

Veterinary Ireland Media Release 12th October 2018

FOOD SUSTAINABILITY, AMR & CALF HEALTH UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT AT VETERINARY CONFERENCE

Dramatic Changes to Profession Overseas: Panel Discussion Debates Potential Impact for vets, farmers and the public

Friday 12th October 2018: The Cattle Association of Veterinary Ireland (CAVI) Annual Conference took place in the Mullingar Park Hotel, Co Westmeath 12th- 14th October, 2018.

The conference programme covered a spectrum of subjects including Leadership with Dublin Senior Football Manager Jim Gavin. A Corporate Practice panel discussion on Saturday 13th October reviewed dramatic changes taking place in the structure of the veterinary profession worldwide and in the UK, debating whether these changes create opportunities or are bad for the veterinary profession, farmers and the public. Sustainability, herd expansion, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), animal health, calf health, nutrition and fertility were covered by international speakers and a panel of Irish experts.

The Opening Address was delivered by **Conor Geraghty**, Veterinary Ireland's CAVI Chairman, who also delivered a presentation on the role of the vet in sustainable agriculture and antimicrobial resistance (AMR). He was followed by **Michael Maloney** Director of Origin Green and Quality Assurance with Bord Bia, who spoke about sustainability on the first day of the Veterinary Ireland CAVI conference.

'The results of the global sustainability survey carried out this year across 13 different markets internationally, show the increasing importance of food sustainability, now and in the future,' according to Michael Maloney. He outlined how the Origin Green Programme was developed in response to market research which was positive towards Ireland as a producer of sustainable food, but needing to be able to provide proof on this.

Michael joined a session on Friday afternoon focussing on sustainability and AMR as well as the contribution of the beef and dairy sector to Ireland's economic revival, including **Bill Callanan**, Chief Inspector, Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine; and **Professor Martin Cormican**, National Clinical Lead for HCAI and AMR with NUI Galway.

DRAMATIC CHANGES IN VETERINARY PROFESSION OVERSEAS

A Corporate Practice panel discussion on Saturday 13th October reviewed the dramatic changes taking place in the structure of the veterinary profession worldwide and in the UK farm animal sector, debating whether these changes create opportunities or are bad for the veterinary profession, farmers and the public.

"Worldwide, the ownership of the veterinary profession is passing from qualified veterinary practitioners to big business," said **Chris Bainton**, Managing Director of VetCel. Mr Bainton maintains the view that looking after the needs of the independent veterinary practice should always be the primary focus; and expressed concerns that the vast majority of vets could only ever be employees in their own profession. He does not agree with developments in the UK, saying it "will end badly."

Dr Tim Potter BVETMED PHD MRCVS, who serves on Westpoints' Clinical Governance Board, pointed to the recent shift away from the traditional mixed practices towards specialist farm animal practices in the UK.

“More recently we have seen the beginning of corporatisation of the sector, offering new opportunities and career paths for large animal veterinary surgeons.” Dr Potter explored the opportunities such as development for new graduate through internship programmes; as well as on going CPD opportunities for vets throughout their careers. Dr. Potter shared his experiences of working in this environment and how it can facilitate clinical excellence through pillars such as clinical governance.

A review of the ownership of veterinary practice in Ireland is currently underway by the Veterinary Council of Ireland. While lay corporate ownership of veterinary practices is legal in some countries, it should be noted that there has been no change to the Veterinary Practice Act 2005 in relation to the practice of veterinary medicine in Ireland. ‘Any non-registered person carrying out act(s) of veterinary medicine as defined in Section 53 of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005 will be guilty of an offence and leave themselves open to prosecution’.

THE THREAT OF ANTI MICROBIAL RESISTANCE (AMR)

Martin Kavanagh MVB MRCVS Cert. DHH, a veterinarian from Tipperary who has been a Herd Health Consultant for 20 years, said that the inappropriate use of anti-microbials in the treatment and management of animal disease contributes to the development of resistant populations of pathological bacteria.

He discussed the threat of Anti Microbial Resistance (AMR) to both animal and human health. “The inevitable curtailment of antibiotic use will require a much greater understanding of the interrelationship between animal genetics, environment design, feed management, and the capacity of the people working with the animals, in order to prevent disease from impacting on the animals' health and welfare.”

Martin Kavanagh drew on experience of working in Scandinavia, where there are restrictions on the amount and type of antibiotics used by farmers and veterinary surgeons, looking at the concept of integrated systems in calf rearing in reducing calf 'sick days' and mortality, versus some of the current constraints in Irish systems to calf health and welfare.

IMPACT OF PRE-WEANING PERIOD ON PERFORMANCE OF DAIRY HEIFER CALVES

Professor Claire Wathes, Professor of Veterinary Reproduction, from the UK's Royal Veterinary College said that the pre-weaning period is extremely important for the future performance of dairy heifer calves.

“Getting management at this stage right, helps to ensure that mortality and disease are minimised and that growth rates are optimal. This in turn enables animals to achieve the optimal first calving age of 23-25 months and to fulfil their genetic potential as cows,” said Professor Wathes.

“At present pre-weaning growth rates on many farms do not meet the recommended weight increases of 0-7-0.8 kg/d. Although feeding more milk or milk replacer increases costs at the time, this should be recouped through the improved adult performance in the herd. In order to ensure that targets on health and growth are met, it is necessary to record and monitor these on a regular basis.”

CALF HEALTH – THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

Calf health from a young vet in practice perspective was the focus of a presentation by **Hazell Mullins** BVM&S, Abbeyville Veterinary Hospital in Cork. Hazel quoted three clinical case studies of common calf disease breakdowns considering clinical history, diagnosis, treatment and prevention.

She also explored how the role of vets in practice is vital to promoting a better standard of calf health in Ireland and reviews what can be learned as vets from other countries' practices.

TROUBLE SHOOTING & TRANSITION DIETS

Diet during the dry/transition period plays a crucial role in the metabolism and health of cow before and after calving, according to **Des Cronin**, Mervue Laboratories. His presentation looked at body condition requirement for both dairy and suckler cows, feed requirements and how to assess if these are being met on farm. It also looked at silage quality with some pointers on how to assess this quickly when looking at problems; and mineral requirements for cows during this period.

SURGICAL AND REPRODUCTIVE EXPERTS

International expert **Karin Mueller**, Senior Lecturer in Animal Husbandry & Reproduction from the University of Liverpool, presented on a range of surgery-related topics at the Veterinary Ireland conference.

Karin Mueller considered aspects that are common to most surgeries in cattle, like patient preparation, scrubbing protocols, choice of suture type and material, peri-operative medication, preventing hypothermia, and instrument care. Her presentation on liver biopsy and cerebro-spinal fluid collection provided a step-by-step guide on these useful ancillary diagnostic techniques. Karen also covered indications and logistics of on-farm fluid therapy including the key principles of IVFT and exploratory laparotomy.

ENDS

Date: 12th October, 2018

Issued by: Antonina Ni Dhuinn, Progress Communications
Tel: 01- 2766117 nina@progresspr.ie

Editorial Footnote:

You will find a copy of the conference schedule and full speaker line up here:

<https://caviconference.com/schedule.html>

You will find an introduction to the speakers here:

<https://caviconference.com/speakers.html>