

# Healthy animals = healthy food = healthy people

## ***Greater co-operation between human and veterinary medicine is a must***

Helsinki, 20 May 2009: IFAH, representing the international animal health industry, presented a symposium on the need for medicines for animals at the 19th European Congress on Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ECCMID) held this week in Helsinki. Seeking to improve the human healthcare sector's understanding of the rationale behind antimicrobial use in animal health, IFAH wanted to highlight two key messages to the human medical audience: **only healthy animals can produce healthy food, and therefore the antimicrobial resistance issue needs to be addressed in strong partnership with the human healthcare sector .**

"Medical doctors and veterinarians often live in different worlds," reminded Prof. J. Acar, MD founding member of ESCMID, the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases and consultant to OIE, the World Organisation for Animal Health, who opened the symposium. "Animal health and welfare, as well as well as public health and food safety will benefit from a much closer co-operation between both medical professions. It is almost a prerequisite because the two are inextricably linked". The idea was further supported by Dr Winding, President of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe in his presentation, 'One world, one health, Healthy animals = healthy people', explaining that only healthy animals can provide healthy food, in sufficient quantities to feed a growing world population.

Better mutual understanding of the need for antimicrobials and their use in human and veterinary medicine would greatly benefit one issue of mutual concern: the matter of antimicrobial resistance. Both Prof. S. Schwarz of the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institute and Dr M. Kresken, Secretary of the Paul-Ehrlich Society for Chemotherapy, presented their data from GERMAP 2008, a resistance monitoring programme covering both the human and veterinary communities in Germany. They explained that their complex work clearly showed the need to collect a wide range of data from both humans and animals in order to have a proper and useful evaluation of the resistance status of several infectious agents.

The animal health industry focuses on maximising the availability of high quality, safe and efficacious antimicrobials for the treatment and prevention of infectious diseases in animals. It is at the same time committed to ensuring the necessary measures are in place to minimise possible resistance development, and any potential transfer to humans.

IFAH acknowledges the multidisciplinary and co-ordinated approaches undertaken by regulators and industry to manage the risk of antimicrobial resistance, and confirms its continued support for government-initiated monitoring programmes to more closely define the risk associated with judicious use of antimicrobials in food animal production. However, a close collaboration with the human healthcare sector is vital to be able to reach a fuller picture of the issues that bind the two fields together.

Ends

**Note to Editors:**

IFAH, the International Federation for Animal Health, represents the manufacturers of veterinary medicines, vaccines and other animal health products in both developed and developing countries across five continents.

Its goal is to promote a harmonised, science-based regulatory and trade framework, and marketplace environment that supports an animal health industry which is economically viable and innovation-driven, contributing to a healthy and safe food supply as well as high levels of animal health and welfare.

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

For more details on the 19<sup>th</sup> ECCMID Congress, please see <http://www.escmid.org/eccmid2009>

*For further information on the topic of this press release, please contact:*

Kim Hardie  
Communications Director  
IFAH  
Rue Defacqz, 1 - B-1000 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 (0)2 543 7575  
Fax : +32 (0)2 5370049  
E-mail: [k.hardie@ifahsec.org](mailto:k.hardie@ifahsec.org)