

UEVP virtual general assembly 2020

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Discussing telemedicine and other technologies

'Once again, due to COVID-19 safety reasons, we are forced to meet virtually, said Piotr Kwieciński (Poland), UEVP president, welcoming the 61 national delegations and guests via Zoom on 5 November. 'Sadly we could not meet in person in Prague as planned, and celebrate our association's 50th birthday together with the 100th anniversary of the Czech Veterinary Chamber.' The virtual format of the general assembly set the tone for the agenda points on telemedicine and other technologies.

Telemedicine position paper

A big topic during the GA was the discussion on the [FVE position paper on telemedicine](#), which defines the various forms of telemedicine and sets out recommendations for the profession. Some member countries had concerns about telemedicine-only practices, while others agreed it was urgent to develop guidelines. The paper presents the four pillars of telemedicine: remote consulting, remote diagnosis, remote prescribing and third-party generated medical data. FVE president Rens van Dobbenburgh recalled that currently, telemedicine is not regulated. 'We should issue recommendations for a code of conduct to assist statutory bodies, which are at the initiative of this position paper. Our aim is to utilise the benefits and limit the risks of telemedicine'. Veterinarians will always be responsible and in-person clinical examination is always to be preferred, he added. The paper was adopted during the FVE general assembly, held on 6 November.

FVE strategy 2021-2025

'Embracing technology' was also one of the five pillars of the [FVE strategy 2021-2025](#). The other pillars were: One Health and sustainability, One Veterinary Community, Being recognised and influential, and Veterinary demography and rewarding careers. 'No vet will be replaced by robotics, stressed UEVP board member Volker Moser (Austria), member of the working group on Digital technology and artificial intelligence (DT&AI). 'But they will probably be replaced by vets who are familiar with robotics.' Mandate of the working group included following trends and making recommendations on competencies, teaching methods, professional conduct and quality assurance linked to DT&AI. The DT&AI WG presented its [report](#), which was adopted by the FVE GA – as was the new FVE strategy.

New mandate for VetCEE

'VetCEE has a new mandate,' confirmed UEVP Secretary general and VetCEE board member Kenelm Lewis (UK). The founding members (EAEVE, EBVS, FVE and UEVP) confirmed an extended scope for VetCEE, to 'become a leader in accrediting the quality of all kinds of veterinary CPD', not just the middle-tier programmes that it currently accredits. 'Together with our member organisations, we aim to be ready to implement this as soon as possible in 2021.' VetCEE was currently working on a business plan, he reported, and had a recently created [a new website](#). Regarding the middle-tier programmes, VetCEE was 'currently developing a dossier of competencies for veterinary public health.'

Busy year for the medicines working group

A new medicines working group had been constituted, reported Nancy De Briyne (FVE office), which had been kept 'extremely busy'. It had made recommendations on the Veterinary Medicinal Product Regulation, 'which will enter into force in less than 14 months,' and will include pharmacovigilance, online trade and the user interface of an EU-wide database of veterinary medicines. It had also been looking into reviewing its position papers on critically important antibiotics and had elaborated the [FVE position paper on recognising the anaesthesia of](#)

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animal as veterinary act, which was adopted unanimously earlier this summer. Currently, the working group is preparing a reflection paper on the veterinary use of cannabis and CPB oils, and has participated in a wide range of consultations, including on antimicrobial resistance, coccidiostats and the list of antimicrobials restricted for use under the cascade.

Member organisations

The various Species Organisations presented their activity reports:

- Ann Criel (Belgium) announced the Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations (FECAVA) had produced fact sheets on vector borne diseases in cats and on anaesthesia, and was preparing dental fact sheets and posters on mental health and wellbeing. Its working groups were promoting the use of the EU pet passport as a form of identification and called for better regulation of the puppy trade.
- Heidi Kollokoski Kiiskinen (Finland) reported that the Federation of European Equine Veterinary Associations (FEEVA) had been working on the horse euthanasia paper to improve the end-of-life process and had been raising awareness on West Nile Disease. She also said that both COVID-19 and Brexit had had a huge negative impact on the horse industry, due to cancellation of races, competitions and sales. This had led to economic losses and welfare problems, and more stress for equine vets, she said.
- Giovanbattista Guadagnini (Italy) said that the European Association for Porcine Health Management (EAPHM) was very worried about the current African swine fever epidemic in Europe. He also said his organisation was collaborating with the Animal Welfare Working Group on more animal-friendly farrowing systems for sows. He finally announced a break with the European College of Pig Health and Medicine, but said his association would continue to organise CPD events for pig practitioners.
- Stephanie Sanderson (UK), speaking on behalf of the European Association of Zoo and Wildlife Veterinarians (EAZWA), said that many new fact sheets had been produced, including on COVID, tuberculosis, African swine fever and West Nile Fever. A Transmissible disease handbook was available online. Working groups had been drafting legal guidance documents for zoos and state veterinarians as well as guidelines and tools for veterinary advisors. She also announced that the secretariat had moved to the FVE headquarters in Brussels.

UEVP welcomes poultry vets as new member

During the general assembly, a new species-oriented organisation, Poultry Veterinary Study Group was voted to join the UEVP as an observer member. Stephen Lister (UK), reported that the organisation, founded in 1965, currently had 90 members from 22 European countries, proportionate to the size of poultry production in the country. Piotr Kwieciński welcomed the organisation, which would be a ‘valuable asset for the UEVP.’

Brexit and Europe’s veterinarians

Chris Tufnell (UK) provided an update on Brexit. Although much was uncertain at this stage, ‘we do know that free movement will end,’ he said. Over 50% of new veterinary registrations in the UK were from non-UK EU citizens. ‘After the 1st of January 2021, visas will be needed for them.’ The mutual recognition of professional qualifications directive of the EU would no longer apply, he said, and graduates of schools without ‘EAEVE approval’ would likely need to pass the RCVS statutory examination. Also, if the candidate’s first language was not English, a language test would need to be passed, he added.

Other agenda points included a report on African Swine Fever in Germany, Canine Leishmaniosis in Greece and discussions on a new subscription fee formula. Due to time constraints, the reports of the working groups on animal welfare and on food safety and sustainability were presented during the FVE general assembly.

Piotr Kwieciński thanked everyone for participating and looked forward to the next general assembly, planned for 10 June 2021 in London – ‘hopefully in person...’