



**Federation of
Veterinarians
of Europe**

Newsletter December 2008

"One Health: Healthy Animals = Healthy People"

With this slogan and a well attended and successful conference, the first EU Veterinary Week ever, jointly organised by the European Commission DG SANCO and the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe, was launched. A range of prominent speakers emphasised the importance of animal health. They all highlighted the intrinsic links between animal health and public health, and many issues were addressed, including transmissible diseases, food safety, food security, poverty alleviation and the responsible use of medicines.

But it is not a matter of animal health alone, animal welfare is equally important. The issue ranks highly on the EU agenda, said SANCO's Director General Robert Madelin. Respect for the five freedoms - freedom from hunger and thirst, from discomfort, from fear and distress, from pain, injury and disease and the freedom to express natural behaviour - is the fundamental principle underlying the Commission approach to animal welfare, he told the audience.

Bernard Vallat, Director general of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), also emphasised that good animal health goes hand in hand with good animal welfare. They both have to be protected and can never be taken for granted. Well-functioning animal health services are essential for the effective prevention and control of diseases. These services are to be considered as Global Public Goods, goods whose benefits extend to all countries, people and generations, he said.

However, so wondered Marc Sprenger, chair of the European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC), although disease prevention is in everyone's interest, who is really concerned?

Good health and welfare of animals and people can only be achieved if all parties involved are really committed to contribute. The chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Especially with regard to the focus of the veterinary week "improving biosecurity" which means reducing the risk of spreading transmissible diseases, every-one's efforts are needed.

EU Commissioner Androulla Vassillou, therefore called upon every-one's support. "Veterinarians play a crucial role" she said "through their work veterinarians help to ensure we can reach our goal of One Health. However, they cannot do this alone. The active involvement and support of other actors, particularly farmers who tend to their animals every day, is needed".

The message FVE President Walter Winding gave, very well matched with the Commissioners call. The veterinary profession is ready and willing to take its responsibility, in the interest of the animals, their owners and keepers and the society at large. He ended his speech with a picture of 4 horses working together, ploughing a field. A perfect illustration of the synergy to be reached when we all pull in the same direction: towards One Health.

Jan Vaarten,
FVE Executive Director

**The FVE Board and secretariat
wish you all
a happy and healthy 2009**



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Animal Health

Promoting biosecurity and the role of veterinarians

Launch of the EU Veterinary Week in Brussels

'One health: healthy animals = healthy people'. That is the motto promoted by the EU Veterinary Week campaign that was launched on 10 November in Brussels. Fruit of a close collaboration between the EU Directorate General health and consumer protection (DG Sanco) and the FVE, the campaign aims to promote the Commission's new animal health strategy, while stressing the important role of the veterinarian in animal and public health. "Veterinarians play a pivotal role between animals, their owners and society," reminded Walter Winding, FVE President.



The EU Veterinary Week event took place in 'Autoworld' in Brussels on 10 November

"We are all too aware of the devastation that can be caused by an outbreak of disease on animal and public health, the food supply, the economy, and on society as a whole, if we do not take action before problems begin to take hold," said Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou, addressing a 400+ audience at the launch of the European Veterinary Week, highlighting the importance of biosecurity, theme of this year's event.

"Biosecurity is an issue which concerns each and every one of us", she recalled. "This is why we

need to work together to implement an effective approach in the EU. We must do all we can to avoid a repeat of the catastrophic epidemic of foot and mouth disease in 2001, which cost billions of euros."

Two levels of biosecurity will be addressed during the campaign, both on the farm and at the EU borders. Regarding the improvement of on-farm biosecurity, the Commissioner announced that guidelines would be produced to help "prevent or contain diseases at the source". Veterinarians play 'a crucial role' at different stages of the food chain, she recalled, adding that "the active involvement and support of a number of other actors in the food chain, particularly farmers" was required.

Regarding border control, she recalled that the European Union is "the biggest importer and the biggest producer of food in the world". This was why "we need to act with a high degree of responsibility". The import legislation regarding commercial imports should be revised, she said, but recalled that biosecurity "is equally related to personal consignments, or pets, brought in by travellers". Therefore, during European Veterinary Week, a major information campaign was launched to raise awareness among travellers.

One Health

"Animal health is a Public Good", reminded Bernard Vallat, Director of the World Association for Animal health (OIE), recalling that good governance of veterinary services were based on "a joint effort between the public and the private veterinary sector". Other 'key elements' of good veterinary services were an efficient epidemiological network, a rapid response system, "rapid and just" compensatory measures and a high quality of service provided. An evaluation tool of the performance of veterinary services set up by the OIE would help to raise standards, he said. He also called for improved education of veterinarians and doctors as well as a closer collaboration between the two professions. After all, 60% of human pathogens and 75% of emerging diseases were zoonoses.

"By the way, how many doctors are there in the audience?" asked Marc Sprenger, Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). "That makes two of us", he regretted, when only one hand went up. Although veterinarians often played the role of 'early sentinel' regarding potential zoonotic pathogens such as MRSA, a closer collaboration was needed with the medical profession. "In the Netherlands,

veterinarians were aware of a Q-fever outbreak long before the medical practitioners realised there was something amiss". What is needed was a true 'one health' approach, he urged, suggesting that veterinary and medical undergraduates should receive a common public health education.

