

UEVP GA November 2019

'We want to listen better to the wishes of our members, send out meeting documents earlier and give more attention to current topics such as corporates and the regulation of telemedicine,' announced Bob Carrière, treasurer of the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners, addressing the UEVP during the general assembly on 7 November, on behalf of the new board. The board, elected in June, is also defining a vision, mission statement and core values of the organisation.

'Tell what we do and do what we tell' is the theme of the action plan undertaken by the new UEVP board based on the analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the organisation. One of the aims is to render the general assembly more practical. Example: the session around Alternatives to antibiotics in Brussels.

Alternatives to antibiotics

'As a profession, we need a mind-set change, from 'cure' to 'care' and animal welfare support,' stressed professor Johanna Fink-Gremmels (Utrecht University), during the session on Alternatives to antibiotics, held during the UEVP GA. She added that good gut health is responsible for 60-70% of the immune system. 'By improving the animal's resilience we can reduce the need for antibiotics. The toolbox of targeted nutrition includes a range of pre- and probiotics, microbiome stabilisers, phytobiotics, phytogenetics as well as vaccination, hygiene and the management of environmental stressors.'

While herbal veterinary products such as essential oils and plant extracts can be an interesting alternative to help reduce the use of antibiotics, most have no marketing authorisation or maximum residue limits, noted Laure Baduel, head of medicines evaluation at the French health and food safety agency Anses. 'This means there is no guarantee of the product's quality and safety for the animal and consumer.' She advocated setting up a simplified European registration and marketing authorisation system for herbal preparations that have already been widely used in the EU for a number of years.

Austria: legal issues around corporates

Austrian delegates shared a court case¹ that was brought before the Court of Justice on the issue of veterinary corporates, and non-veterinary ownership in particular. While non-veterinarians cannot be prohibited from having shares in such a company, the court ruled that Member states could legislate so that a majority of shares (51%) must be held by veterinary surgeons. They could also require that veterinary corporates must be member of the national statutory body, which would facilitate supervision.

'More specialists needed'

'With around 4,200 European veterinary specialists and a veterinary population of 309,144 in Europe, specialists only make up around 1.4% of the total number of vets,' remarked Lidewij Wiersma, CEO of the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS), the umbrella organisation of Europe's veterinary specialist colleges. 'Many more specialists are needed, and with only around 180 new diplomates per year, it will take too long to catch

¹<http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=216541&pageIndex=0&doclang=en&mode=req&dir=&occ=first&part=1>

up.’ She announced that the EBVS is therefore looking into flexible pathways, modular residencies, remote supervision and digital examination. ‘The current system is too rigid, and we’re missing out on many people,’ she said, adding that VetCEE-approved programmes could be used as stepping stones towards Diplomate status.

VetCEE: to become an accreditation body?

VetCEE chair Andrew Robinson announced that there were now six ‘competencies’ (fields) in which European standards have been developed, with veterinary practice management as latest addition, and veterinary public health in the pipeline. However, the number of programmes submitted for application has been rather low, he said. One of the points that therefore might be considered would be for the VetCEE to evolve into an accreditation body for mid-tier European qualifications of veterinary practitioners. The use of specific postnominals and/or titles to be awarded was also a common question, he added.

Welfare of zoo animals

Welfare of zoo animals was highlighted by Allan Muir of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA). During a joint session with the European Association of State Veterinary Officers, he noted that, ‘although the current EU Zoo Directive² is fit for purpose, it is inconsistently applied across Member States. That’s why we’ve developed a Good Practices guidance document for zoo inspectors.’ The detailed 80-page document is currently available in 8 languages³. He added that while the 410 accredited EAZA members adhered to its high standards, the vast majority of zoos did not. ‘We don’t even know how many zoos there are – our estimated guess is 5,000 to 6,000 – as there is currently no central EU register for zoos, and licences are often supplied at regional level.’

Cyprus: full member

During the meeting, Cyprus was welcomed as a full member. The assembly also heard updates from its European members FEEVA, FECAVA, EAZWV and EAPHM, and from the working groups on medicines, animal welfare and food safety & quality, while UEVP President Piotr Kwieciński gave an update on the outbreaks of African swine fever. The spring general assembly of the UEVP will be held in London, on 4 June 2020.

And at the FVE GA...

- Delegates heard about discrimination at the workplace and initiatives taken to combat it, from Daniella Dos Santos, president of the British Veterinary Association.
- Christophe Buhot (France) described a pilot project undertaken in his country to draw more young graduates to mixed and large animal veterinary practice.
- Torill Moseng (Norway) gave an update on the haemorrhagic gastroenteritis outbreak in dogs in Norway.
- The joint FVE-EAPHM position paper on tail docking of pigs⁴ was adopted unanimously.
- The updated European Veterinary Code of Conduct was presented⁵.
- The roadmap for the FVE strategy 2021-2025 was announced.

² Council Directive 1999/22/EC of 29 March 1999 relating to the keeping of wild animals in zoos

³ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/pdf/EU_Zoos_Directive_Good_Practices.pdf

⁴ <https://www.fve.org/fve-eaphm-position-on-preventing-tail-docking-and-tail-biting/>

⁵ <https://www.fve.org/european-code-of-conduct-2019/>

New boards (2019-2022):The Animal welfare working group:

Sean Wensley (UK), Stefano Messori (Italy), Thomas Richter (Germany), Leonard Theron (Belgium), Stefan Gunnarsson (Sweden), Dominique Autier-Derian (France), Vibe Pedersen Lund (Denmark), Ann Criel (FECAVA), Mette Uldahl (FEEVA), Giovanni Guardagnini (EAPHM), Kenhelm Lewis (UEVP), Torill Moseng (FVE) and Heather Bacon (observer, UK).

VetCEE

Andrew Robinson (president), Marjan Tacer (UEVP), Frank Gasthuys (EAEVE), Jimmy Saunders (EBVS), Rafael Laguens (FVE) and Kenelm Lewis (UEVP).