World Veterinary Association Summit 2013
Global Wellbeing – A Partnership of Animal and Human Health

Strengthening Communication Pathways

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The British Veterinary Association

- The national representative body for the United Kingdom veterinary profession
- The largest veterinary association in UK with more than 13,500 members from all sectors of the profession
- Our mission is to represent the veterinary profession and enable members to fulfill their roles for the benefit of animals and the public good
- Use our influence to promote and further the interest of the profession
Why is good communication so important?

BVA is at the forefront of representing our members – the veterinary profession – on key issues of animal health and welfare, and their impact on human health, for the public good. Strong and effective communication is key to success.
What are the types of issues that challenge us every day?
How do we convey our messages? #1

- We aim to convince the public, the media, and policy makers that our positions are the right ones.
- These positions must be based mostly on **sound scientific principles** and not based on emotion, political expediency, or over-reliance on the precautionary principle.
- Above all our positions must be **credible**. As a membership body it is essential that we have **robust processes** in place to capture the views of our members utilising their expertise and knowledge.
How do we convey our messages? #2

• Various approaches, including:
  – Identifying and focusing on critical points of discussion
  – Identifying potential supporters and detractors
  – Recruiting supporters and building alliances
  – Compromising (when appropriate) to seek common ground
  – Communicating upwards (to policy makers) and downwards (to members) to maintain support
  – Utilising members, the media, and the general public
• While all the time building a professional (“personal”) relationship based on trust and mutual understanding
• In addition we must deliver crisis communication in a proportionate manner and be prepared through good media training
So, how do we do it?

#1 Antimicrobial Resistance

- BVA has been at the forefront of promoting responsible use in animals
- Being seen to act responsibly as a profession and being seen to be doing the right thing
- Building alliances with the medical profession
- Inviting politicians and opinion leaders throughout the UK to become associate members of BVA
- Regular meetings with parliamentarians (UK&EU)
- Member of the Responsible Use of Antimicrobials In Agriculture (RUMA) Alliance
- Regular engagement with CVOs and regulatory agency (VMD)
- Active involvement in CPD within and range of activities outside the profession to inform and educate the public
RESPONSIBLE USE OF ANTIMICROBIALS IN VETERINARY PRACTICE: THE 8-POINT PLAN

1. Work with clients to avoid need for antimicrobials
   - Integrated disease control programmes
   - Animal Health and Welfare Planning
   - Isolate infected animals wherever possible

2. Avoid inappropriate use
   - For example, for uncomplicated viral infections
   - Restrict use to ill or at-risk animals
   - Advise clients on correct administration of products and completion of course
   - Avoid underdosing

3. Choose the right drug for the right bug
   - Identify likely target organisms and predict their susceptibility
   - Create practice-based protocols for common infections based on clinical judgement and up to date knowledge
   - Know how antimicrobials work and their pharmacodynamic properties
   - Use antimicrobials with a spectrum as narrow as possible

4. Monitor antimicrobial sensitivity
   - While clinical diagnosis is often the initial basis for treatment, microbiological sensitivity must be determined whenever possible so that a change of treatment can be implemented if necessary
   - Use antimicrobial sensitivity trends

5. Minimise prophylactic use
   - Use only when animals are at risk and evidence that usage reduces morbidity and/or mortality
   - Regularly assess prophylactic use and develop written protocols for when prophylactic medication considered appropriate

6. Minimise use perioperatively
   - Use only when necessary and supported by strict aseptic techniques alongside written practice guidelines
   - Monitor antimicrobial sensitivity trends

7. Record and justify deviations from protocols
   - Be able to justify your choice of antimicrobial and dose
   - Keep accurate records of treatment and outcome to help evaluate therapeutic regimens

8. Report suspected treatment failure to the VMD
   - This may be the first indication of resistance
   - Report through the Suspected Adverse Reaction Surveillance Scheme (SARSS)

SPECIAL NOTE
Fluoroquinolones and third-/fourth-generation cephalosporins:
- Reserve these antimicrobials for clinical conditions that respond poorly to other classes of antimicrobials and where antibiotic sensitivity has been carried out.
- Do not administer systemically to groups or flocks of animals except in very specific situations and special attention should be given to the risk of antimicrobial resistance as part of the beneficial approach.

FOR FURTHER GUIDANCE VISIT
BVAO website

ANTIMICROBIALS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR THE TREATMENT AND PREVENTION OF INFECTIOUS AND ZOONOTIC DISEASES IN BOTH ANIMALS AND HUMANS

EVERY USE INCREASES THE RISK OF DEVELOPMENT OF MICROBIAL RESISTANCE

RESPONSIBLE USE OPTIMISES THERAPEUTIC EFFECTS WHILE MINIMISING RESISTANCE DEVELOPMENT

RESPONSIBLE USE — AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE.
Was the outcome successful?

