



Scientists and livestock experts discussed animal health and food safety

Pharmaceutical companies play a key role in consumer protection

- Veterinarians are increasingly acting as healthcare managers
- Veterinary medicine makes an essential contribution to safe food

Monheim, September 13, 2007 – Consumers are demanding increasingly high standards of food quality. All parties from science, industry and practice involved in the food production chain therefore have a duty to exercise due care. This includes the use of animal health products. Pharmaceutical companies play a key role here. In the research and development of new medications for livestock, they place great value on ensuring that the active ingredients can efficiently combat diseases in animals while simultaneously meeting all consumer safety requirements. During a media workshop held at Bayer's Monheim Research Center on September 13, scientists, veterinarians and experts offered an insight into modern livestock husbandry and the complex pharmaceutical research it entails. Bayer HealthCare invests approximately 10 percent of its annual revenues in research on animal health products.

Professor Manfred Kietzmann from the Department of Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmacy at the University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover called for antibiotic use in keeping with the guidelines recognized and approved by professionals and scientists in the field. According to these guidelines, medication should only be administered after precise diagnosis by a veterinarian. This voluntary commitment, which also pertains to the exact dosage and duration of therapy, would make an important contribution to responsible use of medications. Efforts to combat the potential threat of resistances developing to antimicrobial active ingredients must continue, he added. "Comprehensive resistance monitoring throughout Germany, such as the GermVet Program from the German Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) which is supported by

industry and science, must continue its surveillance activities to determine the substances that resistances might form against,” said Professor Kietzmann. He assessed the current resistance situation in regard to substances used in agriculture as relatively positive, however.

Veterinarians as healthcare managers

The importance of veterinary support for animal stocks as a tool in the production of safe food was demonstrated by two practicing veterinarians from Lower Saxony. Dr. Andreas Wilms-Schulze Kump, a veterinarian and farmer from Visbek, presented several preventive approaches for keeping pigs and poultry healthy. He has witnessed a dramatic change in the daily work of livestock veterinarians. “In addition to treating diseased animals,” said Wilms-Schulze Kump, “veterinarians’ activities now increasingly include advising farmers in their capacity as healthcare managers.” The goal of modern agriculture, he continued, is to prevent animals from becoming sick in the first place by keeping them in optimum conditions. Disease prevention therefore includes advising farmers on stall construction or composition of animal feed. According to Wilms-Schulze Kump, continuous veterinary support of animal stocks is an important tool in the production of safe food.

A safe agent for combating poultry red mite in poultry houses is finally available

Veterinarian Dr. Thorsten Arnold from Ankum cited the poultry red mite, a blood-sucking parasite, as one example of a serious problem facing poultry farmers. In cases of rapid multiplication and severe infestation, this parasite can substantially reduce a hen’s laying rate or even cause its death. “In serious cases, therapeutic administration of animal health products is indispensable,” underscored Dr. Arnold. He added, however, that only a handful of solutions are viable when food safety is at stake. The use of antiparasitic agents in laying hens is especially challenging, as residue in eggs must be avoided at all costs. Bayer HealthCare has therefore developed an animal health product now available to poultry farmers which optimally fulfills all requirements, in particular those regarding food safety.

Research on animal health products is oriented to consumer wishes

Dr. Norbert Mencke, Head of Global Veterinary Services at Bayer HealthCare AG and an expert on the interface between science and veterinary practice, reported on the complex search for new medications for food-producing animals. "Demands on new animal health products are growing and are increasingly dictated by consumers' wishes. They are in danger of becoming economically unreasonable," said Dr. Mencke. Because the associated research costs are so high, he continued, fewer and fewer new veterinary medications are being discovered and only a small number of products are brought to market maturity, especially in the EU.

Almost all new anti-infective agents used in veterinary medicine are derived from research in the field of human medicine, while antiparasitic agents, the second largest animal health product sector, come from crop protection research. As a result of the world's burgeoning population and global eating habits, however, the overall market for animal health products is expected to grow by 3.6 percent per year on average until 2010, with production shifting from Europe to other regions of the world.

Using anti-infective agents as an example, Mencke made it clear that meeting governmental requirements for new active ingredients is especially difficult when the drug product in question is intended for use in food-producing animals. "Innovative animal health products will continue contributing to improved food safety in the future as well," said Mencke. In order to make these products available to veterinarians, there must be underlying conditions in place that allow an assessment of the risks and benefits in the interests of the consumer.

Bayer HealthCare

Bayer HealthCare, a subsidiary of Bayer AG, is one of the world's leading, innovative companies in the healthcare and medical products industry and is based in Leverkusen, Germany. The company combines the global activities of the Animal Health, Consumer Care, Diabetes Care and Pharmaceuticals divisions. The pharmaceuticals business operates under the name Bayer Schering Pharma AG. Bayer HealthCare's aim is to discover and manufacture products that will improve human and animal health worldwide.

With sales of EUR 905 million (2006), the Animal Health Division is one of the world's leading manufacturers of veterinary drugs. The division manufactures and markets approximately 100 different veterinary drugs and care products for food-supplying animals and companion animals (dogs, cats, horses).

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