Public health and animal health are two worlds apart, confirmed Roel Coutinho, Director of the Dutch Institute for Public Health and the Environment, and chair of the 'one health' workshop, held during the launch event. *"This should be changed permanently"*, he urged, noting a *"need for structural communication between public health and animal health workers – and not just in the light of a crisis!"* He called for a *"strong network involving all partners"*, including animal owners, veterinarians, medical doctors and laboratories, and for "regular updates" to face new, upcoming risks.

"A high level of veterinary training – to be officially evaluated and accredited – and a dense network of veterinary practitioners" were *"essential ingredients"* of a good disease surveillance network, stressed Pierre Buisson (France), speaking on behalf of the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners (UEVP), during the on-farm biosecurity workshop.

One of the questions discussed during this workshop was whether it was feasible to combine a high level of animal welfare and tight biosecurity. Although open farmland may lead to a lower level of biosecurity, this is an exception, recalled Sten Mortensen, assistant Chief Veterinary Officer of Denmark. *"The main biosecurity issues are caused by animal purchase, and people, feed and trucks being allowed on the farm. We should look at it in a structured way rather than make it a point of conflict."*

"Controls at EU border inspection posts should be more harmonised, in particular regarding transit consignments, suggested Monique Eloit, Chief Veterinary Officer of France, presenting the conclusions of the workshop on border biosecurity. While more cooperation and resources were needed to counter the illegal imports of animals, *"personal imports from travellers represent a high risk"*, of which they are often unaware. Targeted awareness campaigns were called for, she concluded.

Raising awareness

To raise awareness among travellers, a video had been produced for the European Veterinary Week campaign, for distribution to travel agencies and airline companies, reminding travellers that food products of animal origin should not be introduced into the EU. The video, translated into

all official EU and another dozen languages, can be viewed on the One Health web site (www.one-health.eu). Other educational material included leaflets, posters, luggage tags, rulers and calendars, presented by Paola Testori-Coggi, deputy Director General of DG Sanco. A road show will be held throughout Europe to help raise awareness on biosecurity at various events, while a series of events were planned at many airports.

At the launch event, a detector dog demonstration was held, featuring Berry, a four-year old Labrador Retriever trained to 'sniff out' products of animal origin, such as dairy products, meat products and caviar, but also animals and animal products of protected species, including ivory, sea horses, crocodile skin, corals, furs and feathers. Trained and employed by the customs office at Hamburg airport in Germany, Berry is asked to check some 2,300 pieces of luggage every month, with some 20 to 30 'catches' each month.

In an effort to raise awareness among children about the importance of farm animal welfare, the Commission furthermore launched 'Farmland', an interactive on-line computer game for children aged between 9 and 12 (www.farmland-thegame.eu). Farmland, available in nine EU languages, consists of an illustrative part with information on the needs of farmed animals. In the various computer games, the children can apply the underlying welfare concepts they have read about.



"We have a duty to our children about the origin and production of food and to raise awareness about animals and how they should be treated. With Farmland we believe we achieve these objectives in a way that is also interesting and entertaining." said Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou, speaking at the launch.

Veterinexpo (Belgium)

Sabine Laruelle, Minister of Agriculture, visits EU Vet Week stand

During her visit to Veterinexpo, the annual veterinary trade show held in French-speaking Belgium, Sabine Laruelle, Belgian Minister of Small and medium-sized enterprises, Self-employed persons, Agriculture and Science policy, visited the EU Veterinary Week stand.

FVE representative Alain Schonbrodt explained the purpose of the campaign and offered her the calendar, information leaflets and a cap, which she decided to wear at once!



The road show of the European Veterinary Week had already visited Brussels, Karlsruhe, Hanover, Kalotina (Bulgaria) and will continue to travel across Europe to help raise awareness on biosecurity and animal welfare (next stops: Paris airport and Stuttgart).

Bluetongue control

More funds announced for 2009

“Bluetongue will continue to spread, and has probably come to stay”, noted Bernard van Goethem, of the Commission’s Directorate General Health and consumer protection (DG Sanco), speaking at the European Veterinary

Week event held in Hanover (Germany) on the occasion of EuroTier, the world’s largest exhibition of professional animal husbandry. Looking at the ‘bluetongue map’ of Europe, *“no reasonable person can expect to eradicate all BTV from Europe”,* he said. *“We’ll probably end up in a situation similar to that in the United States, with a decline of clinical signs and losses”,* he predicted. He also announced additional funding of 100 million euros to co-finance the vaccination programmes against bluetongue (BTV 1, 8 and 6) in 2009. This would raise the total amount to be allocated to vaccination efforts to 160 million euros.

During his presentation ‘Animal health in the European Union, past, present and future’, he noted that much had been achieved – citing the ‘success stories’ of the contention of rabies, BSE and avian influenza - but concluded that *“we should be more pro-active”*. This was the underlying concept of the new Community animal health strategy (CAHS), the motto of which is ‘prevention is better than cure’.

Bluetongue control (2)

12 million unsold vaccine doses in England

Approximately 12 million of the 28 million doses of bluetongue vaccine purchased by the UK Department of Environment, Food and Rural affairs (DEFRA) for use in England remain in the supply chain, according to a ministerial response, reports the Veterinary Record¹.

In a written response to a recent parliamentary question, Ms Jane Kennedy, Minister for farming and the environment, said that due to the voluntary nature of bluetongue vaccination in England, no definitive figures could be provided for the numbers of livestock actually vaccinated. However, sales data indicated that the overall uptake across the whole of England was around 60 per cent.

