

Broad stakeholder coalition launches Strategic Research Agenda to combat animal diseases

PRESS RELEASE, Brussels, Belgium, 19 May 2006:

A coalition of stakeholders represented in the European Technology Platform for Global Animal Health (ETPGAH) launched today a Strategic Research Agenda to combat animal diseases in the presence of European Commissioner for Science and Research Janez Potočnik. The Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) lays out a systematic plan to ensure a close cooperation between both private and public sectors to accelerate the rate of innovation in Animal Health and achieve a better coordination of the fragmented research activities in Europe.

This initiative also stresses the importance to include international organisations and developing countries into a global research effort, as improved animal health can make a significant contribution to poverty reduction in developing countries.

Brian Clark, Chairman of IFAH-Europe, the International Federation for Animal Health industry in Europe, comments:

“For the first time, researchers in both public and private sectors together with European, national and international stakeholders will address animal disease as a global programme, complementing rather than duplicating efforts. We see the SRA as the core of the European research effort on Animal Health that will be an orientation point for national research programmes and will guide them towards a more coherent European strategy to combat animal diseases. European and national research money can then effectively be targeted to develop new medicines to prevent and cure diseases.”

The European Technology Platform for Global Animal Health (ETPGAH), a broad stakeholder alliance with participants from, amongst others, academia, industry, veterinarians, farmers, national

chief veterinary officers and animal welfare groups, has developed the SRA as an important step to increase the development rate, and so, the availability of Animal Health products worldwide.

Themes

The SRA stresses six interacting themes to guarantee the successful transfer of ideas into deliverable products.

- 1) Europe needs to **prioritize animal diseases** to ensure the most effective use of resources and research capacity in developing new tools for disease control.
- 2) A gap analysis should **determine the current gaps in the knowledge on diseases and availability of products** as well as in **the current research activity within the EU** to develop a coherent research program
- 3) The EU should **strengthen fundamental sciences in Animal Health** by better funding and better coordination. A good basis of fundamental research is essential to ensure competitive applied research in the public and private sector.
- 4) To facilitate the effective transfer of research into products, **the technology transfer system needs to be streamlined**, taking into account quality management, intellectual property rights, education and training as well as infrastructure.
- 5) The regulatory environment is an important determinant for the rate of new products. The EU should further **adjust the regulatory system in Animal Health to ensure a balance between ensuring safety, while fostering innovation.**
- 6) **The development of effective Animal Health products needs to be treated in a global context.** The scale and complexity of the development of medical products requires alliances with developing countries and international organisations such as the World Organisations for Animal Health (OIE) and the Food Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

Declan O'Brien, Managing Director of IFAH-Europe, remarks:

“Avian Influenza has highlighted the impact animal diseases can have not only on animals and their owners, but also on human health. As we are facing the threat of a global pandemic influenza, it is urgent to find better ways to treat zoonoses in a systematic way.”

A vaccine against Avian Influenza only costs a few cents per bird. *“But today vaccines against avian influenza have to be injected animal by animal - an enormous effort for the producer. A vaccine that could be delivered in feed would lower costs for vaccination significantly. Thus, more*

innovation can make a huge impact on how we can tackle the Avian Influenza threat.”, he concludes.

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Notes to Editors:

IFAH-Europe (International Federation for Animal Health Europe) is the federation representing manufacturers of veterinary medicines, vaccines and other animal health products in Europe and comprises 14 Member Companies and 17 National Associations throughout Europe.

For further information on IFAH-Europe, please visit <http://www.ifaheurope.org/>

The European Technology Platform (ETPGAH) is a joint initiative of industry and the research community actively encouraged by the European Commission services. Led by IFAH-Europe, it integrates all relevant stakeholders at EU and national levels, from academia, research, farmers, veterinarians, industry, consumers, regulators, etc and representatives from international organisations such as the FAO, OIE and non-European countries. For further information on ETPGAH, please visit: <http://www.ifahsec.org/Europe/EUPlatform/Platform.htm>

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