷, are currently being studied on behalf of the Commission. According to the Regulation, the Commission needs to review the experience gained from its application, in particular its scope and the fee-setting mechanism. The study aims to understand how the fees system is implemented in the different Member states (centralised or not, minimum rates or flat rate, calculation method, collection method) and whether the current system is working well; and to see if changes to the system are needed, examining the pros and cons of a common EU system of fixing fees and of a subsidiarity system.

Apart from a survey directed at the competent authorities, the study also invites comments and suggestions for improvement from stakeholders, including the FVE. Two FVE sections, the European Association of State Veterinary Officers (EASVO) and the Union of European Veterinary Hygienists (UEVH), will prepare a reply.

⁶ previous baseline studies (3) published on Salmonella: in laying hen flocks, in broiler meat and in turkey flocks

⁷ Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare issues.

Chemical decontamination of poultry carcasses

EU veterinary experts reject plans to lift US poultry ban

On 2 June, the Standing Committee on Food Chain and Animal Health (SCOFAH) rejected the Commission proposal to allow the use of four currently banned anti-microbial substances for the decontamination of poultry carcasses.



FVE position paper stresses that decontamination can never replace hygiene practice on farms and in food production establishments

SCOFAH members were not convinced by the Commission's arguments that the chemicals have been cleared by the European Food Safety Agency; that the carcasses would be rinsed with potable water after treatment, thereby removing any possible residues on the final product; or that consumers would be fully informed via clear labelling.

The vote is in contrast to that of the Commission, who had promised that an agreement would be found to lift the 11-year ban on US poultry, which is generally treated with these chemicals. But members of the European Parliament welcomed the decision. "Member states made this decision in tune with the opinion of European consumers, who don't want to bow to American commercial pressure and sacrifice their food production standards and rules," said Monica Frassoni, co-president of the Greens/EFA Group.

The FVE also welcomes the SCOFAH vote. "Decontamination can never replace good hygiene practice on farms and in food production

establishments", it stresses in its position paper⁸. "A decontamination process may remove the normal competitive microflora. This could render the surface of the carcass susceptible to preferential growth of pathogens that may be already present or added by recontamination after treatment". Concern regarding contaminated meat should be addressed by hygiene measures applied at all stages of the food chain, including primary production, the Federation concludes.

The dossier will now be handed over to European agriculture ministers, who are expected to confirm their experts' position within the next three months.

European Food Safety Authority

Scientists invited to sign up to new expert database

The European Food Safety Authority is launching a database for Europe's leading scientific experts. EFSA is inviting scientific experts to sign up to its new expert database, which will be used to assist its Scientific Committee and Panels in their risk assessment activities. This open invitation to scientific experts is being made within the context of EFSA's strengthened policy for the selection of scientific experts for its Scientific Committee, Scientific Panels and working groups to assist EFSA with its scientific work. This will create a "pool" of experts from which EFSA will select future working group members and other ad-hoc scientists who will support the work of EFSA's Scientific Committee and Panels. The expert database will also be available to all EU Member States who may use it to select experts for their own scientific activities.

See the expert database login page, along with Frequently Asked Questions:

http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/efsa_locale-1178620753812_1178712852762.htm

⁸ FVE Position paper:
http://www.fve.org/news/position_papers/public_health/fve_06_037_decontamination.pdf

World Rabies Day, September 28, 2008

Raising awareness worldwide on the control and prevention of rabies

The mission of the World Rabies Day, to be held on 28 September 2008, aims to raise awareness about the impact of human and animal rabies, how easy it is to prevent it, and how to eliminate the main global sources. Even though the major impact of rabies occurs in regions of the world where many needs are present, rabies should no longer be neglected. The tools and technology for human rabies prevention and dog rabies elimination are available.

Even though human rabies is 100% preventable, over 55,000 people die each year, mostly in areas of the world that still have "dog-to-dog" rabies transmission.

To date, the World Rabies Day website (www.worldrabiesday.org) inquiries have come from over 180 countries. It is hoped that collaboration with organizations such as the FVE, will lead to increased awareness and change, to help reduce inequities and neglect that lead to human rabies cases and uncontrolled canine rabies. Together, we can Make Rabies History!

Early December the FVE will hold an international rabies conference in Turkey, in collaboration with the TAIEX⁹ Office.