Regarding the number and value of unsold doses of vaccine, Ms Kennedy said that, of the 28 million doses purchased by DEFRA, about 12 million had not yet been sold to veterinary practices.

¹ The Veterinary Record of 29/11/2008

Agriculture and research

British farmers call for more research funding

'Why science matters for farming' is the name of the campaign of the National Farmers' Union in the United Kingdom launched in October, the Veterinary Record reports². The main objective of the campaign is that funding for research and development has declined significantly in recent decades, and that this trend should be reversed. "It is dangerous to allow the current trend of funding cuts to continue and not to address the impact it is already having on the number of scientists in this sector", the NFU deplors. "Research cannot simply be switched on again once it has fallen below critical capacity".

A report published as part of the campaign had shown that while government funding of science overall had increased over the past decade, funding for "strategic and applied agricultural research" had been moving in the opposite direction. The FVE shares these concerns.

TAIEX meeting in Antalya

Fighting rabies discussed by new and neighbouring EU countries

Fighting rabies, the oldest known zoonotic disease, through better regional cooperation was the aim of the meeting on 4-5 December in Antalya, Turkey. Around 150 participants from 19 countries attended the meeting³. In none of the countries present, rabies had been eradicated and in most it was endemic. Some countries had as main reservoir wildlife such as foxes, in others the reservoirs were mainly dogs. Human cases had still been seen in the last two years in Algeria (34/2007), Morocco (31/2007), Russia (8), Tunisia (2/2007, 6/2008), Armenia (2/2007), Turkey (2) and Romania (1).

Thomas Müller of the Friedrich-Loeffler Institute (Germany) and OIE reference laboratory for rabies, explained the principles for a good rabies control programme. Before starting, you should

identify your problem; do you have dog rabies or wildlife rabies or both? You also should decide on your goal; eradication or containment? He continued with explaining the principles of a good vaccination campaign for dogs and wildlife. Sustainability should be planned from the start, vaccination campaigns have to be planned ideally for at least six years.

The OIE terrestrial code makes a distinction between "rabies free" and "rabies infected" countries and specific provisions are defined to allow safe trade between countries, said Lea Knopf from the OIE scientific and technical department. Welfare recommendations for stray dog population control are currently under consultation in OIE, to be adopted during the next OIE GA in May 2009. "Good veterinary governance is needed to allow an effective rabies control, as for the control of other diseases", she emphasised.

Nancy De Briyne (FVE) gave an overview of the current pet travel rules in the EU, which was not always easy, as the requirements differed according to the country of origin and of destination, in particular regarding pets (cats, dogs, ferrets) under 3 months of age. No data were available on the number of animals moved, legally or illegally. Most rabies cases observed in Western Europe over the past years could be traced to illegally imported pets. She also referred to a survey recently carried out in Italy (see article below), which had shown that in a significant number of puppies of foreign origin, the travel documents were faulty or incomplete. She also announced that the Union of European veterinary practitioners and the European association of state veterinary officers would hold a survey to map the dog and cat movement in Europe.



"Although the technical and scientific knowledge is available to fight rabies, however, it is not an easy task", concluded James Moynagh, of DG Sanco (Veterinary controls). A good understanding of the epidemiology of rabies in a region is

necessary to design an effective eradication programme. He also indicated that efficiently working veterinary services were essential to achieve eradication, and that any 'black spots' where rabies or other diseases remained present were often due to poor collaboration at administrative level.

² The Veterinary Record of 25/10/2008

³ Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia/Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYROM, Moldova, Montenegro & Kosovo, Morocco, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkey and Ukraine

Italian survey highlights serious health and welfare issues

Puppy trade: faulty papers, identification and poor health

A recent survey carried out by the Italian Veterinary Order (FNOVI) to gain an impression of the extent and problems of the (illegal) international puppy trade, showed that travel documents were only considered 'correct' or 'accurate' in 15% of cases. Although most animals were identified with EU accepted microchips, in most reported cases, the number did not correspond to the data recorded on the pet passports. In many cases, the chips, although implanted abroad, had an Italian code, making it appear "as if the pups were born in Italy". Most of these puppies originated from Eastern Europe, the survey found.



Furthermore, the pups "always appear to be younger" than indicated on the documents, and showed 'poor' or 'dreadful' health in 52% of cases. Most commonly encountered problems were endoparasites (34%), parvovirus infection (23%), mycosis (17%), mange (16%) and distemper (10%).

FNOVI has expressed its concern about the animal welfare and risks of spread of rabies and other diseases that this situation may entail. It urges veterinarians and competent authorities to collaborate towards the publication of a document that analyses the importation of young pets in the EU "with the aim of resolving this problem and its serious health and animal welfare implications".

A recent press release had highlighted the problem of illegal puppy trade⁴.

⁴ http://www.ansa.it/site/notizie/awnplus/english/news/2008-12-03_103290518.html

Animal Welfare

Global conference on animal welfare

Animal welfare standards: "Veterinarians should take the lead"

The second global conference on animal welfare, organised by the World organisation for animal health (OIE), was held from 20-22 October in Cairo. The conference aimed to evaluate the implementation of global animal welfare standards, adopted in 2005. Around 400 participants attended the meeting, including representatives of veterinary services, farmers' organisations, animal welfare organisation and the meat industry.

