



News Flash 6

Status 3 April 2020 19.00

Key issues for the animal health industry in Europe






Update on two new questions - feedback from CNA members

During the second “special Covid-19” call on 26 March, National associations were asked to give feedback on two questions: one on National association exchanges with vets and on local vet initiatives, the other on the status of tele prescriptions. CNA members shared their feedback with the Secretariat. Below a short summary of the answers received for each of the two questions. In the pages that follow, you will find detailed information per country/per question. NB the numbering follows that of the first update (See News Flash 4)


8. All our associations maintain close contact and are in communication with their respective Chambers for Veterinarians and other Vet organisations in order to monitor the Covid-19 crisis and the implications for the vets.
9. The situations are very different from one country to another. Members have highlighted that there are two different issues to be addressed: tele consultation and tele prescription

Tele consultation: In some countries this is accepted / tolerated under certain circumstances e.g. the veterinarian has to know the animal (CZ, UK, NL, ES, SK, SE). In France a decree is in preparation in the form of an experiment until the end of 2020 (FR).

Tele prescription: In almost every country tele prescription is not allowed. Either because vets are considered as essential businesses (ES), or the ratio: geography of the country/number of vets is very big (NO), or the situation is extreme, so authorities tolerate it (IT). In UK however RCVS Council has decided that remote prescribing of POM-V medicines should be permitted where it is appropriate to do so. This position will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and in any event no later than on 30 June 2020 (UK).

8. Feedback on National association exchanges with vets and on local vet initiatives	
Country	
	Belgium n.a.
	Czech Republic and Slovakia We are in regular contact with our respective Chamber of veterinarians thanks to our longstanding relation.
	France The official body of the vet profession is in permanent contact with us. The main points are the safety of veterinary practice / versus emergency medicine and the messages to the general public (pets are safe). For more information https://www.veterinaire.fr/la-profession/boite-a-outils-covid-19.html
	Germany BfT is in exchange with the veterinary chamber and the association of the veterinary practitioners. The practitioners association together with other training providers have informed veterinarians in a webinar about questions in context of the pandemic e.g. recognition of the veterinary profession as system relevant, guidance for the daily work, federal financial support for enterprises negatively affected by the pandemic, telemedicine etc. A voluntary initiative by the German veterinary society became obligatory, at least in the State of Hesse which has released the order to notify the competent health authority about suitable respirator equipment. This does include those stationed in vet clinics. It has been agreed by the federal and Lander MoHs to increase corona test capacities across Germany through the use of veterinary diagnostic laboratories. In the first step, state laboratories are involved. Regionally, there are already inquiries for support by private vet laboratories.
	Greece The vets continue to work but day by day they realize a reduction of their income as a lot of appointments for surgical operations, vaccination etc. are cancelled or have been postponed to a later date. The Vet Association proposed and managed to include


the vets in the financial aids of the government (02/04 we had the official announcement of the government that has included the vets in the relevant measures). Some local vet associations have already started to ask for prolongation of the payment terms from the vet companies. All national vet congresses have been cancelled.
There are no shortages of Animal Health products until now, however there is shortage in protective equipment such as masks, hand sanitizers and gloves.
Employees of Animal Health companies are working remotely and no visits to vets are performed.

 **Hungary**


Regular follow-ups with the HU Vet Chamber.
Vet clinics and pharmacies can still operate. Number of patients is decreasing due to measures and mainly taking emergency cases.

 **Ireland**

Vets are trying to continue as normal for food producing animals - all emergency work, routine work and disease eradication work. For Companion animals Vets continue to provide necessary service. Elective service is paused. The situation for equines is less clear as they can be classified as food producing or companion.

 **Italy**

I am in regular touch with the President of Vet Association and he updates me on how the things are going on. Small clinics are closed, ready to open for emergency. Big clinics are open. They try to postpone routine vaccination and other procedures that can be postponed. Many clinics are in touch with their clients through social media.
All national and international vet congresses have been cancelled.
Sadly, we have to announce that two vets passed away because of COVID-19.

 **Nordic countries**


We are in close contact (weekly ad hoc calls) with the veterinarian associations in DK, SE, NO and are exchanging relevant information as it surfaces (on 'essential services' measures and such).

 **Poland**

The only feedback is from the Veterinary Chamber. Leaders of Regional Vet Chambers (16 in Poland) gather information from their members on any shortages in supplies and disturbances at work. So far no complaints about VMPs shortages or problems with deliveries.
There are shortages in supplies of personal protection equipment for vets visiting farms, but a bigger problem is lack of information flow between MoH and MoA about farmers being on quarantine. Vets visiting farms are not sure if they are safe and later if they do not spread a virus!

 **Portugal**


Two Scenarios:
1- Some contacts are remote. No face to face meetings with exception of particular technical support requested by vet (especially in livestock). Contacting vets by teleconferences, videoconferences and trainings by webinars (specially CA vets)
2- Just urgent consultations with pre reservation. Reduction of time schedules on pet clinics. Vet teams have different times schedules to avoid potential contaminations between them. Owners of animals are not allowed to come into installations.

