

NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2012

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EDITORIAL

Why veterinarians should be licensed



A few weeks ago, the FVE General Assembly was held in Brussels. Although outside it was grey and cold, in the meeting room there was an atmosphere of rising temperatures due to the lively debates, including on topics such as modernization of meat inspection, the responsible use of antimicrobials - and the definition of a veterinarian.

Question: Should veterinarians per definition be licensed by the competent authority? 'Being licensed' in this context means that the person assumes all rights and responsibilities connected with the profession. It entitles the person to work as a veterinarian and renders him accountable for his professional behaviour. For the FVE, the answer to the question is a resounding "Yes".

The delivery of professional responsibilities was discussed several times during the meeting. How can we assure food safety, and are all conditions fulfilled allowing us to do so?

Does veterinary education provide sufficient starting competences? And what about responsible use of medicines?

It is not without reason that veterinary medicine is a regulated profession and that veterinary services are considered a Public Good. Veterinary medicine concerns both public and private interests and they need to be properly balanced. In the overwhelming majority of cases, veterinarians know this very well, but there will always be exceptions. These cases should be addressed at the appropriate level. If individuals do not follow the rules, then these individuals should be sanctioned rather than changing the system.

This brings us to the discussion on prevention and containment of antimicrobial resistance. There is no simple solution, and what works in one country may not work in another. However, it is clear that the position of the licensed veterinarian is crucial and should be strengthened. Because veterinarians are part of the solution.

Jan Vaarten, FVE Executive Director

ANIMAL HEALTH

FVE CONFERENCE

Import and keeping of exotic animals in the EU: gaps identified

On 4 and 5 October, a conference was held on the import and keeping of exotic animals in Europe. Experts from many countries provided their input on the benefits and risks (animal health and welfare risks, public health risks) trade practices and needs, existent legislation and gaps or problems that have to be tackled. In conclusion, participants identified the following gaps:

- Clear definitions to distinguish domesticated animals from wild animals born in the wild and those born in captivity.
- A list of the different categories of animals, defining also the ownership requirements and responsibilities for the concerned species.
- Harmonised legislation on import and keeping of those species and proper enforcement.
- Encouragement of good practices in pet shops, farms or zoos. Penalties should be harmonised throughout the EU and strong enough to discourage illegal trafficking.
- Application and harmonisation of traceability, i.e. identification and registration of these species.
- Educating the public and potential owners on the husbandry and special needs of the different species, as well as on the risks for the public

health, the health of endemic species and the environment.

- Education and training of the professionals working at certain posts, in order to ensure a high degree of professional competence and preparedness.
- For certain species, a mandatory certificate of ownership, assessing the capacity to own exotic animals and obtained after an official examination.
- For certain species or list of animals, free movement through the EU should not be allowed or greatly restricted.

Organised jointly by FVE, the Cyprus Presidency of the EU Council, the Commission and the Swiss Federal Veterinary Office, the event was attended by about 120 representatives from animal welfare organisations, pet traders and exotic pets owners associations, CITES, European Ministries and European Institutions.

EU ANIMAL HEALTH LAW

Laddomada: 'proposal by 2013, but adoption unlikely before 2015'

At the FVE general assembly, Alberto Laddomada (Head of Animal Health, DG Sanco) gave an update¹ on the development of the community Animal Health Law (AHL) package, which consists of 'animal health rules, covered by the AHL, and control rules, covered by the Official Controls Regulation,' as well as Rules on food and feed safety. For example, the AHL will stipulate rules on items as 'disease control, what should be in the certificate and conditions for entry into the EU' while the Official controls Regu-

lation 'will enforce the compliance with rules, how to check a certificate and border control,' he explained. The AHL will also clarify the role of vets (disease surveillance, sampling, etc) while the role and definition of the official vets will be set out by the Official Controls Regulation. The FVE's own definition is found below.



He also recalled the importance of "Prevention is better than cure" and the principles of One Health that will be reflected in the package. The official Commission proposal is to be expected early 2013, but it is unlikely it will be adopted before the end of the mandate of the European parliament (2014). The proposal for the financial review, however, should be ready by end 2013.

DEFINITION

'Veterinarian' defined by FVE GA

The FVE definition of a veterinarian, adopted at the recent general assembly is as follows: **Veterinarian:** a professional with a comprehensive scientific education, licensed by the legal authority, to carry out, in an independent, ethical and personally responsible capacity, all aspects of veterinary medicine, in the interest of the health and welfare of the animals, the client and society.