- BVA president was invited to become a member of the DEFRA {UK Ministry of Agriculture} Antimicrobial Resistance Committee (DARC) enabling strong veterinary input into policy making
- The UK Chief Medical Officer in her annual report this year acknowledges that current evidence suggests that veterinary use is not a major cause of resistance in bacteria that affect human health (at least in the UK)
- Invited to participate in joint seminars with the medical profession organised by the profession and government health departments
- Invited to brief parliamentarians on the AMR topic in UK parliament
- Regularly approached to give papers on the subject matter e.g. British Society for Animal Science annual conference (05/13)
So, how do we do it?

#2 Dog control

Approximately 6000 attacks by dangerous dogs result in cases being hospitalised every year in UK

• Joint submission with BSAVA to UK parliamentary committee enquiry into dog control and welfare (EfraCom)
• Formed a joint lobbying group of 19 leading animal welfare organisations, trade unions and enforcement bodies during consultation on tackling irresponsible dog ownership
• Lobbied MSPs in Scotland to support amendment to Scottish legislation on dangerous dogs
• Campaigned with associate members in all UK parliaments and held meetings with ministers
• Spearheaded campaign to introduce compulsory microchipping of all dogs
Was the outcome successful?

• Evidence given to EfraCom widely acknowledged in the Committee’s final report and cited in veterinary and national media

• Draft legislation in Westminster parliament on antisocial behaviour will amend Dangerous Dogs Act and introduce preventive measures

• “Deed not breed” campaign has been widely publicised and appreciated – opportunity to engage public

• Public is fully behind the efforts of BVA to change the law

• Compulsory micro-chipping to be introduced in England & Wales and already in Northern Ireland. Scotland yet to decide but Government announced upcoming consultation at BVA event

• Alliance established with the 19 organisations has proved immensely useful in campaigning on other issues on dog welfare
So, how do we do it?

#3 Horsemeat scandal

• Worked very closely with our specialist division BEVA – our experts
• Reinforce the message that this was mostly a labelling issue and not a safety one
• Met with government officials to campaign for better horse passport system
• Drew on scientific expertise to counter misinformation re phenylbutazone residues
• Used well established media contacts to encourage media bids to communicate BVA opinion and veterinary input into the debate
Was the outcome successful?

- Public was mostly reassured this was a labeling issue and that risks of intoxication from PBZ was limited despite some misinformation
- Chief Medical Officer reinforced this message vigorously
- Achieved consistency in clear messages through collaboration with our own specialists, and engagement with Food Safety Authority and DEFRA
- DEFRA is committed to full inquiry into inadequacy of horse passport system
- BVA was invited to give several radio and TV interviews at the height of the crisis illustrating that we also handle crisis communications well
- You can never plan for the unexpected! But you can have systems in place to be prepared
So, how do we do it?

#4 Bovine TB

Cows with TB have entered human food chain: Infected meat served up in schools, hospitals and to the military: 30/06/13

'Unacceptable' TB losses could cost country £1bn over the next 10 years

Will culling badgers help to control bTB in cattle?
So, how do we do it?

#4 Bovine TB

- Worked very closely with our specialist division BCVA – our experts – and other divisions (potential agreement/disagreement)
- Past president selected as member of Bovine Tuberculosis Eradication Advisory Group for England (TBEAG) advising government
- BVA Officers meet frequently with Animal Health and Welfare Group for England (AHWBE) advising government
- Frequent Joint Officer meetings with farmer representative bodies
- Many presentations to interested parties
- Dedicated communications plan and media campaign including webinars
- Ongoing dialogue with CVO and DEFRA officials
- Continuing policy review at BVA Council
Was the outcome successful?

- BVA is consulted widely by press and media on all aspects of bTB control as recognised and respected source of information and expertise
- Our principled stand on proposals for badger culling while not agreed to by all is understood and acknowledged
- Government respects and appreciates BVA policy input
- Farming organisations welcome the support and contribution of the veterinary profession in tackling this disease
Key conclusions
#1 Communicating upwards

- Have robust policy processes in place to be credible
- Be clear in what you want
- Be aware of other external pressures (e.g., financial/political) and be prepared to adapt
- Praise and support as well as challenge. Be a “critical friend”
- Build alliances with other respected organisations with similar goals
- Foster good relationships at all levels (parliamentarians, ministers, civil servants)
Key conclusions
#2 Communicating downwards

- Engage members/supporters throughout
- Regular updates and opportunities to input and comment
- Use a variety of methods and channels
- Personalise information and make it relevant to the individual (database)
Key conclusions

#3 Communicating outwards

- Be reliable and available to the media
- Have something interesting to say (try not to ‘sit on the fence’)
- Be authoritative and credible
- Be honest
- Train your media spokespeople (it’s not as easy as it looks!)
- Remember who you are speaking to through the media. Animal owners and the general public = potential supporters and champions
Acknowledgements: Sally Burnell – Head of Media and PR at BVA

Questions?

www.bva.co.uk