As a global public good, the veterinary profession should take the leadership in order to improve animal health, welfare and public health, stressed Bernard Vallat, OIE director. "*Science is the common denominator between all 172 OIE member states*", he said, each with his own cultural, ethical and religious background.

Leadership of the veterinary services and working in partnership with all relevant stakeholders were the two key components for the improvement of animal welfare, according to Barry O' Neil, President of the OIE International Committee. Many challenges lie ahead, he noted. Ensuring domestic compliances in all OIE member states, "*some of which are struggling to ensure basic humane well-being*", has proved difficult, in particular in the context of the current economic crisis. But in spite of these challenges, he remained optimistic. "*All of us are on the journey towards better animal welfare. Some are well advanced while others are still at the beginning, but all of us are on the same journey.*"

A competitive argument for all

Andrea Gavinelli, Head of the newly created Animal Welfare Unit in DG Sanco, explained how the EU tries to work in partnership to improve animal welfare globally. Training and education is organised and animal welfare research is funded to come to science-based standards. He urged participants to reflect on whether we should move from an animal-centred

approach to a human-centred approach in order to get more people on board.

“Animal welfare is intrinsically linked with farmer welfare”, recalled Grigera Naon, of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP). International welfare standards are essential to ensure worldwide acceptable practices and should also guarantee that issues of animal welfare do not become barriers to trade. Dr Naon presented case studies in Argentina, Sweden and South-Africa, which showed that the implementation of welfare standards can increase profitability of farms. He cited the results of a study conducted in Argentina in 2007 on 17,370 slaughtered animals: *“Better handling of animals in slaughterhouses resulted in a 39% decrease in injuries, which implies, on a national basis, a production of 14,200 extra tons of beef for human consumption, valued at 28,000,000 US dollars on the international market.”*

“Although many developing countries are worried that animal welfare will be used as trade barrier, this is an unfounded concern, added Stella Huertas (Veterinary Faculty, Uruguay). *“Improved animal welfare can increase human welfare”* and will allow developing countries to demonstrate their ability to farm in a responsible and sustainable manner.

Speaking on humane slaughter methods during disease outbreaks, Debby Reynolds, former CVO UK, stressed that good preparation, *“with robust contingency plans which have a political agreement, are backed up with adequate resources and with a good communication are essential”*. As it is difficult to test slaughter methods for mass slaughter in peacetime, experience should be shared between countries.

During the discussion, it was recalled that *“the derogation for cultural, religious methods should not be a carte blanche for allowing cruel techniques. Standards should be science-based and this should apply to derogations”*.

Education and specialisation

Rasto Kolesar, from the World Society of the Protection of animals (WSPA) presented the Society’s humane slaughter training programme in Brazil and China. The project had three aims: The training of staff and inspectors (150 000 in China and 30 000 staff in Brazil); advice on legislation; and the incorporation of animal welfare at slaughter into curricula. The results in China are currently being evaluated, and the intermediate results seemed *“promising”*.

At the meeting, Nancy De Briyne (FVE deputy Director) highlighted the importance of

undergraduate and postgraduate veterinary education in animal welfare. She presented a poster on the undergraduate veterinary training in animal welfare in Europe. The study, based on evaluation reports from 43 veterinary schools in 24 countries, showed that, in some schools, animal welfare teaching is firmly embedded throughout the whole curriculum, while in others, it is non-existent. Furthermore, animal welfare is almost exclusively presented in terms of legislation rather than from a practical perspective.



FVE poster on the undergraduate veterinary training in animal welfare in Europe.

FVE recommends that animal welfare studies include practical aspects, such as the welfare on farms, during transport or at slaughter, instead of merely addressing the legislative aspects. Part of the teaching should be done in an interactive way promoting critical analysis of situations from different perspectives. The FVE is working together with Bristol University to develop a European College for Animal Welfare.

Welfare of animals during transport

“Unsatisfactory” Regulation should be simplified and better enforced, says FVE

Regarding the transport of animals, FVE does not believe that since the coming into force of Regulation (EC) 1/2005⁵ animal welfare has significantly improved. In large part, this is due to the “*failure to achieve adequate implementation and enforcement in all Member States*”. In its recent position paper⁶, the Federation stresses that, in particular, the Regulation “*has failed to address effectively the problems associated with the long distance transportation to slaughter of relatively low value animals*”.

Although FVE accepts that the Regulation, if properly applied and rigorously enforced, could prevent many incidents of adverse welfare, the experience of veterinarians working in this field suggests that animal welfare “*may actually have deteriorated*” over recent years. “*Reports from non-governmental organisations suggest that the Regulation itself is often not respected by those responsible for the transportation of animals, and not adequately enforced by officials of Member States*”. Moreover, long distance transport of animals appears to be more frequent and more welfare problems are being found.

In order to have effective legislation, it should be “*simple, practical and unambiguous*” and be redesigned rather than amended – according to FVE, the current Regulation is already too complicated, which “*inhibits its effective monitoring and enforcement*”. Other FVE recommendations include:

Consignments should be accompanied by certification, allowing officials of the competent authorities (CA) concerned to monitor, control and enforce the legislation;

Member states must provide their veterinarians with the legal powers, authority, resources and training to properly apply the Regulation;

enforcement by Member states should be “*rigorous and targeted*” particularly at the

beginning and end of journeys, in addition to spot checks during transportation;

penalties for infringements should be high enough to discourage further offending but should distinguish between technical breaches of the Regulation and instances where serious welfare problems are found; provision should be made, in individual cases, for feedback from the CA responsible for the destination to the CA responsible for the premises of origin, so that problems can be addressed.