¹ http://www.fve.org/members/fve/ga/2012/Presentations/pdf_Nov/002%20AL.AHL.FVE.16.11.2012.R1.pdf

EU DRAFT REPORT

Movement of pets: no call for I&D

The draft report on the Non-commercial movement of companion animals (Mr. Horst Schnellhardt) was adopted on 6 November by the European Parliament's ENVI committee. The report asks for the inclusion of a maximum limit of five animals for non-commercial movements (with a derogation for animals travelling for competitions, exhibitions and sporting events). MEPs also request that young pets that have not been vaccinated against rabies should only be allowed to move between EU member states that are free of rabies. Finally, they call upon Member States to provide information on the general requirements that apply for the non-commercial movement of pet animals. Unfortunately, the amendments recommending the introduction of pet animals to be registered in a database accessible across the EU were rejected. FVE is greatly disappointed at this, in particular since only last year, European Parliament had called for the compulsory identification and registration of dogs. FVE president Christophe Buhot recalls that *'Effective and reliable systems of dog identification and registration are crucial for successful animal health and welfare management, not only to reunite stray dogs with their owners, but also to help prevent illegal puppy trading and to promote responsible ownership'*.

The final adoption of the draft report is scheduled for March April 2013.

ANIMAL WELFARE

SLAUGHTER CONFERENCE

Highlighting the role of the Animal Welfare Officer

"Protection of animals in slaughterhouses: getting ready for 2013" was the theme of an international conference organised by the Commission and the EU's Cypriot Presidency on 24 October².

One of the goals of the conference was to *'facilitate the implementation of Regulation 1099/2009 on animal slaughter'*. These new rules focus on animal welfare in slaughterhouses which, as of 1 January 2013, will have to regularly monitor the efficiency of their stunning techniques, appoint a specific person responsible for animal welfare and ensure that their staff is properly trained and certified. Such an *'Animal Welfare Officer'*³ will need to collaborate closely with the official veterinarian and will most likely be a qualified veterinarian, too.

However, *'without good training, the best laws are useless'*, stressed Elisiv Tolo (Norway), who addressed the participants on behalf of the FVE at the conference and gave a presentation on the importance of training and education. *'Training makes the difference between good practice and bad practice.'* The conference also allowed an exchange of experience with interested parties from the meat supply chain and the presentation of

² http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/information_sources/ahw_events_en.htm

³ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/information_sources/docs/ahw/brochure_24102012_en.pdf

the state-of-the-art technologies for the killing of slaughter animals

OIE

3rd Global Animal Welfare conference – regional expectations

Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), was the location of the 3rd OIE Global Conference on Animal Welfare, which took part from 6 to 8 November⁴. The main objective of the Conference was to support the implementation of OIE Animal Welfare standards, with a focus on addressing regional specificities and expectations in animal welfare



'This third conference is the necessary next step in facilitating the process of implementing animal welfare standards worldwide,' Director General of the OIE, Dr Bernard Vallat, said. *"Differences in perception, needs and capacity of our Member Countries stand at the core of the challenge"*, he added.

'Do OIE standards and other initiatives improve global welfare? And what are their effects on trade?' was the topic of the first session. Animal Welfare should not be used as a token in trade or as technical barriers to trade. However, animal welfare is still not recognised by the World Trade Organisation, which means that

⁴ <http://www.oie.int/for-the-media/press-releases/detail/article/3rd-oie-global-conference-on-animal-welfare/>

some regions include it in bilateral agreements. Standards should focus on principles and outcomes, which should be “equal” not “identical”.

‘What is the progress in implementing the OIE standards? – stakeholders’ perspectives and experiences’ was the topic of the next section. Speaking on behalf of FVE, Nancy De Briyne informed participants about the joint European stakeholders’ guidelines for fitness of transport for adult bovines. Several presenters also referred to the FVE and AVMA project to develop a model welfare curriculum, which was seen as a great future development. All presentations and conclusions will be published on the OIE website⁵.

VETERINARY EDUCATION

Animal Welfare curriculum: public consultation

The joint FVE/EAEVE⁶ working group on the undergraduate teaching of animal welfare and ethics is about to launch a public consultation on the draft syllabus of Animal Welfare (science, ethics and law) as well as the corresponding learning objectives and the intended outcomes. The consultation will be launched early December and stay open until 10 December. All interested are very much invited to participate⁷.

Another task of the group was to map the current undergraduate teaching of animal welfare. This task was carried out in collaboration with the

AWARE project. The information has been collected and is currently being analysed and will be published early 2013.

