



Representing the Manufacturers of Animal Medicines

National Office of Animal Health Ltd

3 Crossfield Chambers, Gladbeck Way, Enfield, Middlesex EN2 7HF

Tel: (+44) 020 8367 3131 Facsimile: (+44) 020 8363 1155

e-mail: a.glennon@noah.co.uk

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Animal medicines can help health strategy succeed

Animal medicines are an integral part of the future health and welfare of Britain's animals, and those involved with their manufacture and distribution can help make DEFRA's plans succeed.

In its comments on DEFRA's implementation plan for the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy in England and Wales, NOAH chief executive Phil Sketchley was pleased to see a new initiative on veterinary medicines. "As the inclusion of this initiative shows, animal medicines, responsibly used, form part of the backbone of the strategy," he said.

The implementation plan is another good step on the way to implementing the strategy for animal health and welfare, particularly in relation to farm animals. But it is important, while companion animal welfare is encompassed by the draft Animal Welfare Bill, that the health needs of companion animals are not sidelined. "And it is important that parliament is given the time to discuss this important Bill," added Mr Sketchley.

He went on to explain: "The main thrust of planning for companion animal health focuses on rabies, and medicine manufacturers will of course be happy to continue to help in relation to the vaccines and other products that help make PETS possible. But it is important not to forget other exotic diseases, not necessarily zoonotic, which may enter as animals come into the country. There is scope for awareness and information to be disseminated to and through the veterinary profession, and to the public, on what to look out for in travelling animals."

"We are pleased that the partnership approach of the RUMA Alliance - which includes the veterinary profession - has been recognised as a means to bring stakeholders together. The work has already started and NOAH looks forward to it continuing", said Mr Sketchley.

NOAH stressed that RUMA was not the only existing grouping of organisations that could help the strategy succeed. "We look forward to a similar recognition for AMTRA (Animal Medicines Training Regulatory Authority)," explained Mr Sketchley.

"Members of the Animal Health Regulatory and Training Authority (AMTRA) have qualifications, expertise, and daily contact with the farming community. This makes them the ideal source of information on a range of practical issues, including the all important area of biosecurity. Through the register of Suitably Qualified Persons in the agricultural merchant sector, AMTRA is in a strong position to assist in implementing this animal health and welfare strategy," he said. "Their role should be formally written into how the strategy is implemented."

NOAH also sees a role for animal medicine manufacturers to be included directly as an agent to help deliver the initiative, through the information they provide about the medicines they make. This is important, as NOAH can also offer expertise in medicines for horses and companion animals. "Companion animal and equine health must not be forgotten," Mr Sketchley said.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. For further information, please contact Philip Sketchley or Alison Glennon of NOAH, telephone 020 8367 3131 or Andrew Kendall, Kendalls PR, telephone 01394 610022, or visit the NOAH website, www.noah.co.uk
2. The National Office of Animal Health was formed on 1st January 1986 to represent the UK companies which research, develop, manufacture and market licensed animal health products. The association now has 33 corporate members and 14 associate members. In 2002, NOAH's members accounted for well over 90 per cent of the £389 million UK animal health market.
3. NOAH is a member of the RUMA (Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture) Alliance. RUMA was established in November 1997 to promote the highest standards of food safety, animal health and animal welfare in British livestock farming. A unique initiative involving organisations representing every stage of the "farm to fork" process, RUMA aims to promote a co-ordinated and integrated approach to best practice. For more information, see www.ruma.org.uk
4. AMTRA is an independent regulatory body whose task it is to ensure that the distribution of animal medicines in the UK is undertaken in a responsible manner by qualified persons. The board of AMTRA comprises an independent chairman and vice-chairman, two directors appointed by DEFRA, two from NOAH, three from Animal Health Distributors Association and one each from National Farmers Union, Pet Care Trust, British Veterinary Association, Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain and British Equestrian Trade Association.
5. There are now 4 different AMTRA Registers of Qualified Persons: Agricultural Merchants Suitably Qualified Persons (SQP) Register, Saddlers Suitably Qualified Persons (SQP) Register, Animal Medicine Manufacturers' Sales Staff Register and GSL Companion Animal Medicines Register.