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A member of IFAH,
the International Federation for Animal Health

Representing the Manufacturers
of UK Animal Medicines

NOAH's Manifesto for 2010

1. About NOAH

The National Office of Animal Health (NOAH) represents the UK animal medicines industry: its aim is to promote the benefits of safe, effective, quality medicines for the health and welfare of all animals.

The animal health industry is dedicated to providing safe, effective, quality medicines for the treatment and welfare of all animals, farm (food producing) animals or companion animals (pets, including horses). NOAH represents the companies that research, develop, manufacture and market licensed products in the United Kingdom. The association has 28 corporate members and 7 associate members.

In 2009 NOAH's members accounted for £452 million of sales, representing about 90% of the UK animal health market.

NOAH's member companies range from large multinational organisations to small independent UK companies. NOAH works closely with government and regulators including DEFRA and its agencies as well as other representative organisations concerned with ensuring the safety of food and ensuring the health and welfare of all animals.

NOAH wants to see government policies that are based on sound science, which are predictable and so enable businesses to invest, and which promote animal welfare, ensure food safety, encourage sustainable agriculture, make product information freely available and encourage research.

Issues which currently concern NOAH and its member companies include:

1. Over regulation

NOAH supports the principles of Better Regulation and believes the animal health industry in the UK is well regulated and controlled, through the Veterinary Medicines Regulations. These Regulations are reviewed annually, but as recent updates have seen relatively few significant changes, ***NOAH believes this frequency of update is no longer appropriate.***

2. The 1-1-1 concept

NOAH – and particularly through its membership of IFAH-Europe – has started to focus on the forthcoming European Commission review of the Veterinary Medicines Directive. Amongst the opportunities this brings is the chance to introduce a true single market for veterinary medicines in Europe by removing licensing barriers - the 1-1-1 concept. ***The idea is to introduce a licensing process based on 1 dossier / 1 assessment / 1 decision for marketing authorisations, valid throughout Europe.*** This will overcome some of the obstacles of the current systems and lead to a more efficient registration system with many advantages for all stakeholders. It will complete the evolution to a single European market – increasing competitiveness and efficiency in line with the Lisbon agenda – and help improve animal welfare by making the market more favourable to the development of new animal medicines and ensure new medicines reach the market as soon as possible.

3. Feeding the world

Animal medicines play a vital role in helping to meet the growing global demand for food. Healthy animals also help the environment through the reduction of methane emissions through the more efficient conversion of animal feed into food for human consumption. The control of disease on a national and global level means healthy animals, more efficient food production and, most importantly, less danger of transfer of disease to people.

4. Consumer attitudes to farm animal medicines and vaccination

A 2008 survey carried out by the Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD) on behalf of NOAH found that, overall, **UK consumers have confidence in those working in the food chain to use animal medicines appropriately and produce safe food**. Consumers are now more aware that medicines are used to prevent and treat disease. Encouragingly, they trust the effective controls in place, through producers and the regulatory authorities such as the Veterinary Medicines Directorate and Food Standards Agency.

With specific regard to vaccination, there is some misunderstanding: although 40% of consumers believe vaccination should be used to help prevent disease, one third are worried that vaccines can be transferred into the food we eat. **Consumers need to be informed and assured** that vaccines do not leave residues in food, particularly in light of the emergence of new animal diseases in Europe, such as bluetongue, where vaccines can play a key role.

5. Animal health and animal welfare – inextricably linked

NOAH believes animal health and welfare are inextricably linked and has been pleased over the past decade to support the development and implementation of DEFRA's Animal Health and Welfare Strategy through initiatives such as the England Implementation Group and Positive Farm Health Planning, and parallel initiatives in Scotland and Wales. However, it believes **that the creation of the proposed Animal Health Organisation (AHO) under the draft Animal Health Bill, with no animal welfare responsibilities, could be to the detriment of animal welfare**. Animal medicines are a critical part of the solution for a sustainable animal health and welfare policy. Sick farm animals are not efficient, and feed inputs are wasted. Sick companion animals cannot do their job, whether that is working with our security forces, as an assistance animal to people with disabilities or as a trusted friend.

We recognise that animal welfare is of great interest to the British public, but believe that **without good health there cannot be good welfare** – there needs to be freedom from pain and disease.

Companion animals have been mentioned within the consultation, but NOAH wonders **how, under the proposed structure, companion animal issues other than disease outbreaks will be covered**.

For example, many dogs and cats are not protected from preventable disease. It is important that dog and cat owners are aware of the benefits that medicines authorised for the prevention and treatment of disease can bring and use them as appropriate, seeking professional advice when necessary. This is why NOAH has created its Pet Health Information website www.pethealthinfo.org.uk. This is a welfare issue with a health solution which may fall between the DEFRA and the new AHO if it comes about in its current form.

6. Healthy animals = healthy food

Good access to medicines for farm animals is essential in managing animals' health and welfare, as well as the quality of the food we consume. NOAH upholds the principle that medicines should be used to treat disease **'as little as possible, but as much as necessary'**. It supports moves towards minimising the need for treatment, and using them only as part of a wider-ranging **proactive approach to farm health planning, which will include measures, such as vaccination, to help prevent disease**.

Responsible use of medicines on farms is vital to ensure the options available to manage farm animal health are maintained. NOAH highlights the **importance of a wide range of medicines being available**, from which vets and advisers can select the best option for each situation. It supports initiatives such as the RUMA (Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture) Alliance, **which works, through the development of guidelines such as those on antibiotics, to support and ensure responsible use**. RUMA can help the Government to fulfil its responsibilities towards the health and welfare of Britain's farm animals as well as public health and looks forward to the support of the new Government in the future. .

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