FARM ANIMAL WELFARE

Workshop in Italy

Lasize (Garda Lake Italy) was the fourth venue (after Budapest, Barcelona and Riga) to the workshop ‘Improving animal welfare, a practical approach’, that took place on 27-28 November. It was organised jointly by FVE, FNOVI, the Italian Ministry of Health, SIVEMEP, ANMVI and the European Commission (DG Sanco). 70 % of the participants were practitioners, the rest being mostly official vets and researchers from Italy. The course was fully booked within two days of opening the registration, which reflects the interest for this type of training initiatives.

Future animal workshops are planned in the Netherlands and Poland.

All presentations and pictures can be found on the dedicated website.⁸



LINNAEUS AWARD

Marit Paulsen MEP honoured by vets

On the occasion of the FVE General Assembly, Marit Paulsen MEP was awarded a silver Linnaeus medal by the delegation of the Swedish Veterinary Association. For many years, Mrs Paulsen has been committed to issues such as animal welfare, prudent use of antibiotics, food safety, animal transport,



conditions at slaughter and public health that are of great importance to the veterinary profession. The FVE congratulates Mrs. Paulsen and thanks her for the fruitful collaboration over the years and for the constant efforts she has made in raising awareness in animal welfare across Europe.

5 http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Conferences_Events/docs/pdf/recommendations/kuala_aquatic/A_Recommendations_Animal_Welfare_conference.pdf

6 European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education

7 <http://www.fve.org/uploads/publications/docs/064%20annex%20v%20fve%20ga%20nov%202012.pdf>

8 Presentations, photographs and videos will be available on <http://animalwelfare.onetec.eu/>

PUBLIC HEALTH

CALLISTO

Zoonoses project: Conference discusses first cycle

The first CALLISTO conference was held in Brussels on 24, 25 and 26 October and welcomed around 65 participants. CALLISTO⁹ is an EU-funded project on the role of companion animals in the transmission of infectious diseases to humans and to food producing animals. Objective of the conference was to discuss the first year's results. To enhance interaction and cross-fertilization between participants' diverse backgrounds, they were divided in varied combinations over a number of workshops.

The outcome of the conference will be used to finalize the first year's CALLISTO strategic report, which is expected in January 2013.

CARCASES

DECONTAMINATION

EP and Council to vote on lactic acid

The European Parliament debated end November whether to veto a Commission proposal to allow food business operators to use lactic acid to reduce microbiological surface contamination at the slaughterhouse. The MEPs failed to reach agreement

9 Companion animals multisectorial interprofessional and interdisciplinary strategic think tank on zoonoses, <http://www.callistoproject.eu/joomla/>

either for or against the proposals, paving the way to allow the practice over the next few months. FVE firmly opposes this practice. *'Decontamination or any other equivalent treatment can never replace Good Hygiene Practices on farms and in food production establishments'*, stresses the FVE in its position paper¹⁰. It should only be used under exceptional circumstances approved by the Competent Authority and should only be carried out after the inspection process has been completed and the Official health mark applied.

The European Consumer's Organisation (BEUC) is in line with the FVE and states that *'lactic acid washes will dilute our farm-to-fork approach to food safety'*. *'We fear indeed that lactic acid may be used to mask poor hygiene practices in the slaughterhouse. Strong safeguards are needed to ensure this would not be the case, which are missing from the current proposal. It is essential that, if it were ever to be permitted, lactic acid may only be applied after final inspection by the official vet guaranteeing that meat is fit for consumption.'*



However, the proposal which is on the table would allow slaughterhouse staff to use lactic acid at any time on the slaughter line (e.g. skin removal): given the way the line operates, there is the potential for recontamination at a later stage (e.g. evisceration). In addition, this would prevent the random sampling of non-treated carcasses to check compliance with microbiological criteria demonstrating proper food safety management.

10 http://www.fve.org/uploads/publications/docs/fve_11_050%20decontamination%20of%20carcasses_19_nov_2011.pdf

FOOD HYGIENE

Session on meat inspection, official controls and the food chain



During the session on *'modernising meat inspection'* at the FVE general assembly in November, participants heard presentations, from Stuart Roberts (ABP Ltd, a large beef/lamb processor), Iris Fuchs (BTK, Official Veterinarian) and Camille Perrin (BEUC, the European consumers' organization). The following questions served as discussion points:

1. Does the veterinary practitioner add value on farm to animal health, animal welfare and food safety? If so, what?
2. Should a practitioner be permitted to carry out Official Controls on farm or does this present a conflict of interest?
3. Does traditional post-mortem inspection of pigs add value to animal health, public health and animal welfare? If so, what?
4. Should we try to balance scientific knowledge and a risk based approach to modernisation of meat inspection with the maintenance of veterinary employment? If so, how?