The FVE position paper on animal welfare during transport was unanimously adopted at its general assembly in November.

Welfare during slaughter

FVE welcomes new draft Regulation, proposes modifications

FVE congratulates the Commission on the draft Regulation on the protection of animals at the time of killing. It is a “*significant step in the right direction*” and has the potential to improve the welfare at slaughter and killing of millions of animals. FVE especially welcomes the clear operator’s responsibility for the welfare of animals during slaughter, the introduction of a certificate of competence and the need for slaughterhouses to appoint an animal welfare officer⁷.

FVE appreciates that the current proposal is a Regulation and not a Directive. However, it shares the concern with some Member States that, on specific points, they might be required to implement less stringent rules. FVE suggests allowing Member States the option to implement stricter rules for slaughtering/killing if they wish to do so.

FVE furthermore suggests some modifications of the current draft, including Article 4.2 (killing without prior stunning), where FVE would like to add the notion that the meat thus obtained remains exceptional and is exclusively destined to the religious community concerned. “*In Belgium, for example, 21% of calves and 92% of sheep are slaughtered without prior stunning*”, while the religious communities concerned represent less

⁵ Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations

⁶ http://www.fve.org/news/position_papers/animal_welfare/fve_08_016_transport.pdf

⁷ http://www.fve.org/news/position_papers/animal_welfare/fve_08_085_slaughterwelfareamendments.pdf

than 4.5 % of the population. The surplus of meat is sold on the domestic or export market to consumers unaware that they are eating meat of animals which were slaughtered without prior stunning.

Furthermore, FVE would like to stress the role of the Official Veterinarian by adding an Article 13.6: *“The official veterinarian shall regularly verify the above mentioned monitoring procedures and the correct adherence to the standard operating procedures”*.

Regarding a designated person responsible for animal welfare (Art. 14), FVE believes that every slaughterhouse, whatever its size, should have an appointed employee (not a consultant) as Animal Welfare Operative.

And regarding a certificate of competence (Art. 24) to be issued without examination, FVE suggests that the competence of these persons is assessed by the Official Veterinarian. *“It is not because somebody has been working ten years in the business, that he is certainly competent.”* FVE furthermore notes that these ‘more experienced people’ will serve as trainers for younger personnel. *“If they do not have the right skills and attitude, they will not pass it on to the newer generation.”*

Council of Europe

First meeting after two years, to discuss welfare of rabbits, cattle and fish

The welfare of farmed rabbit, cattle and fish was on the agenda of the 49th T-AP meeting of the Council of Europe, held in Strasbourg on 27-29 November. It was the first meeting after an inactivity of two years, due to a shift in budgetary resources.

Regarding the welfare standards of designing rabbit farms, the debates in Strasbourg proved difficult, and no compromise could be reached. It is likely that a new proposal will need to be drafted.

Regarding cattle farming, much progress had been made, according to Alain Schonbrodt, who attended the meeting on behalf of the FVE, as was the case for fish farming. An agreement had been reached on the annexe on carp. The annexes regarding the European eel and African catfish have now been drafted, and only need minor rewording. They are likely to be adopted in the near future.

Public Health

Following ‘cautious’ EFSA report and rejection by European Parliament

EU citizens have ‘negative perception’ of animal cloning for food

In October 2008, the Eurobarometer survey (25 000 participants) showed that a majority of European citizens has a negative perception of animal cloning for food⁸. Most feel that too little is known about long-term health and safety effects.

Before that, on 3 September, the European Parliament had called on the Commission to submit proposals prohibiting the use of cloned animals in food products following the publication of a highly cautious report by the EU’s food safety authority on the issue. The parliamentary resolution was adopted by 622 MEPs in favour with just 32 against and 25 abstentions (see FVE Newsletter September 2008).

While the experts of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) found no clear safety concerns related to food products or the environment from clones of cattle, pigs or their offspring, it noted in its scientific opinion that there are insufficient scientific data on the subject⁹.

The European Commission is currently evaluating the next steps. The FVE working group on cloning¹⁰ will meet on 18 December.



⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_238_en.pdf

⁹ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/efsa_locale-1178620753812_1211902019540.htm

¹⁰ Members: David Morton (UK, chair), Eckhard Wolf (Germany), Cesare Galli (Italy), Anna Duszewska (Poland), Hiemke Knijn (Netherlands), Constantinos Kyriakis (Greece).

The link between animal welfare and food safety

Stress in chicken increases *Campylobacter* levels

“In most countries, chicken are the species with the biggest threat to public health”, stated Tom Humphrey, Professor of veterinary zoonotic bacteriology at the University of Bristol. Speaking on the occasion of Veterinary Week in Hanover on 14 November, he noted that *Salmonella enteritidis* was “overwhelmingly” the most important threat to consumers through infected eggs and poultry meat, with some 1.3 billion cases worldwide each year. But although this pathogen was “ultimately controllable”, according to Professor Humphrey, this was not so obvious for *Campylobacter*, a pathogen “far worse” to have than *Salmonella*. An estimated 70% of carcasses at retail level were contaminated, while around one percent of the EU population is infected each year.