Alliance for Rabies Control

Over 55,000 people die each year, mostly in areas of the world that still have "dog-to-dog" rabies transmission

⁹ Technical Assistance and Information Exchange

Medicines

Antimicrobial resistance

COREPER calls for cooperation, surveillance and promotion of prudent use

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is “a growing European and global health problem” which requires “effective surveillance systems”, according to the Committee of permanent representatives, which discussed the topic during its 20 May meeting. It notes “significant differences in antibiotic use” between Member States and “a confirmed relationship between the use of antibiotics and AMR in Member States”.

It recognises there is evidence for a link between antimicrobial use in food animals and occurrence of AMR in bacteria linked to food-borne infections, as well as occurrence of specific emerging strains of resistant bacteria. Prudent use of antibiotics – both in food-producing and companion animals – should be promoted, according to the COREPER.

It therefore calls on the Commission to “further promote cooperation” between Commission, Agencies and Member States on all aspects of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), “for instance to examine the issue of antimicrobial use in animals raised for food production, especially for antimicrobials that are also used to treat infections in human medicine and veterinary medicine” and to “consider further control options when appropriate”. Together with the Member States, the Commission should also “coordinate an annual European initiative to increase awareness of the general public and veterinary and healthcare professionals about AMR, the prudent use of antibiotics on humans and animals and infection control practices”.

Calls for improved collaboration and raising awareness are in line with the conclusions of the symposium on methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), organised by the FVE on 8 April. The Federation is currently preparing guidelines on the prudent use of antibiotics.

Education

Community Animal Health Strategy

European Parliament recommends accreditation of veterinary schools

Several members of European Parliament had been very supportive of finding a legal basis for the evaluation system of veterinary schools in Europe, reported Christophe Buhot, president of the Union of European Veterinary practitioners (UEVP). Speaking at the 11 April meeting of the European Coordination Committee on Veterinary Training (ECCVT)¹⁰, he announced that several amendments supporting the official recognition of the evaluation system were proposed in the report on the Community Animal Health Strategy (CAHS), which had been adopted at Committee level. If adopted in Plenary, the Commission and Council would need to take the tabled amendments into consideration.

At the meeting of the European Board for Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS), held the following day, it was decided that only residents from “approved” teaching establishments would be allowed to enrol in an EBVS residency programme. Candidates from non-approved schools would be required to first complete an internship. The decision was taken to avoid a possible “influx of insufficiently trained students”. A further proposal to promote positively evaluated schools was to limit Erasmus exchanges between “approved” faculties.

An update of the minimum training requirements, as listed in Annex V.4 of the Directive on professional qualifications¹¹, was also discussed at the ECCVT meeting. It was suggested to delete certain subjects (e.g. ethnography), to add others (e.g. communications skills, management) and to possibly review the general organisation of subjects. At the EBVS meeting, Stefano

¹⁰ a platform which includes the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education, the European Board for Veterinary Specialisation and the FVE

¹¹ Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications

Romagnoli (European College of Animal Reproduction) became EBVS president.

Quality of Veterinary Services directly linked to quality of training

OIE to host international conference on veterinary education

The challenges of an evolving veterinary education were at the heart of an informal meeting of the Deans of the main Veterinary schools of the United States of America, Canada and Mexico. The 3-day meeting was hosted by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) in Paris, at the request of the Deans who consider the OIE “an important partner” of their activities.

The OIE strongly advocates its Member Countries and Territories to strengthen their Veterinary Services as guarantors of animal health and, by association, of public health. Their performance is directly linked to their quality and thus to their appropriate education and training.



OIE wants to reach consensus on a new veterinary curriculum

“Evolving veterinary education for a safer world” is an international conference that will be organised by the OIE, and held in Paris from 12-14 October 2009. The main purpose is to reach consensus in order to recommend to the international veterinary community a new veterinary curriculum. This should ensure that future graduates are increasingly able to work in an international environment applying OIE standards for disease surveillance, veterinary public health, food safety and animal welfare.