Key conclusions will be used to formulate a draft position paper. Participants also decided that the FVE should discuss with other stakeholders how to set up a reliable system of food chain information, and will work specifically with BEUC on issues of mutual interest.

HONEY BEES

A sector in need of veterinary professionals

Since the mid 2000, an average of 30% of honeybee colonies die each year in the EU. Suspected causes include mites, virus, bacteria, fungi, pesticides, poor beekeeping practices, poor agricultural practices, poisoning and misuse of drugs or use of banned medicinal products. *'Veterinarians have an important role to play in this field,'* stressed Nicolas Vidal-Naquet, a French veterinarian specialised in bee diseases. Unfortunately, few veterinarians were interested to be-



come involved in the health of honeybees when they became a reared species, and beekeepers were left to take on board this task themselves. Earlier this year, an FVE honeybee working group¹¹ was set up, which now calls on the FVE board to promote the training in honeybee health and production of veterinary students and practitioners. *'Veterinary students throughout the EU should have a basic knowledge of the honeybee sector.'* Very few countries offer postgraduate courses and only France offers a postgraduate veterinary degree course in honeybee health. *'Veterinarians should become closer involved and take up their professional responsibilities of animal health and public health in this sector. This also includes the use of veterinary*

11 Nicolas Vidal-Naquet (France), Giuliana Bondi (Italy) Barbara Bernhart (Austria), Heike Aupperle (Germany), Raquel Martín-Hernández (Spain)

medicines, which should only be prescribed by veterinarians,' he added.

The WG recommendations were adopted by the FVE General Assembly in November.

There are currently approximately 14 million honeybee hives in the EU, with Spain in the lead with 2.7 million registered hives.

MEDICINES

ANTIBIOTIC AWARENESS DAY

AMR: "Vets are part of the solution"

'Antibiotic resistance is a true 'One Health' issue, and veterinarians are part of the solution as gatekeepers of antimicrobial use in animals,' said Dr Christophe Buhot, FVE. Speaking at the press conference held on the occasion of 5th European Antibiotic Awareness Day, on 16 November, he added that the FVE is a long-standing advocate of responsible use of antimicrobials, and had been very active in this field.

Recent initiatives included active membership of EPRUMA, organising an international conference on Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and a European-wide survey on veterinary prescription behaviour in collaboration with the Heads of Medicines Agencies in Europe.

Education and information were the cornerstones of fighting AMR, he said, not just of veterinarians and farmers, but also of citizens and pet owners, *'who should realise that antibiotics are not an 'automatic' solution to all ailments.'*

For this purpose, FVE had published two leaflets – one for veterinary practitioners and one for policy makers – to increase the awareness of AMR and to give guidance for the responsible use of antimicrobials. Other leaflets (one for pet owners and one on how farmers and vets can join forces to combat AMR) are currently in preparation.



When asked to comment on the resolution on antimicrobial resistance that had been recently adopted by the European Parliament's ENVI committee, and in particular on the suggestion 'to separate the right to prescribe from the right to sell antimicrobials in order to eradicate economic incentives to prescribe,' Dr Buhot said: *'Antimicrobial resistance is a complex issue for which there is no simple, one-size-fits-all solution such as 'decoupling' of prescription and dispensing, but which requires rigorous action from all players and at multiple levels. In the Netherlands, where there is no 'decoupling', veterinarians have greatly contributed to decrease the antibiotic consumption by over 50% over the past 3 years. In France – no decoupling either – antibiotic consumption in farms has dropped by over 30% in the past four years.'*

In other countries, such as Denmark, the compulsory monthly herd health visit by the veterinary practitioner had also contributed to a more responsible use. *'We fully agree with the vision of the EU upcoming Animal Health Law that prevention is better than cure, and such a preventive herd health scheme would certainly help*

to ensure a more responsible use of antibiotics. Veterinarians are part of the solution to keep antibiotics effective.'

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

FVE leaflets: now available in French and Italian

The two leaflets on the responsible use of antimicrobials published by the FVE are now available in French and Italian. "How to use antimicrobials responsibly: advice for veterinarians"¹², aimed at veterinary practitioners", and "How we can safeguard antimicrobials now and for the future, aimed at animal owners and policymakers"¹³ have been translated with the help of its members and are now available online. Two further leaflets are in the pipeline for 2013, one for pet owners and one for farmers.

