

Veterinary Europe: changes ahead

Much news came out of the latest general assembly of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), held on 7 and 8 June in Bratislava, Slovakia. First of all, new boards were elected, both for the FVE and its main section, the Union of European Veterinary



Practitioners (UEVP). There were also two member associations welcomed to the FVE, bringing the total number of member countries of FVE to 40. Welcomed were the Albanian veterinary order, which became full member and the Armenian veterinary association as observer member. Topics ranged from discussions about new veterinary landscapes, a new code of conduct, new position papers and of course the new EU

Regulation on veterinary medicines. With this lively meeting, the federation demonstrated to be a vibrant and healthy organisation, with many active and very engaged people involved.

New regulation on veterinary medicines

“Why did we need a new regulation on veterinary medicines? Because the old regulation was largely based on the human medicine context.” Guest speaker Ivo Claassen, head of the veterinary medicines division of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) went on to point out how the new EU Regulation – adopted last January and applicable from 2022 – will improve veterinary practice. “For example, the new Regulation will allow for an increased flexibility of the prescription cascade, making it easier to import medicines from other Member States. It will also facilitate access to information: an EU database is planned on all available veterinary medicines authorised anywhere in the EU, while pharmacovigilance reporting and feedback will be improved.”

Positive outcomes for veterinarians

For the FVE, positive outcomes also included no-mandatory decoupling of prescription and dispensing, a veterinary prescription reserved for veterinarians only, the prohibition of online trade of prescription-only medicines (POM) and the continued possibility of metaphylactic use, according to Rens van Dobbenburgh, chair of the FVE/UEVP medicines working group. He also proudly presented the FVE infographic highlighting the main provisions in the new Regulation affecting veterinary practice, and announced that the flyer explaining the cascade would be updated. “However, there are still some issues to be resolved: while it will be possible to make an electronic prescription for a POM product in another country, the question is: is this online trade? We’re not sure how this will work.”

Four new position papers

Four FVE position papers were adopted in Bratislava, on [the end-of-life in horses](#), cattle lameness, intramammary dry cow treatment and the early neutering of cats. “Horse ownership entails a life-long responsibility to provide for the animal’s health and welfare needs,” recalled Mette Uldahl (Denmark), president of the Federation of European Equine Veterinary Associations, that had developed the paper together with FVE. “Euthanasia should be recognised as an acceptable and ethical option if in the best interest of the horse. It’s an act of welfare if done professionally, as suffering can be worse than death.”

The FVE did not give specific recommendations on the best neutering age of cats as both early (< 4 months) and late neutering have advantages and drawbacks. Instead, it suggested that [early neutering](#) was probably the best option for feline population control, while individually owned cats should be neutered at 4 months of age or older. However, “no kitten should be neutered before weaning (8-9 weeks of age).”

FVE also recommended a regular assessment of [dairy cow welfare, including lameness](#), and called upon countries to set up a statutory maximum lameness rate, above which veterinary intervention and advice would be required.

Regarding [dry cow treatment](#), FVE recommended the responsible use of antibiotics and advised against blanket use of intramammary antibiotics when drying off cows. A new version of the FVE Code of Conduct was also adopted, which will be developed in a nice brochure. Full position papers and references are available from FVE.

Corporate practices and veterinary wellbeing

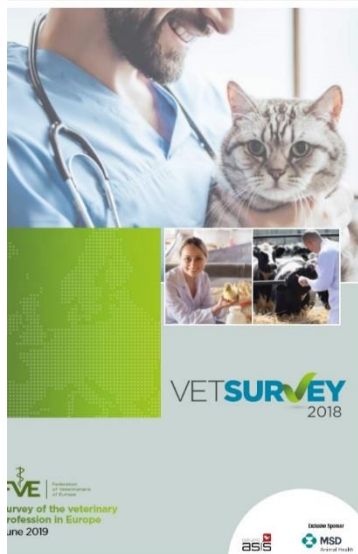


“Telemedicine, mobile clinics, consolidate and corporate practice forms - with a changing veterinary landscape, our members’ needs are becoming increasingly complex,” observed chief executive officer of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). Regarding corporates she said it was important to “get to know them and gather information – which can be a challenge!” A particular focus should be on veterinary wellbeing and workplace culture, she stressed. To promote this, the AVMA had held a wellbeing summit and had set up a workplace wellbeing certificate programme.

The Canadian cannabis experience

Although the use of cannabis has been permitted in Canada since October 2018, veterinarians have been excluded from this new regulation. “So although clients now have access to cannabis, we have no legal right to prescribe, creating a difficult situation,” reported Enid Stiles, vice president of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA). Cannabinoids have over 500 components, the two main components being THC – toxic for pets – and CBD. Although the mortality rate is low, Dr Stiles said more intoxications had been observed by veterinarians since October 2018, as “pet owners have become less careful and are no longer hiding their ‘brownies’ and other cannabis products, facilitating access for pets.”

Second veterinary demography survey



“There are now an estimated 309,000 veterinarians in Europe, of which 46% are under 40 years of age and 58% are female, with an increasing percentage of women in the younger age groups” announced Rafael Laguens, giving a preview peek of the second survey of the European veterinary profession. Some 58% of vets work in clinical practice, of which two-thirds work with companion animals. With only 6 out of 10 vets saying they would choose the veterinary profession again and 32% considering leaving the veterinary profession altogether in the next five years, leading to “more focus will be needed on the wellbeing of vets.” The full report will become available in September.

Other topics discussed in Bratislava included One Health, dog trade, animal welfare, veterinary education and specialisation, African swine fever and the impact of Brexit on farming.

The assembly also heard presentations by Magda Jannasch (International Veterinary Students’ Association), Desmond Maguire (European Commission), Maaïke van den Berg (World Veterinary Association), Paula de Vera (Copa-Cogeca) and by German delegate and pig veterinarian Andreas Palzer reporting on the legal conundrum around painless pig castration in Germany.

The next FVE general assembly will take place in Brussels on 8-9 November, and the spring assembly will be held in London, on 5-6 June.

The FVE board 2019-2021 was elected as follows: Rens van Dobbenburgh (Netherlands)- president, Thierry Chambon (France), Siegfried Moder (Germany), Torill Moseng (Norway) and Stanslav Winiarczyk (Poland) – vice presidents.

The Board of the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners was also renewed, resulting in the election of Piotr Kwiecinski (Poland) as president, Kenelm Lewis (UK) as secretary general, Bob Carrière (Netherlands) as treasurer and Volker Moser (Austria), Athina Trachilli (Greece) and Eric Lejeau (France) as vice-presidents.