FVE & Professional matters

FVE GA in Vienna

‘One health’ and biosecurity high on the European veterinary agenda

‘One health’ – the concept that animal and public health cannot be seen independently – was identified as one of the top priorities of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) for 2008, by FVE Executive director Jan Vaarten. Speaking at the recent FVE general assembly, held in Vienna (Austria), on 6 and 7 June, he identified the other priorities as the new Community animal health policy, animal welfare, veterinary education and professional matters including the European Veterinary Act and the Code of Conduct. Not surprisingly, these priorities were high on the agenda during the FVE general assembly.

Evaluating the Veterinary Services

“Animal health is a key component of food security”, confirmed guest speaker Bernard Vallat, director of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), “and we need to stress the link between animal health, food safety and public health”. Old policies need to be adapted, he added, in view of the changing world. “Nowadays, pathogens are transported around the world faster than their incubation period”, he said. Added to that the increase in (legal and illegal) trade, travel and global warming and the fact that 60% of human pathogens and 75% of emerging diseases are zoonoses, and it was clear “that we need to communicate”. He also underlined the importance of the quality of veterinary education, “which urgently needs updating”. “We need to promote the quality of the veterinary title, and we should convince governments that basic requirements are needed for the use of such titles”. Of particular importance was the quality of State veterinary services, for which the OIE had developed an evaluation tool, to be used on a voluntary basis. Since 2006, 56 countries have been evaluated. Following a 2-3 week visit and

expert assessment, a draft Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) report was drawn up, followed by acceptance and gap analysis, which made it easier to obtain the World Bank investment needed for improvement. The PVS Tool can be downloaded from the OIE website (www.oie.int).

Animal health strategy and Veterinary Week

'Prevention is better than cure' is the motto of the new Community Animal Health Strategy (CAHS), outlined by Eric Marin (European Commission). Improved biosecurity, both on the farm and at the borders, was one of the priorities of the strategy and had been selected as the main theme of the recently launched EU-wide Veterinary Week (10-16 November 2008, see previous FVE Newsletter). This new joint initiative by DG Sanco and the FVE was aimed at promoting the CAHS and the 'one health' theme of the FVE, underlining the broad scope of the veterinary profession and strengthening its position. Activities on the 'biosecurity' theme are planned in all EU Member States, to be organised by the profession itself.

The quality of veterinary education was also part of the CAHS, as highlighted recently by the European Parliament, which recommended 'a European accreditation system of veterinary schools' in its resolution of 22 May (see article on page 8). This was warmly welcomed by the FVE assembly, which regretted the lack of legal framework and enforcement of the current evaluation system of veterinary schools. A meeting on the subject is planned on 6 October with representatives of the European Commission (DG Sanco, DG Market and DG Education), the European Coordination Committee for Veterinary Training (which includes the FVE) and the RCVS.

Farm visitation schemes

"Your 'one-health' concept sounds much more exciting than the usual calls for more money from the medical profession, enthused guest speaker Karl Jurka, professional political consultant on EU lobbying. "This is because most people over 40, which includes the majority of political decision makers, have an emotional link to health". He underlined that most political decisions were based on *"70% emotion and 30% knowledge – and this applies to all EU legislation"*. Good lobbying was largely based on thorough research and preparation, both concerning the dossier and the decision maker in question. Furthermore, for optimal impact it was

important to *"concentrate on those people that matter"*, in particular *"those of tomorrow"*.

Biosecurity was also discussed at the general assembly of the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners (UEVP), held on 5 June. Farm visitation, a recent French initiative, consists of farm visits every other year, explained Thierry Chambon (France). The visits, which are compulsory, are an assessment rather than an audit, and are carried by the farmer's usual practitioner. In this manner, veterinarians can assess farm management regarding animal and public health as well as biosecurity, and provide advice to avoid sanctions in case of official controls. The cost of the service is met by the government, at 100 euros per visit, which takes an hour on average.

UEVP Guest speaker Etienne Bonbon of the European Commission (DG Sanco) presented the concept of compartmentalisation. This was a risk management tool that allowed *"safeguarding the status of an animal subpopulation"*, in particular in the presence of endemic or recurring disease outbreaks such as avian influenza. *"It is a functional rather than a geographical separation and should be seen as a complement to regionalisation rather than an alternative"*. Although it was unlikely that it would apply to traditional farms, *"it offers a way out to continue trade for highly biosecured products"*. The project was currently in its pilot stage and many practicalities, such as risk assessment and the responsibility in case of a breach of biosecurity, still needed to be sorted out.