ANTIMICROBIAL CONSUMPTION

ESVAC report notes a 30-fold difference in sales

The European Surveillance of Veterinary antimicrobial consumption (ESVAC) published its second report¹⁴, presenting the 2010 data from 19 European countries¹⁵. This showed a striking 30-fold difference in sales, corrected by livestock presence in a country, between the most and least-selling countries. Hungary, Spain and

Portugal were found to be the top-3 most selling countries of the 19 that had submitted data, with Iceland, Norway and Sweden at the lower end. This difference can partly be explained by a difference in composition of the animal population (e.g. more pigs than cattle; a high proportion of veal calves within the cattle population) and by the way the data were collected (wholesalers, pharmacies or marketing authorisation holders). There may also be considerable variation in terms of dosage used for the various antimicrobial agents, length of treatment period or formulation of the various antimicrobial agents used. And of course, climate, geographical location and animal density may have an impact on the pathogens present. The report adds a note of caution: 'In general, it takes at least three to four years in order to establish a valid baseline for the data on sales of veterinary antimicrobial agents. Consequently, the data from countries that have collected such data for the first time should be interpreted with due caution.'

Of the antimicrobials sold, 49% were premixes, 42% oral powders or solutions and 9% injectables. This means around 90% of antimicrobials are used for herd treatment. Only 1.2% were for local use (intra-mammaries and intra-uterine). Antimicrobials for dogs and cats were excluded from the report as there are no centralised statistics on the number of dogs and cats, but also since pet mainly receive the drugs in tablet form, which tablets only account for approximately 1% of total sales. Fishes were also excluded, on account of the 'negligible sales'.

FVE comment:

FVE recognizes and welcomes the rapid development of surveillance systems of antimicrobial use, both on the level of sales data (as by ESVAC) as on the level of consumption or prescription data. However, FVE suggests

that, careful consideration should be given to its interpretation.

Also, 'antimicrobial use monitoring should be seen in correlation with resistance monitoring,' recalls FVE president Christophe Buhot. 'Action needs to be taken the human as well as the veterinary field and carried out on a global level. National antimicrobial use surveillance and monitoring programs should be further harmonized for example, as done via ESVAC and should be promoted by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).' While FVE recognizes that benchmarking antimicrobial use can become an important component of antimicrobial stewardship program activities, care needs to be taken that the comparison is done with valid, usage data which are, risk-adjusted to account for farm, disease and climate differences

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

MEPs vote on draft report

The Antimicrobial resistance report by Anna Rosbach MEP was adopted on 11 December by the European Parliament.

Overall, FVE welcomes the document and acknowledges the importance on fighting antimicrobial resistance in a One Health context. FVE fully agrees with the call for closer collaboration and surveillance, and the need



for antimicrobials to be available on prescription only, and to fight ille-

12 http://www.fve.org/uploads/publications/docs/fve_antimicrobials_a3_hr03.pdf

13 http://www.fve.org/uploads/publications/docs/fve_antimicrobials_a4_hr02.pdf

14 http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Report/2012/10/WC500133532.pdf

15 EU-27 without Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, but with Iceland and Norway

gal sales of antimicrobials. FVE also agrees with the fact that antimicrobials *'should not replace sound farm management and animal husbandry' and any 'further preventive measures to reduce the spread of infections and diseases in livestock farming'*. FVE is a long-standing advocate of mandatory herd health schemes and regular farm visits. FVE also supports the reports call for raising awareness among prescribers and among the end users *'to raise awareness of the consequences of improper consumption of antimicrobials'*. However, the report's suggestion of *'separating the veterinary prescription of antimicrobials from the right to sell antimicrobials'* is not the solution to combat antimicrobial resistance, according to the FVE. On the contrary: it will reduce control on the sale of antimicrobials, undermine veterinary presence and reduce veterinary advice in rural practice. To help fight antimicrobial resistance, the role of the veterinary practitioner as *'gatekeeper'* for antimicrobial use in animals should be strengthened. The *'Berenschot'* report¹⁶, commissioned by the Dutch Ministry concluded that *'restricting the sales by veterinarians would not be effective and instead recommended strengthening the position of the veterinary practitioner as 'gatekeeper'*.

A greater reliance on preventive actions and education and training initiatives stands a far better chance of achieving the desired result, than altering the distribution from veterinarians to pharmacists, gross-sellers or internet trade. See the comments of FVE president Christophe Buhot on this matter at the European awareness day.

