



News Flash 14

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Key issues for the animal health industry in Europe

New question #12- feedback from CNA members

During our 23 April it was agreed to add a new question 12 on key issues related to deconfinement, with a special feedback on the importance of securing the vet profession

12. Analysis of the impact on the vet profession

During the lockdown, in most countries veterinary services for food producing animals (incl supply of Vet Meds) were deemed essential, so they are operating normally, companion animal services were in general also deemed essential but usually the vets themselves restricted their activities to emergency procedures only (BE,CZ, DE, FR, GR, IE, PO, PT, NL, SP, SK, UK)








The following countries required vets to work respecting social distancing (DE, DK, GR, NL, NO, PO, SP, SW)

Where restrictions were observed (most countries), going back to normal will need to entail

- Supporting companion animal vets (CZ, DE, IT, FR, PO, NL, SP, SK)

Analysis of the impact on the animal health industry

- shortening of consultation timelines and attempts to “simplify” authorization procedures under the non-physical conditions. With the emergency legislation for COVID-19 a proposal was tabled to make applications public and dropping hearings. This is not specific to the veterinary sector, but would apply in general across industries.
- the reduced purchasing power will most likely have an impact especially on measures preventing disease, general health care, herd health management. (DE, IT, PO)
- Consumers show more appreciation for agriculture and food supply, but there is a certain stronger movement towards living closer to and with nature (DE).
- or on the contrary a stronger need to fight misinformation about intensive farming (IT). There will be a clear need to rebuild the image of meat and food producing animals (PO)
- international supply chains might suffer from more regionalization, this can be both a challenge or an opportunity for our industry.(DE)
- a sector to observe closely is Ho.Re.Ca as it is not yet possible to evaluate the impact the lockdown is having on this economic sector. (IT)
- the possibility to allow tele-diagnosis, tele-prescription and dispense at distance by the Vet will be a key issue to look at. This will require some legislative changes about the vet’s right to dispense veterinary medicines (this is not allowed at the moment by Law) (SP)
- ensuring rapid return of relations between our sales forces and their veterinary customers (FR).

12. Priorities in view of deconfinement with special focus on vet practices	
Country	
	<p>Belgium</p> <p>Nothing to report on this point. Vets have continued to operate and no member has expressed any concerns (for now).</p>
	<p>Czech Republic and Slovakia</p> <p>CZ: the vets were operating during the lockdown under specific conditions that might become a “common – post COVID” practice. Most challenging would be “prevention is better than a cure” approach (as some of the preventive actions (vaccination) were postponed due to the risk for human) as in some areas the owners were asked to focus only on the acute treatment. In “small” vet practices especially in remote areas that could be more challenging than in big municipalities.</p> <p>SK: the same situation as in CZ, regain the “preventive” action in small PET animals. It would be great to better accommodate the restrictions to the vet practices – small animals vs. large animals (horses).</p> <p>CZ&SK: both countries - no, veterinarians were operating during lock down and were visible to general public.</p> <p>In general: better support of “prevention”, focus on small business & businesses in remote areas, better accommodation on specific services – horses etc.</p>
	<p>France</p> <p>We must be compliant with the national deconfinement protocol published by the Ministry of Labor for companies to ensure the health and safety of employees.</p> <p>The objective of our companies is to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the fastest possible return to normal relations between our sales forces and their veterinary customers - by respecting the conditions of professional activity set by the deconfinement protocol set by the Government. <p>Our companies adapt to the conditions set by veterinarians:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meet face to face - or not according to their choice. <p>The organisation of visits depends on the legal statute of the different areas fixed in France (Red / orange / green)</p>
	<p>Germany</p> <p>Currently there are 3 major issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact on democratic structures and processes, e.g. by emergency legislation, digital consultation with that shortening of consultation timelines. But also attempts to “simplify” authorization procedures under the non-physically conditions. With the emergency legislation for COVID-19 a proposal was tabled We saw an attempt to make applications public and dropping hearings. This is not specific to the veterinary sector, but would apply in general across industries - Assessing the impact and consequences on our sector, for both farm and companion animal segment. First: Will the reduced purchasing power have an impact especially on measures preventing disease, general health care, herd health management. Second: Maybe other effects such as an even stronger movement towards living closer to nature. Or positively using the currently appreciation of agriculture for food supply. - Future of international supply chains and intention to regionalise again. What are challenge and chance for our industry. <p>Concerning the vet clinics, the situation in Germany is a bit like in the Netherlands. Vets are working under the limitations of social distancing.</p>
	<p>Greece</p> <p>The vet sector was remaining open during the “lockdown” and is continuing to stay open now, because of the essential character of the profession. During the “lockdown” the vets used to prioritize in the urgent cases of their clients, taking all the necessary protective measures (only one owner in the consultation room, more time between consults, safe distance of 2 metres, protective masks etc.), in accordance with government instructions.</p> <p>After the end of the “lockdown” they continue to operate, following the same instructions.</p> <p>Greek Veterinary Association has also given relevant instructions. Same situation with the farm animal veterinarians. Priority in the urgent cases and visits to the farms, following all the necessary and obligatory measures.</p> <p>Regarding the future, possible negative impact on the vets income, because of the economic difficulties of the citizens and the farmers. This could have an impact on vet pharmaceutical sector, in terms of revenues and credit collection. This will depend on the evolution of pandemic.</p>
	<p>Hungary</p>
	<p>Ireland</p> <p>In Ireland, Veterinary services for food producing animals (Incl supply of Vet Meds) are deemed essential, so operating as normal despite some earlier stockpiling by practitioners. Emergency companion animal services are also deemed essential so operating as normal. Non Emergency Companion Animal Services are suspended, although Veterinarians can decide on</p>

individual case basis what is deemed 'emergency'.

