



Veterinary Ireland Media Release 26th November 2021

VET CONDITIONS NEED IMPROVEMENT FOR LONG TERM & RURAL SUSTAINABILITY

A survey of the veterinary profession in Ireland has identified major concerns in relation to working conditions, especially regarding work-life balance, which could undermine the long-term sustainability of veterinary and out of hours services, particularly in rural parts of the country. The professional body Veterinary Ireland has, as a result, set a key objective over the next five years to work towards improving the work-life balance of vets in Ireland.

The findings of Veterinary Ireland's Benchmark Survey 2020 were presented to Veterinary Ireland members at the organisation's AGM and Conference at the Knightsbrook Hotel in Trim, Co. Meath (26th November, 2021), which was officially opened by Jackie Cahill, TD, Chair, Joint Oireachtas Committee on Agriculture Food and the Marine.

"The Veterinary Ireland survey provides an extraordinary amount of data on work and life as a veterinary practitioner in Ireland in the 21st century," says Finbarr Murphy, Chief Executive of Veterinary Ireland.

"Some of the principal reasons given why vets would not choose a veterinary career again if they were back at career choice stage, were poor work-life balance, poor wages, and poor working conditions including long working hours and 'on-call' arising from poor rotas," says Finbarr Murphy. "It is incumbent on all stakeholders to work together to find meaningful ways to address these issues."

Veterinary Ireland announced it will seek central funding from Government to support the provision of out of hours services by the veterinary profession as is available to other professional groups - including specific supports for the provision of veterinary services in rural areas. "This is necessary to ensure the continuation of the high level of services available to the public whilst improving the work-life balance of the people working as veterinarians," says Finbarr Murphy.

NEW VETERINARY IRELAND PRESIDENT HIGHLIGHTS 'ONE HEALTH: ONE WELFARE'

The new President of Veterinary Ireland is Dr Joe Collins MVB PhD CertEP CertVR, who was formally presented with the Chain of Office at the 2021 AGM in Trim by outgoing President Conor Geraghty MVB CertDHH.

"The ongoing pandemic has heightened focus on One Health-One Welfare - the interconnected nature of humans, animals and the environment we all share," said Dr. Collins.

"Veterinarians play a central role as guardians and as gatekeepers, particularly in these very challenging times. We must ensure their health, livelihoods and wellbeing for their own sake as persons, but also so that they remain resilient in serving the cause of animal health and welfare as well as public health."

FUTURE PRESCRIBING

Tadhg Gavin MVB CertDHH facilitated the morning session featuring updates on the impending implementation of new veterinary medicines regulations in 2022.

The panel of speakers included Dr. J. Gabriel Beechinor, PhD MVB MRCVS MVM CDipAF MSc Director of Veterinary Sciences, Health Products Regulatory Authority & CVMP Member. Dr. Beechinor says that one of the aims of the EU legislation on veterinary medicines to be introduced in 2022, is to strengthen actions to fight antimicrobial resistance with a clear focus on safeguarding public and animal health.

“Veterinary Ireland insists that implementation of the new veterinary medicines regulations will result in human and animal health being the highest priority and that prescribing is limited to the attending vet that has real and ongoing knowledge of the animals under their care being prescribed for,” says Conor Geraghty MVB CertDHH Outgoing President, Veterinary Ireland.

“In the current era where antimicrobials must be prudently prescribed, the time for distance prescribing and cherry picking is over. Human health must come before any other considerations.”

Paul Corkery PhD MVB DLS BL MBA is Head of Division, Veterinary Medicines, DAFM, Senior Superintending Veterinary Inspector at the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine. He is of the view that vets should prescribe the antimicrobial medicinal products based on their knowledge of antimicrobial resistance, their epidemiological and clinical knowledge and their understanding of the risk factors for the individual animal or group of animals.

“If an antimicrobial is administered or used incorrectly, this presents a risk to public or animal health. Therefore, antimicrobial veterinary medicinal products should only be available on veterinary prescription,” says Paul Corkery.

Joe Moffitt MVB MRCVS President of the Veterinary Council of Ireland, believes that increasing levels of resistance demands changes in our ways of operating to fight against resistance to antimicrobials and antiparasitics.

The day concluded with a presentation on *Mental Health—Wellbeing and Resilience* by David McKeown BVMS Cert SHP ARAGs MRCVS Vet Support Ireland and a session on *Financial Planning and Services* with Declan Gahan DSD QFA, Veterinary Ireland Financial Services Limited

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