The report will be submitted to the European Commission as a non-binding document.

¹⁶ <http://www.cbg-meb.nl/CBG/en/veterinary-medicines/actueel/20100309-Berenschot-report-onantibiotics-use/default.htm>

FVE MEDICINES WORKING GROUP

Tackling anthelmintic resistance 'not easy'



'It is not easy to make guidelines for the use of anthelmintics to fight resistance in the same manner as for the use of antimicrobials,' explained Rens Van Dobbenburgh, vice president of the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners (UEVP). Speaking at the FVE general assembly, he added that there are much less anthelmintics than there are antibiotics, *'so a 'second' and 'third choice' are often simply not possible. Also, the testing of anthelmintic resistance is very complicated, time-consuming and unreliable.'* Currently, FVE is discussing the development of a position paper on the matter to address the problem in a pro-active manner and propose good practice guidelines.

EDUCATION

FVE EAVE TASK FORCE

GA adopts list of minimum training requirements

An updated list of so-called *'minimum training requirements'* – subjects that should be taught during the veterinary curriculum – were adopted by the FVE general assembly in November. The current list (Directive 2005/36/EC Annex V.4), had not been updated since 1978, and is in great need of an overhaul. A joint task force with representatives of the FVE and the EAEVE¹⁷ was set up to address this matter.

'It should be remembered that the list has to fit all EU Member States,' recalled Karin Östensson, chair of the task force. *'There are clear national differences in the content of secondary education required for admission to veterinary education.'* Difference with the existing list is the addition of animal welfare, public health, herd health management, food microbiology and diagnostic imaging.

This list goes hand in hand with the so-called veterinary *'day-1 competences'*. These are the minimum competences required to perform the duties of a veterinarian. All new graduates should have these competences at the start (day 1) of his or her career. Clearly, there are many more, more general competences and skills that will help a veterinarian to be successful, such as communication and

¹⁷ For EAEVE: Ana Bravo (Spain), Hans Henrik Diez (Denmark), László Fodor (EAEVE president, Hungary), Gert Niebauer (EAEVE executive director), Manuel Sant'Ana (Portugal)

organisation skills, etc. The lists are available from the FVE website¹⁸.

EAEVE

'Approval rate is improving'

Of the members of the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) inside the EU (74 schools), two thirds are either approved (62.2%), conditionally approved (1.3%) or accredited (4%).



The remaining schools are either not approved (23%) or not visited/visit pending (9.5%). When looking only at schools that had been evaluated, three quarters (74%) are either accredited, approved or conditionally approved. *'The figures are getting better, showing that the schools are striving to meet standards'*, commented Lazlo Fodor, president of the EAEVE, speaking at the recent general assembly of the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners.

He also announced 'a big breakthrough': EAEVE had become an affiliate member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). To become an associate member, an external review would be required. The self-evaluation report was currently in preparation, he said and early 2013, a visiting team from ENQA was expected.

18 <http://www.fve.org/uploads/publications/docs/064%20annex%20v%20fve%20ga%20nov%202012.pdf>

FVE & PROFESSIONAL MATTERS

PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

European Parliament publishes key amendments

The directive on the recognition of professional qualifications¹⁹ (PQD) is currently being revised. In October, over 700 amendments were tabled by the IMCO committee of the European Parliament in response. Several have an impact on the veterinary profession.



A number of amendments aim to clarify that language assessment can take place after recognition but before access to the profession. There has also been some discussion on whether the language assessment should be free of charge to professionals or be the responsibility of competent authorities.

Certain amendments propose the introduction of a professional card for easy recognition and to allow greater flexibility for authorities to process

19 Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications

applications. For the veterinary profession, this card is not a priority.

MEPs were supportive of the alert mechanism to exchange information about sanctions on a professional's right to practise although some of the amendments indicate disagreement on how much information should be exchanged.

An FVE briefing note with all points of concern for the legislative proposal can be found on the FVE website²⁰. In light of the quantity of amendments, the IMCO committee has postponed its vote on the amendments until January 2013, for a plenary vote next April. It is expected that the Parliament and Council will start negotiations on a compromise text in 2013.

