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IFAH-Europe annual conference 2008:

Stakeholders outline way forward to joint animal health policy

Brussels, Belgium, 20 June 2008: With more than 140 participants, the 2008 IFAH-Europe annual conference has become the main annual event on Animal Health Policy in Europe. High level representatives of FAO, OIE, industry, academia and the European institutions were present as speakers and participants, amongst these Paola Testori-Coggi, Deputy Director General from DG SANCO as well as Juan Lubroth, Head of the Infectious Disease Group, FAO and Jean-Luc Angot, Deputy Director General from OIE. The participants highlighted the necessity of a joint approach of all animal health stakeholders in developing new policy concepts in food safety, the area of companion animals, fostering more European research and enhancing international cooperation.

Deputy Director General of the European Commission DG SANCO, Ms. Paola Testori-Coggi spoke about DG SANCO policy looking to the future of animal health on behalf of the European Commissioner Ms. Androula Vassiliou and praised the fruitful cooperation with industry. She said: "Animal Health gained an incredible importance for both micro and macro socio-economic development, from the farm to international trade. The European Union therefore needs a more encompassing approach in its new animal health strategy."

"No species is an island, we live a world of One Health", underlined Juan Lubroth, Head, Infectious Diseases Group at FAO. He stressed that animal health is closely linked to human health, food security, food safety and environmental conservation. Not only do transboundary animal diseases – some of which are zoonoses - severely impact the livelihoods of the poor, they disrupt trade and threaten food security, but they also pose a threat to human and animal health beyond national boundaries. "A vital issue is access to appropriate tools, including diagnostics and affordable safe and effective vaccines and medicines. Tackling diseases at source protects the rest of the world," he added. Together with Jean-Luc Angot, Deputy Director General from the OIE, Dr Lubroth emphasised

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the need for a better international coordination and investment in animal health research and innovation.

In his final presentation, Patrick Duhaumont, Director of the French Agency for veterinary medicinal products (AFSSA-ANMV), talked about the need to start discussing necessary improvements in veterinary legislation. He announced that the French Presidency will look in an upcoming conference on veterinary medicinal products legislation into the issues of creating a functioning single market in veterinary products, simplification of the regulatory framework as well as fostering innovation and availability of medicines. This is a first step towards a structured discussion between European and national authorities as well as stakeholders on the need to evolve the existing system.

The speakers highlighted the critical importance of global cooperation and coordination between NGOs, governments, academia, industry, veterinarians, the farming community through different means – public private partnerships, alliances and networks of excellence – all of which can harness specific public sector and private industry experience to combat animal diseases globally. IFAH-Europe is a strong advocate of this open and cooperative approach, where prevention and cure co-exist for the good of both animals and humans.

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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. It is a major operating division of a broader organisation – the International Federation for Animal Health, an international non-profit organisation registered under Belgian law.

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

The conference programme and presentations are available at:
http://www.ifaheurope.org/events/Animal_Health_solutions_for_the_future.htm

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