We have discussed the issues with Government and Veterinary Representative body, and are working towards achieving a solution that allows routine service to re-commence, whilst protecting the health and safety of Veterinarians, their staff, and companion animal owners.



Italy

Short term issue: to defend Veterinarians as essential services. Help Vet Association to convince Vets to reopen their companion animal clinics as well as help them to bring more people in. Establish official protocols for guaranteeing safety for both vets and pet owners & breeders.

As actions: We have highlighted the importance of keeping pets in good health and reminded pet owner that it's the right time for summer prophylaxis against ectos. Videos as well as an interview to MOH have been produced and massively distributed.

Medium term issues: Economic issue will be quite heavy both for Vets and citizens. This could have a negative impact on our industries in terms of revenues as well as credit collection. It is not possible to evaluate the impact of lockdown applied to Ho.Re.Ca business, yet.

We need also to fight the never-ending strong noise against intensive farming.



Nordic countries

The account for the Netherlands pretty much emulates the Nordics:

Open, distancing, essential goods & services – and largely business as usual.



Poland

As I mentioned during the last COVID-19 teleconference all veterinary practices generally operate normally in Poland. Vets have implemented the principles of self-protection and maintain social distancing. The Polish government treated everyone equally. There were no preferences for any branch of the economy.

Polprowet supported the National Veterinary Chamber initiative to recognize the work of veterinarians and VMPs as essential, but the appeal remains unanswered.

We estimate that CA practices will suffer the most in a pandemic, but this is when people run out of money. This moment has not yet occurred.

Livestock vets work normally, following the principles of self-protection and social distancing.

What the government should focus on is rebuilding the markets for animal origin food. Deliveries were interrupted and Poland as the largest poultry meat producer in Europe has a problem with its management. The same goes for beef, lamb and milk.

We manage quite well on an ad hoc basis, but we are afraid of the delayed effect.



Portugal

As of 4 May all restrictions on Vet clinics are cancelled. The operational organisation of veterinary clinics will continue under the responsibility of the technical director. From 20 March till 3 May, clinics were open only for emergencies and chronic diseases. Vaccinations were not being dispensed but will restart from 4 May.



Spain

Veterinary services (both for companion and farm animals) has been considered as essential from the declaration of the State of Alarm. Also, veterinary medicines, pet food and other animal health products have been considered essential. Clinics were exempted to be closed, our vets could carry out their activity both for companion and farm animals. Although those measures taken by the Government, supported by Veterindustria, the vet activity at companion animal level has decreased during the pandemic; the reason being vets admitting only urgent cases in first instance (in order to limit the spread of the virus).

In this context, our priority item will be to **ensure re-activation of activity at clinics level (particularly small animals**, as this has been the most affected sector in the veterinary field). We are working closely with Vet bodies to ensure that the activity is back to normal (some progress has been achieved with regards to regular prevention/treatments protocols), guaranteeing at the same time safety of vets and clients (like minimum distance, masks, etc.).

One of the future challenges will be the possibility to allow tele-diagnosis, tele-prescription and dispense at distance by the Vet. In our case, this will require some legislative changes about the vet's right to dispense veterinary medicines (this is not allowed at the moment by Law).

This will be considered a "priority topic" for Veterindustria, in that context, we will work together with the Vet profession bodies (council, regional colleges, scientific organisations, etc.), the Government (Ministry of Agriculture and Health) and the livestock organization in order to work together in a common strategy.



The Netherlands

With the 'intelligent lockdown' it has been possible for the majority of vet clinics in the Netherlands to stay open during the outbreak.

The Dutch government has asked sectors to think about a 1.5 meter social distancing and what adjustments should/could be

done. By maintaining 1.5 meters from other people, most veterinarians have been able to do their work. Large vet clinics have set up protocols for their employees in order to maintain this safe distance (only one owner in the consultation room, more time between consults etc.). The Dutch veterinary association will also make such a protocol. Farm animal veterinarians have been able to continue their activities. Regarding the securing of the vet profession, since there was no lockdown veterinarians were able to continue their work. In case a lockdown would have taken place, farm animals veterinarians would have been able to continue their work (as part of securing the safe production of food) and companion animals veterinarians could have possibly been added to the list of vital professions (they are not on the list at such at the moment).



United Kingdom

To put in context, UK is slightly behind many EU MSs on the COVID-19 timeline therefore we are still lockdown and awaiting further guidance from government; an announcement on the review of the lockdown is due to be announced by the Prime Minister this Sunday.

Livestock vets continue to operate more or less as normal and are classed as an essential service. Many companion animal practices have closed, reduced services or are only providing emergency cover. In the initial emergency response this was understandable as vets attempted to comply with governments social distancing measures and some have moved on to introduce good control measures allowing client consultations. Some of the early guidance from the veterinary associations was not as clear as we would have liked and created some confusion/lack of confidence in what vets needed to do. Concerns about companion animal health & welfare are now surfacing as the lockdown continues. NOAH is now lobbying government to highlight this and move the focus to considering the actions required to protect pet health & welfare as we move out of lockdown to recovery.

Similar to above; we need our vet profession as a whole to work together to a) build confidence in vets to re-open/re-introduce services and b) introduce measures to allow clients to safely access services for their companion animals.

NOAH is lobbying government and other stakeholder organisations to highlight this and move the focus to considering the actions required as we move out of lockdown to recovery.