“Whatever we’ve tried so far, it hasn’t worked”, he said and perhaps it was time to “think outside the box”. Studies had suggested that animal welfare might play a role. “We found that infection rates were higher in large flocks with high densities and in birds with hock or pad burn”. Faecal levels of *Campylobacter* were also higher after transport and after part-depopulation, suggesting that stress played an important role.

Public health, food safety and animal welfare

Hygieia, a multidisciplinary “one health” students’ association in Utrecht

Hygieia, the Dutch students’ association of veterinary public health, has just celebrated its third anniversary. Created late 2005 at the veterinary faculty of Utrecht, Hygieia aims to inform students, veterinarians, medical doctors and other professionals involved in veterinary public health about current trends and opportunities in public health, food safety and animal welfare. “Many different disciplines play an important role in veterinary public health, and we invite students and other interested persons to focus on this field, explained Aldrin Wires, chairman of Hygieia.

Hygieia (“for man and animal”) also organises excursions, lectures, workshops and symposia, and invites non-veterinary students to join. “We have already been joined by a student in pharmacy and two students in medicine, he reported. For further information, please visit www.hygieia.info

Medicines

European meeting on veterinary medicines

Much support for simplification to improve medicines availability

“Attach your seat belts, there are turbulent times ahead!” warned Steve Dean, of the UK Veterinary Medicines Agency, speaking at the European symposium on veterinary medicines, held in Paris on 30 September. The meeting was organised by the French food safety agency (Afssa) and the agency of veterinary medicines (ANMV) on the occasion of the French EU Presidency. It attracted some 200 representatives of European and national competent authorities, industry and other stakeholders, including the FVE, represented by Jan Vaarten.

In his presentation, Steve Dean noted that it was high time to adapt the current rules. “We’ve overdone it with too much legislation, forcing practitioners to act illegally when the required medicines are not available”, he admitted.

“There is a conflict between legislation on good veterinary practice” confirmed Jan Vaarten. The FVE proposed to simplify and relax the different cascade rules. References to its “exceptional” character to “avoid unacceptable suffering” should be deleted, allowing the cascade to better address the needs of veterinarians. In the long term, the FVE hopes for the arrival of a single market where medicines can circulate freely.

Currently, the protection of the health of a relatively small number horse-meat consumers has limited the European development of a modern therapeutic arsenal in the treatment of sport and leisure horses. Only 200 medicines are authorised, while 500 are used. In other words, equine practitioner use more products that are not licensed for horses than those that are! Often equine veterinarians would be breaking the law.

This legislation is complex, incoherent and not credible, stressed Jan Vaarten during the discussion. Steve Dean explained that the Regulation, adapted from human pharmacology, is a true minefield, and hampers the development of new products for such small markets.

The meeting's participants agreed upon areas for improvement as regards the free movement of products, the necessary simplification of administrative procedures, generic medicinal products and facilitation of innovation.

Three major ‘breakthroughs’ could be noted:

There was much support for a single market of veterinary products and development of the “1-1-1 concept” to solve the (over)regulation and increasing costs of product licensing procedures. The idea is to have one application, one assessment and one authorisation that would apply in all 27 Member States.

The simplification of procedures: the participants undertook to optimise the means implemented by the network (e.g. better use of hierarchy and work sharing between agencies). This would also allow a fast-track authorisation of vaccines in an emergency and improve pain management in animals, including production animals.

Innovation: the participants agreed on the difficulties associated with the cost of defensive R&D, so-called because it is relative to the cost of keeping a medicinal product on the market. Much emphasis was placed on the fact that there is still a significant need for innovation (emerging

diseases, animal protection, minor indications and species, etc.) and that, in this sector, public-private partnerships are essential.

The agreement on these three key points of European medicinal product policy is a notable step forward that should eventually benefit the entire European continent.

Education

Meeting on the quality veterinary education

Consequences of lacking legal accreditation discussed with Commission representatives

‘Quality of Veterinary Education in Europe’ was the topic of a meeting with Thomas Wiedmann (DG Internal Market) and Laszlo Kuster (DG Sanco) of the Commission and representatives of the veterinary profession, including Marcel Wanner (EAEVE¹¹), Stefano Romagnoli and Frank Gasthuys (EBVS¹²), Jane Hern and Lynne Hill (RCVS¹³), Christophe Buhot (UEVP¹⁴) and Walter Winding, Karin Östensson, Jan Vaarten and Nancy De Briyne (FVE), held on 6 October in Brussels.



Marcel Wanner recalled that the EAEVE had originally been set up in 1988, to evaluate veterinary education in Europe. Although the evaluation visits, currently carried out jointly by the FVE and the EAVE, does not fall under the mandate of the European Commission, and is therefore not legally binding, all 93 EAEVE member schools are obliged to undergo evaluation. In the EU, there are 72 veterinary schools, of which currently only 43 were approved. Seventeen of the visited schools “failed to meet the minimum

¹¹ European association of establishments for veterinary education

¹² European board for veterinary specialisation

¹³ Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (UK)

¹⁴ Union of European veterinary practitioners

requirements as set out in the EU Directives”, with a lack of clinical training facilities being cited as the main deficiency. “We cannot accept this high number of non-approved veterinary schools, Professor Wanner stressed. The fact that ‘deficient’ schools face no legal consequences was seen as the main weakness.

