

Industry leads a European Technology Platform for Global Animal Health

An initiative to develop and deliver tools to control animal disease

Brussels, Belgium, 20 December 2004: A high level group of stakeholders in the animal health sector lead by industry has decided to establish a European Technology Platform for Global Animal Health. The group comprises representatives from the animal health industry, small biotechnology enterprises, research institutions, regulatory authorities at the European level and the financial world.

The aim of the Platform is to facilitate and accelerate the development and distribution of the most effective tools to control animal diseases of major importance to Europe and the rest of the world. This shall benefit animal health and welfare, food safety, human health and market access.

Outbreaks of major animal diseases can have devastating impact. Effective tools, such as vaccines and improved diagnostic tests, are vital to control major animal diseases of social and economic significance. Vaccines are potentially one of the most cost effective measures to prevent and control infectious animal disease. It is necessary to develop improved diagnostic tests to enable early diagnosis and detection of outbreaks, and to demonstrate the effectiveness of control programmes.

The Platform was launched in Brussels on 16 December 2004 at the International Conference on the Material and Immaterial Costs of Animal Disease Control, a conference organised by the European Commission. During the conference Susanne Zänker, Managing Director IFAH-Europe, stressed: *'The challenge of delivering new or improved vaccines and diagnostic tests is a high-risk business.'*

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Europe currently has a relatively good scientific research base to take advantage of genomics and technologies. However, the translation of scientific discoveries into authorised vaccines and tests needs to be significantly improved.'

Constraints on the transfer from breakthrough to the deployment of new and improved vaccines and tests for the major animal diseases are found in research, manufacture, and production and particularly in the regulatory framework. She added that '*...there is a need for a coordinated, transparent and multidisciplinary effort in research and development, encompassing basic sciences, emerging technologies, product development, production and distribution within a competitive and innovative environment.'*

The Platform will bring together all the stakeholders who are interested in and can contribute to the control of major animal diseases at national, EU and international level. After identifying strategic priorities, they will develop a research agenda and an implementation plan. The first working meeting, to which all stakeholders will be invited, is scheduled to take place in the spring of 2005.

In conclusion, Susanne Zänker emphasised: *'The European Technology Platform for Global Animal Health will help to speed up the delivery of animal health products by overcoming the problems identified throughout the whole supply chain.'*

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Notes to Editors:

IFAH-Europe is the representative body of manufacturers of veterinary medicines, vaccines and other animal health products in Europe.

For further information on IFAH-Europe, please visit <http://www.ifahsec.org/Europe>
A European Commission press release is also available [here](#).

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