

“Healthy Animals, Healthy Food, a Healthy Future”
***Responsible Use of Veterinary Medicines and Sustainable Animal Production:
Key to Global Food Security and Affordability***

Brussels, 11 June 2015 – Responsible use of veterinary medicines and sustainable animal production play a crucial role in securing animal health and provisioning a safe, secure and sustainable food supply. That was the conclusion of the ‘Healthy Animals, Healthy Food, a Healthy Future’ conference organised by the International Federation for Animal Health - Europe (IFAH-Europe). The event attracted an audience of over 100 European animal health and agrifood-chain stakeholders, policy makers, and other experts to Hotel Bloom in Brussels and explored Europe’s role in animal health and global food challenges as well as the role of innovation and consumer acceptance in animal production.

The conference was opened by Arunas Vinciuonas, Head of Cabinet of the European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety (Vytenis Andriukaitis) who outlined the three ways in which EU policies can help address food security: by strengthening food chain sustainability and resilience against economically devastating crises in the area of food safety, plant and animal health; by enhancing resource efficiency through innovation; and by drastically reducing food waste.

Thanks to a growing global population which is increasingly urbanised and wealthy, demand for animal food products continues to grow rapidly. Jimmy Smith, Director General of the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), explored this topic in depth and concluded that the growing demand presents opportunities for European animal health, genetics and feed industries to contribute towards sustainable animal food systems that will require novel approaches to engage in the diverse and rapidly changing livestock sector.

Animal health products are a key contributor to sustainable development and a healthier planet. Food products from sick animals cannot be sold for human consumption, so pan-European access to a wide range of veterinary medicines to keep animals healthy is essential to address global food security challenges as well as to the economic viability of farming in Europe.

As the Hungarian Chief Veterinary Officer Lajos Bognár explained in his presentation, there are several big threats facing the animal production industry such as emerging diseases from known or unknown pathogens and the re-emerging of previous diseases. Most importantly, the increasingly crowded nature of our world means we live in closer proximity to animals, allowing infections to pass more frequently between species.

Veterinary medicines therefore not only allow farmers to meet the growing demand for animal produce such as meat, milk, eggs and fish but also protect consumers from harmful food-borne pathogens or diseases transmissible between animals and people (zoonoses).

In this context, Gwyn Jones, Chairman of The European Platform for the Responsible Use of Medicines in Animals (EPRUMA), highlighted the importance of antibiotics in improving and maintaining animal health and welfare as part of a holistic approach to minimising diseases.

Thanks to the use of veterinary medicines Europe has been very successful in preventing and managing serious animal diseases such as Bluetongue and Schmallenberg. Rabies has been practically eradicated in Europe and vaccines have also helped to reduce cases of Salmonella in poultry meat by 40% in just 5 years (2006-2010).



The final session of the conference focused on the role of innovation in animal production and consumer acceptance, which will also be a key topic during the universal exhibition Expo Milano 2015 'Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life'.

Michael Stones from Food Manufacture Group, Machiel Reinders from Wageningen University, and Michael Freedman from the International Institute of Grocery Distribution all agreed that in order to protect Europe's 467,000 cattle, sheep, pigs and other animals, it is important that European animal health companies are supported by both consumers and policy makers in their efforts to find innovative ways to prevent and control animal diseases.

With the legislation governing veterinary medicines and medicated feed in Europe currently on the agenda of the European Parliament, Roxane Feller, IFAH-Europe's Secretary General, closed the debate by stressing the importance of more efficient and harmonised legislation to increase innovation and ensure the availability of all veterinary medicines across Europe. *'A less complex licencing system could significantly lower the administrative burden in bringing new, innovative veterinary medicines to the market. This will not only allow us to react rapidly to emerging disease situations but will also contribute to the sustainable supply of safe, high quality and affordable food across Europe.'*

-Ends -

NOTE TO EDITORS:

IFAH-Europe is the representative body of manufacturers of veterinary medicines, vaccines and other animal health products in Europe. It promotes a single market in veterinary medicines across the EU ensuring the availability of medicines to protect the health and welfare of animals. For further information on IFAH-Europe, please visit www.ifaheurope.org.

See also information on the panel debate: "Innovation – how can it fuel a strong & competitive EU agri-food sector?" co-hosted by IFAH-Europe during EXPO Milan: <http://www.ifaheurope.org/ifa-media/events/249-innovation—how-can-it-fuel-a-strong-competitive-eu-agri-food-sector.html>

For further press information please contact

Kim Hardie, Communications Director

Tel.: +32 2 543 75 75

E-mail: k.hardie@ifahsec.org