The UK registers more graduates from abroad than from the UK, informed Jane Hern, who gave an overview on veterinary migration into the UK. In the past five years, 3 335 graduates were registered in the UK, 2 566 came from EU/EEA and 1 530 were from other overseas countries. Of the 2 566, hundreds had qualified at non-approved schools, which could have a potential negative impact on animal health/welfare and food safety.

The fact that the EU system is not officially recognised, and that no legal action can be taken in case of deficiencies, might not only lead to a poor education of veterinarians but could also jeopardise the recognition of EU qualified veterinarians worldwide, recalled Karin Östensson. She explained that a global accreditation system was currently being set up, based on mutual recognition of officially accredited schools. Lacking this, the EU could become an “isolated island” of veterinary employment, she warned. Although several EU veterinary schools had accepted to be evaluated by the North-American veterinary schools accreditation programme, that was not the best way forward, she said, as the educational curriculum was “very different” from the EU system.

Frank Gasthuys discussed the annex of study subjects required for veterinary training (annex V.4 of Dir 2005/36), which dates back to 1978. An update of an annex is necessary as the current list does not take into account the developments of the last three decades.

At the meeting, Laszlo Kuster suggested a multi-tier response of short-term and long-term actions, including:

- updating the annexes of Directive 2005/36 (several months) rather changing the Directive
- examining whether veterinary education could be included in FVO missions
- clarifying, if necessary, in the evaluation reports exactly which article of the Directive is not satisfied
- increasing the transparency of the evaluation reports, for example by making the list of approved and non-approved schools available online (see www.fve.org/education).

Veterinary training

OIE to organise global conference on “evolving veterinary education”

“In a rapidly changing world, veterinary education must face new challenges and continually evolve to meet societal demands in the field of food security, food safety, public health and animal welfare. Appropriate education and training have a direct effect on the quality and performance of public and private components of Veterinary Services”. For these reasons, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) will organise the conference *“Evolving veterinary education for a safer world”*, to take place at the Maison de la Chimie in Paris from 12-14 October 2009. The conference will be in English with simultaneous translation to French and Spanish.

For more information please contact Saraí Suárez, OIE Publications Department, phone +33 1 44 15 18 88, or s.suarez@oie.int

FVE & Professional matters

FVE General Assembly 15-16 November

‘One health’, animal welfare and education high on the agenda

The EU animal health strategy was one of the main agenda points at the recent general assembly of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), held on 15 and 16 November. This was not surprising since the meeting took place during the EU Veterinary Week, a few days after the official “kick-off” meeting in Brussels (see page 2). For this occasion, the FVE had even exchanged its traditional autumn venue (Brussels) for Hanover, host to the Veterinary Week, on the occasion of EuroTier (the world’s largest professional animal productions exhibition) and to the congress of the German veterinary practitioners’ association (BpT).

“*Very satisfied*” was how Walter Winding, FVE President, qualified the first EU Veterinary Week,

at the start of the general assembly. The initiative is a clear demonstration of the Commission to underline the position of the veterinary profession, not only in animal health and welfare, but also in public health, he said. The week was also “a big chance” for the profession, but it was up to this same profession to make it work. He also announced that the FVE is involved in celebrating the Year of the Veterinarian, which will be held in 2011 to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the foundation of the first veterinary school, in Lyon in 1761.

According to the recently approved EU Action plan of the Community Animal Health Strategy, of which the European Veterinary Week was a “spin-off”, a number of steering groups will be established. Stakeholders will be closely involved in the legislative proposals by helping to draw up so-called scoping papers, which should analyse the policy objectives, actions and their respective impact. The FVE will be particularly involved in the drafting of certain scoping papers, such as farm herd health visits, the evaluation system and puppy transport. Once these scoping papers have been accepted, their measures will become law, recalled Christophe Buhot, President of the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners (UEVP), stressing the potential role of the input by the veterinary profession.

Equine dentists file complaint against veterinarians

During the UEVP meeting, veterinary education and the accreditation of veterinary schools was discussed (see article on page 11), as was the problem with equine dentists, which was also presented to the FVE general assembly.

Equine dental technicians may become a threat to animal welfare and the veterinary profession, and it was time to act. This was the conclusion of a Europe-wide survey, carried out by Catherine Roy (France). In most countries, equine “dentists” are not regulated and often receive no formal training. As non-veterinarians, they can only carry out non-invasive acts and are not allowed to use POMs such as tranquillizers and anaesthetics, although they are known to often transgress these rules. In addition, the public has no means of complaint in case of malpractice, while appropriate professional liability insurance is often lacking. Nevertheless, the equine ‘dentists’ are getting organised on a European level, Catherine Roy warned. She noted that this organisation had filed a complaint “with 38 arguments”, both to the European Court of Justice and the French and Belgian competition authorities, regarding their

freedom of practice. She called for a united veterinary position to counter these arguments.

Veterinarians should – and could – be better funded, according to FVE guest speaker Danica Ramljak, an EU expert in grant review. She outlined the details of the EU Framework programme 7 which encompassed some 50.5 billion euros for a seven-year period (2007-2013). Around two thirds of these funds were allocated to collaborative research (63%), the rest to capacities (“such as upgrading research infrastructure”), people (education) and “ideas” (challenging cutting-edge research).