FVE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Focus on antimicrobial resistance

Around 125 delegates, representing over 30 FVE member countries gathered mid-November in Brussels at the bi-annual meeting of the Federation's General Assembly. FVE President, Christophe Buhot, also welcomed representatives of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) the World Veterinary Association (WVA) the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and several international European veterinary organisations. In his opening speech, President Buhot reflected upon some of the Federation's strengths and weaknesses. In his view, the Federation holds much knowledge and expertise on veterinary issues, but faces difficulties in linking these to the needs and concerns of our societies. *'Having good veterinary technical arguments is not*

20 http://www.fve.org/uploads/publications/docs/027b_briefing%20note_pqd_proposal_2012.pdf

NICOLAS VIDAL NAQUET

Nicolas Vidal-Naquet is a veterinary practitioner from France who started to be involved in the bees sector in 2007. He is the current chairman of the FVE working group on honeybee health.

1. How did you become a vet and join the bees sector?

To be honest, this was not my boy's dream when I was young! However, at school I loved biology and the natural sciences and combined with my interest in livestock, veterinary medicine seemed a logical choice.



I studied at the Alfort Veterinary School, and during my studies I thought I would only be a "real" vet once I had done a caesarean section in a cow – which I did while at Alfort. I then dedicated myself to companion animal medicine, with determination, but also with a hint of regret... of no longer being part of the agricultural world. I set up my own practice in 1991 in the outskirts of Paris.

In 2007, I read an announcement for a training course on honeybee diseases. Because of my awareness of the link between disease and the environment, I threw myself into this field with passion. At that time, honeybee veterinary medicine was still in its infancy, and only one degree existed, a French diploma for beekeepers.

2. What are the key responsibilities for a veterinarian in the bee's health sector?

Veterinarians can be involved at many levels. Like on any animal production site, a vet's role in the apiaries is double: preventative and curative. This includes advice in preventative management, in particular concerning varroasis, nosemosis and American foulbrood, and also carrying out clinical examinations, diagnosis and prescription of appropriate treatments if possible. The drug arsenal in the honeybee health sector is limited to miticides, except in some European countries, where treatments against nosemosis or American foulbrood are allowed. Key responsibilities also cover public health, especially with regards to residues in the products of the hive, honey and the honeybee trade. Worldwide trade is necessary in these days where the honeybee sector is suffering great losses, but is also a threat. Emerging diseases can wreak havoc on apiaries (for example the small hive beetles *Aethina tumida* or the mite *Tropilaelaps*). Official veterinarians have a key role to play in coordination with agricultural, health and consumers' authorities. Finally, veterinarians are also involved in laboratory diagnosis and in the pharmaceutical industry.

3. What is your involvement at EU level for the support of the bee's health?

We should remember that the place of veterinarians in the honeybee health sector is quite limited at present. Early 2012, the FVE asked me to chair the Honeybee-health working group. This working group allows European vets involved in this sector to share their knowledge and professional experience and to help the FVE Board promote the veterinary involvement in this sector at EU level. So far, we have proposed a document on the role of the veterinarian in the honeybee health sector and another on veterinary education in this field. Currently, our working group is looking at the availability and at the most appropriate use of medicines in the honey bees sector.

the same as translating these in clear and convincing arguments,' he said.

One of the most important topics for discussion concerned the use of antibiotics in animal health. In recent years, FVE has paid a lot of attention to the responsible use of medicines and the role of the veterinary profession. There is a lot to gain in optimizing animal husbandry and housing conditions, which contributes to disease prevention. For this reason, regular veterinary presence on farms is vital. Veterinarians and animal keepers form a strong team for optimizing the health and welfare of the animals and for reducing the need for medical treatment. Veterinarians are part of the solution. However, the suggestion that the issue of inappropriate use of medicines can be solved by decoupling the prescription and sales of medicines, is an oversimplified and false perception of the issue. This was also part of the message President Christophe Buhot gave at the 2012 European Antibiotic Awareness Day, organised by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

On the Friday afternoon delegates took part in one of three interactive workshops: The effectiveness of guidelines for the use of antimicrobials, The veterinary labour market and The future of meat inspection. In the latter, it became apparent that there is room to modernize current inspection procedures, but only if and when breeding and farming practices are ready for it. Clearly, there are enormous differences between different animal sectors and between different countries. Where in some cases, changes can be made in the near future, other sectors and countries will need many more years to get ready. Maintaining high standards of food safety and consumer protection can only be achieved through a gradual and step-by-step changeover.

The next FVE general Assembly will be held in Maribor, Slovenia on 7 and 8 June 2013.