Companion animals: turnover, welfare and bite prevention

Companion animals, traditionally the 'poor cousin' of European veterinary policy, were also prominent on the UEVP agenda. The economic impact of the companion animal sector in Belgium was presented by UEVP vice president Marc Buchet (Belgium). The expenditure of Belgian pet-owners (1 million dogs, 1.9 million cats, 3 million birds, 4.5 million fish and 1 million other pets) totalled 820 million euros in 2004. Nearly half of that amount was spent on pet food, while the expenditure for veterinary care came in second place, with 18%. It was decided to draw up a template, in collaboration with the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (FECAVA) and collect similar information from other European countries.

'Pets in Europe' is a new charity that aims to spread the pet welfare message across the EU, according to its chairman Chris Laurence (Dogs

Trust). Objectives include promoting the benefits of pets, acceptance of the health risks they may cause and acceptance of the effects of global warming.

Dangerous dogs were also discussed at the UEVP meeting. Rémi Gellé (France) informed the UEVP assembly about new legislation that had been introduced in his country and required a veterinary evaluation of dogs belonging to categories 1 and 2 (so-called 'at-risk' breeds) as well as dogs that had bitten. It also mentioned the importance of owner education, in particular of category 1 and 2 dogs. FECAVA president Andrew Byrne (Ireland) updated the audience on the Blue Dog project and explained how this tool allowed the education of children (and parents), as research had shown that most dog bites in children occurred at home and involved the family pet. Anne Ceppi (Switzerland) announced that, from 1 September 2008 onwards, all Swiss dog owners will have to take courses (5 hours theoretical and 10 hours practical training) and pass a test to prove that they can control and care for their animal – or risk losing it.

Code of Conduct and Veterinary Act

A European Code of Conduct for the veterinary profession was adopted at the FVE general assembly in Vienna. It consists of an explanatory preamble, a chapter on 'core values', containing the minimum standards, and a chapter on optional quality recommendations. "*Aim of the Code of Conduct is to protect the public and to establish trust among clients*", recalled Catherine Roy (France), chair of the working party that had drawn up the Code, "*not the defence of veterinary interests*". The establishment of the profession's own Code had been essential "*to avoid having one imposed on us*", she added.

Also adopted was the Act of Veterinary Surgery, renamed 'Veterinary Act' to avoid confusion with the surgical discipline in other European languages. It clearly defines the role of the veterinarian, outlining tasks and responsibilities that should be the preserve of the veterinary profession in Europe.

During the FVE general assembly, Montenegro was welcomed as new FVE member. This small country (14,000 km²) on the Adriatic coast has a population of 600,000 and its Veterinary Chamber (founded in 2007) has 103 members, of which 67 were veterinary practitioners.

The next general assembly of the FVE will be held in Hanover (Germany) on 15-16 November, while the next spring meeting is planned in Stockholm (Sweden), on 22-23 May, 2009.

Obituary

Valère Bienfet (1920-2008)

With great sadness, the FVE announces the death of its past president professor Valère Bienfet (88), on 29 April 2008. He was a former professor in large animal physiology and pathology at the Veterinary school of Cureghem (now part of the University of Liege). In 1970, professor Bienfet was one of the founders and first president of the Belgian Union of Veterinarians (BSDV/USVB). The headquarters of the Union were in Brussels, on the avenue de Fonsny, where also the French-speaking Veterinary Ordre and later the secretariat of the FVE were located. He was also a past president of these two other organisations, and was known and respected for his negotiation talents.

The FVE mourns its past president, and extends its sincere condolences to his wife and family.

Dr. Vallat received prestigious Penn Vet World award



Dr Bernard Vallat, Director General of the OIE, received the first Penn Vet World Leadership Award. The award is given annually to a veterinarian that has dramatically changed the practice and image of the profession and substantially influenced the lives and careers of others. Two students of the University also received the first Student Inspiration Awards on the occasion. This initiative celebrates the veterinary profession worldwide and brings light to the continuous action for improved animal health.



FVE

The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) is an umbrella organisation of veterinary organisations from 37 European countries, regulated by the law on international societies in Belgium.

Members

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

Sections

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

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