FVE delegates during the General Assembly in Hanover

Lynne Hill (UK) presented the multilingual exchange information tool (IMI). This online programme would facilitate communication between the public administration (such as competent authorities granting the right to practice) at local, regional and national level. The system allowed for automatic translation from and to all 23 official EU languages, increasing the efficiency, flexibility and a faster response time. The project had been tested during a pilot phase. “It’s simple and it does work!” she concluded.

FVE sections discuss animal welfare

During its meeting on 14 November, the European Association of State Veterinary Officers (EASVO) discussed animal welfare at length, including labelling, welfare at slaughter, during transport (see article on page 8), herd health plans in relation to animal welfare and the practice of ‘mulesing’ sheep (removal of skin folds at the tails base to reduce fly strike, usually carried out without anaesthetic and antiseptic measures), widely used in Merino farms in Australia. Regarding the last subject, it recommended the FVE to “encourage the European Commission to apply the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy in the case of imports of animal products from Third countries”. Furthermore, the EASVO announced it would circulate a questionnaire regarding the

requirement of State veterinarians to be licensed by their national statutory body.

Animal welfare was also prominent on the agenda of the meeting of the Union of European Veterinary Hygienists (UEVH), including labelling and herd health plans. Furthermore, the UEVH had a joint meeting with the EASVO regarding the so-called 'Public Health Pool'¹⁵, an information source for students on the educational and employment possibilities available in Veterinary public health. The EASVO and UEVH issued a common statement to encourage FVE members to support students in veterinary public health. The UEVH also discussed the role of the Official Veterinarian at slaughterhouses, and asked that the FVE Hygiene working group "prepare a paper describing the principles which underwrite the role of the veterinary profession in meat hygiene controls".

Animal welfare was also discussed during the meeting of European veterinarians in education, research and industry (EVERI). EVERI members discussed the need for non-clinical extramural studies; a network of contacts in research and industry for students to do short "internships" was being developed.

The next FVE general assembly will be held on 22 and 23 May 2009 in Stockholm (Sweden).

European Federation meets World Veterinary Association

The first Council meeting of the World Veterinary Association took place in Hanover, following the FVE general assembly. For Tjeerd Jorna, current WVA President and former FVE President, it was an excellent occasion to hold a joint meeting with the FVE board and regional representatives. Representatives of both organisations discussed how to prepare a joint policy outlining their objectives as well as short and long-term action plans.



FVE Board meets with WVA Council in Hanover

Online veterinary CPD

British Veterinary Association promotes VETS.TV

VETS.TV is an initiative and internet television site of the British Veterinary Association (BVA), offering a platform for the veterinary industry to deliver education and continuing professional development (CPD) to veterinary surgeons, nurses and the veterinary team. CPD is now a significant business – both expensive to deliver and expensive to purchase – and BVA believes that this medium provides "an exciting opportunity to deliver it in a new format".

The potential audience is, of course, not necessarily restricted to the UK. "We received substantial interest at the recent International Veterinary Officers Council meeting, reports Amalia Kassem of Vets.tv. "As the site develops we are aiming to provide content in major European languages and have recently uploaded a video on Commodity Trading, courtesy of the British Government's Department for International Development, which is available in both English and French". Since BVA has invested substantial resource in developing the site, "we believe we are ideally placed to host a central and credible platform for the delivery of CPD and animal health subjects", she concludes.

For more information visit www.VETS.TV, or contact ameliak@bva.co.uk if you wish to develop the platform for your own use or have video footage you wish to share.

¹⁵ <http://www.public-health-pool.at>

Obituary

Sue Haslam

FVE regrets to announce the death of Sue Haslam, on 22 October. She qualified from Bristol in 1980 and gained a doctorate in 2003. She was a research fellow in the Division of Farm Animal Science at Bristol University.

She demonstrated her interest in animal welfare by completing the RCVS certificate and diploma in animal welfare science, ethics and law (AWSSEL) and by studying for a PhD within the University of Bristol's animal welfare and behaviour group.



She was assisting D. Morton and others to try to set up an animal Welfare College under EBVS.

She was junior vice-chair and newsletter editor of the Animal Welfare Science, Ethics and Law Veterinary Association (AWSSELVA) and had been looking forward to assuming the role of chair. She was an extraordinary woman giving her time and advice freely and fully to any colleagues who approached her for help.

Alasdair Steele-Bodger (84)

Alasdair Steele-Bodger CBE died on September 17, 2008, aged 84. He was a distinguished veterinary surgeon (qualifying from Edinburgh in 1948) who became President of both the British Veterinary Association and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. His interests and influence ranged over the whole spectrum of animal health-related activities, from the scientific and clinical aspects of animal treatment to the economics of organising a veterinary practice; from the council of the Royal Agricultural Society to a Cambridge professorship.

Mr Steele-Bodger's involvement in European matters began in 1967 when he was appointed UK delegate to the Federation of Veterinarians of the EEC. He was on the committee of the EEC Advisory Committee on Veterinary Training from 1981 until 1990. All this was in addition to his participation at a high level in the affairs of British veterinary associations and a constant round of lecturing and chairing meetings.



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, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom

Sections

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

Observers

Ukraine, Albania

FVE Staff

Jan Vaarten – Executive Director, Nancy De Briyne – Deputy Executive Director, Nicole Schreiner – Veterinary Policy Officer and Ulrike Tewes – Office Manager

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Acknowledgements:

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