VETERINARY LABOUR MARKET

Women in the profession

At the FVE workshop on the veterinary labour market, held during the FVE general assembly, Lynne Hill (UK, Bristol University) gave a presentation on the increasing percentage of women in the veterinary profession – around 50% of the veterinary workforce in the UK now consisted of women – in which



she decided to 'bust a few myths'. 'They' say that women don't stay in practice for long, do not own veterinary practices, are not doing farm work, are not specialising and are not involved in academia... One by one she defused these myths, supporting her arguments with data from the UK veterinary profession. *We should look at the positive side and look how we can adjust.* Reduced work out of hours, more flexible hours and part-time work were changes showing 'we are coping well' – and that were also welcomed by the male members of the veterinary profession. *'Let's change the discussions from gender issue to generational issues – and embrace the changes,'* she concluded.

WORLD VETERINARY ASSOCIATION

Strengthening the global veterinary voice

At the moment, World Veterinary Association (WVA) is putting greater emphasis on being the voice of the global veterinary profession. Different WVA Committees and working groups are currently working in order to revise and strengthen different aspects of the WVA.

For example, the WVA Constitution and By-laws Committee is drafting a proposal to revise the WVA Constitution and By-laws, the WVA Policy Committee is working on the revision of different WVA policy and position papers (e.g. the Control of Inappropriately Aggressive Dogs and Identifying a Veterinarian) and on the WVA Strategy Plan for the next years.

Another WVA working group is looking on the future of the World Veterinary Congress (WVC). Other Working Groups are working on the WVA Veterinary Education Conference (Bangkok, May 2013), the WVC Global summit (in collaboration with the OIE, WHO and FAO) and Global Veterinary Seminar on Animal Welfare (in collaboration with the Animal Welfare Unit of the EU Commission services) during the WVC 2013 in Prague.

The WVA is also focusing on increasing collaborations with international bodies and organizations in order to promote globally Animal Health, Animal Welfare and Public Health. In this regards, the WVA recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the World Medical Association to collaborate in the One-Health concept. The WVA is currently exploring similar MoUs with the WHO on zoonotic diseases, with World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) on Animal Welfare and with World Farmers'

Organization on Animal Health concept. The WVA is also focusing on the increasing the involvement of WVA members in the WVA activities through emails, info-news, WVA website, request for members opinion on policy and positions papers and on the work done on different veterinary issues by the WVA committees and working groups.

MISCELLANEOUS

OBITUARY

Rudy De Meester



With regret, FVE and the European Society of Veterinary Comparative Ethology (ES-VCE) announce the death of their much-loved and re-

spected colleague Rudy De Meester, who died on 28th October at the age of nearly 59 after a short illness.

Rudy was dedicated to the concept of veterinary behavioural medicine and committed to the idea of uniting all European veterinary ethologists in one association, spreading information among colleagues and educate owners, with the overall goal of a better quality of life for animals under our care.

Rudy was one of the members of the FVE working group on dangerous dogs and also one of the founders of the Belgian ethology working group (VDWE) and a valued board member of the Flemish veterinary association SAVAB-Flanders.

FEEVA

Europe's horse vets met in Vienna



The general assembly of the Federation of Equine European Veterinary Associations (FEEVA) was held in Vienna on 28 November, on the occasion of the European Equine Meeting of the Year hosted by the Austrian Equine Veterinary Association (VÖP). At the GA, participants decided to establish equine standards for VetCEE, discussed equine disease surveillance and Callisto.

FEEVA also reached an agreement together with World Horse Welfare to initiate a multi-stakeholder project developing guidelines for fitness of transport of equidae. The FEEVA GA was followed on the aged equine patient.

The FEEVA delegates also elected a new FEEVA Board consisting of Ben Mayes (UK), Miguel 'L Lorca (Spain), Jesper Moller Nielsen (Denmark), Claire Scicluna (France), Giorgio Ricardi (Italy) and Juris Tolpeznikovs (Latvia).

FVE SECRETARIAT

New address

**Avenue de Tervueren 12
1040 Bruxelles**

Tel +32 2 533 70 20

Fax +32 2 537 28 28

<http://www.fve.org>

FVE

Federation of Veterinarians of Europe - AISBL

Avenue de Tervuren 12

BE - 1040 Brussels

Tel +32 2 533 70 20

Fax +32 2 537 28 28

info@fve.org

<http://www.fve.org>

The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) is an umbrella organisation of 46 veterinary organisations from 38 European countries and 4 Sections, regulated by the law on international societies in Belgium.

Executive Director Jan Vaarten

Deputy Executive Director

Nancy De Briyne

Veterinary Policy Officers

Francesco Proscia

Despoina Iatridou

Zeev Noga (WVA)

Office Manager Ulrike Tewes

Office Manager Sylvia Grond

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Free lance editor K. de Lange

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