



## News release

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### International Bayer Expert Forum at EuroTier 2006

#### **Controlled use of veterinary drugs is indispensable**

Reduced risk of pathogens in the food chain –  
Resistance problem requires an interdisciplinary approach

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**Hanover** – Any discussion of animal health and food safety today needs to include the subject of antimicrobials and resistance. Yet the controlled and responsible use of veterinary drugs in animals used to produce food is indispensable – in terms of both animal health and welfare and food safety. This was the general feeling among the participants at the 1st International Bayer Expert Forum on "Animal Health and Food Safety" which took place in Hanover on November 15, 2006. Bayer HealthCare invited veterinarians and scientists from Europe and North America to attend the Forum, organized to tie in with EuroTier 2006, to discuss the questions and problems that arise in the context of animal health and food safety.

The key questions that the Forum sought to address is how important drugs like antibiotics can continue to be used in veterinary medicine while at the same time avoiding any risk to human health. The discussion focused on the following aspects: How big is the risk for consumers really? Would there be any point in stopping the use of antibiotics in veterinary medicine? What methods can be used to identify and avoid emerging resistance? How can an international safety standard be developed?

The participants emphasized that the targeted and controlled use of veterinary drugs, and anti-infectives in particular, in animals used to produce food is an important safety factor. Veterinary drugs reduce the risk of pathogens getting into the food chain. This finding was confirmed by a recently published study carried out by the Institute of

Food Technologists, a U.S. organization supported by some 22,000 experts. However, there are certain risks which need to be quantified using scientific methods.

Professor Stefan Schwarz from the Federal Agricultural Research Office in Neustadt-Mariensee underlined the urgent need for standardized methods for approaching the problem of resistance development. Specific thresholds for antibiotics (known as breakpoints) are needed in veterinary medicine to make national and international resistance programs comparable and informative.

The EPRUMA platform, which was presented at the Forum by Peter Rudman, a member of the National Farmers Union in the UK and the European agricultural association COPA-COGECA, is an important step towards international standardization. EPRUMA is an alliance of European interest groups working in the fields of animal health and food safety which aims to take an integrated and coordinated approach to the safe and responsible use of animal medicines.

The manufacturers of veterinary drugs also bear some of the responsibility in the production of safe food. Bayer HealthCare together with other research-based companies in conducting standardized European monitoring programs and has a long tradition of supporting the responsible use of antibiotics. Professor Norbert Schmeer from the Animal Health Division of Bayer HealthCare AG explained how difficult it is to reconcile the growing cost for the development of new drugs and obtaining approval for them with economic necessity.

Dr. Andreas Böcker from the University of Guelph in Canada later talked about the end of the food chain. Consumers are evidently not prepared to pay a premium for additional food safety efforts in the production and processing of food of animal origin. The retail price war is continuing unabated. The task and objective of everyone involved in animal health and food safety must therefore be to raise consumers' awareness and to inform consumers. It is ultimately the consumer at the checkout who decides which foods are stocked by the stores and hence produced at the start of the food chain.

Professor Schmeer summarized the situation as follows: "There is no doubt that we need to take the risk of resistance seriously. Scientists, doctors, the regulatory authorities, the legislator and the manufacturers of veterinary drugs have a joint responsibility to find answers to the problem. Responsibility also lies with the

veterinarians. They are the ones who use the products in the field. They are the multipliers, and they advise the farmers whose job it is to produce safe food."

**About Bayer HealthCare AG:**

Bayer HealthCare, a subgroup of Bayer AG, is one of the world's leading innovative companies in the health care and medical products industry. In 2005, the Bayer HealthCare subgroup had sales of about €9.4 billion. Bayer HealthCare employs approximately 33,800 people worldwide.

The company combines the activities of the Animal Health, Consumer Care, Diabetes Care, Diagnostics and Pharmaceuticals divisions. The Pharmaceuticals and Biological Products divisions were combined effective January 1, 2006. The new Pharmaceuticals Division comprises the Hematology/Cardiology, Oncology, and Primary Care business units. With sales of EUR 856 million (2005) and a headcount of 3,000, the Animal Health Division is one of the world's leading manufacturers of veterinary drugs.

Bayer HealthCare's aim is to discover, develop, manufacture and market products that will improve human and animal health worldwide. These products enhance well-being and quality of life by diagnosing, preventing and treating disease.

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