 **Spain**

Veterindustria maintains a close contact and communication with the Council of vets and other vets organisations in order to monitor the Covid-19 crisis and the implications for the vets. As stated above, veterinary activity has been considered essential in the new rules restricting further the movement of people to the workplaces, so vet activity can continue in the whole country (for companion and food producing animals).
Vet council and the regional colleges have produced material with recommendation both to society and the vets to stop the transmission of the virus.
There has been also some impact on the media about the important activity of vets in order to ensure public health, food safety, etc. in the framework of the crisis.

 **The Netherlands**

FIDIN has a weekly call with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Vet organisations regarding the actualities that play during the COVID-19 crises. Further, there are informal contacts daily with the Vet organisations to align our policies. Most important subjects: how should a veterinarian perform its job within the 1.5 metre distance rule (e.g. use of e-health solutions). Provision of respiratory equipment for human health, availability of propofol for human health.

 **United Kingdom**

We have been in close contact with our national veterinary associations and the Royal College over issues such as 'essential worker' status and veterinary medicines supply. Useful guidance for vets has been produced:
<https://www.bva.co.uk/news-and-blog/news-article/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-updates-for-the-veterinary-profession/>
<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/coronavirus-covid-19/>

9. Report on the status of tele prescriptions	
Country	
	<p>Belgium</p> <p>Technically the possibility to prescribe VMP electronically does not exist in Belgium. However, as 99% of VMP are delivered directly by veterinarians to the owner of the animals most communication is handled electronically. For deliveries to farmers a specific document (TVD – Administration and Delivery Document) is transmitted to them, for pet owners the VMP delivered are recorded in the vet's registry of delivered VMP.</p>
	<p>Czech Republic and Slovakia</p> <p>Tele consultations are possible but not the preferred option – it is not possible however to prescribe a medicine as a result of such a consultation - the vet always has to see the animal first. However, if we're in a situation of continuity of treatment then tele prescription is allowed. NB For food production animals and for antibiotics tele prescription is never allowed.</p>
	<p>France</p> <p>The use of teleconsultation will be tested by the veterinary profession. A decree is in preparation to give the framework in the form of an experiment until 31/12/2020</p>
	<p>Germany</p> <p>During the seminar mentioned under Q8 technical and legal information about telemedicine was given. In Germany the practical clinical examination is still a basic element also laid down in the legislation. The profession is asking to move toward the new European legislation: A prescription should only be issued by a veterinarian for the animals treated by him "after a clinical examination or another appropriate examination of the state of health of the animal or group of animals".</p>
	<p>Greece</p> <p>Tele prescription is not allowed. Two days ago the government announced the beginning of internet prescription procedure for human medicines, but for vet medicines the classical procedures are applying, as the vets and the pharmacies (human and vets) are open and continue to work. Until now, we have no electronic prescription procedure in force, so there isn't any relevant experience or platform. We know that it's in the plans of the Ministry of Agriculture, but the discussion hasn't started yet.</p>
	<p>Hungary</p> <p>n.a.</p>
	<p>Ireland</p> <p>Vets are resisting this potential development for now, as they don't want emergency measures that may become the 'new' norm. They are also trying to protect the integrity of prescribing protocol.</p>
	<p>Italy</p> <p>Even if tele prescription is not allowed by law and MoH has not sent out any note related to tele prescriptions yet, vets are doing it, mainly with companion animals. Thanks to the electronic prescriptions it is very easy to do it, electronic copy of the prescription goes at the same time to pet owner's smartphone and to pharmacy database. In case you are not able to go to the pharmacy, medicines will be delivered at home.</p>
	<p>Nordic countries</p> <p>DK No changes yet, but the Danish vet association is in close contact with the authorities to gauge extension if conditions change SW Up to the individual veterinarian to judge whether a video- or teleconference is sufficient (official answer from regulators to vet clinic chain) NO Extended possibilities for tele prescriptions (large country with very, very few vets in the 'outback' so it's almost a given)</p>
	<p>Poland</p> <p>Veterinary inspection working under MoA commented that anything what is not valid by law cannot be considered as an option even in this difficult situation. Neither tele consultation, nor tele prescription are allowed.</p>
	<p>Portugal</p> <p>Some CA vets are providing tele consultation for first cares and first diagnoses. We don't know if there is tele prescription or which selected products, no information for now.</p>
	<p>Spain</p> <p>The Ministry of Agriculture, responsible Authority in Spain for the prescription of VMPs, has released a note stating that for both food producing animals and veterinary clinics, vets have to prescribe in situ after the clinical visit. The reason is that vet clinics and vets for food producing animals can continue their activity under the emergency status. Only in exceptional and fully</p>

justified circumstances, vets could make the diagnosis at distance, based on the knowledge of the clinical and epidemiological information, etc.



The Netherlands

Tele prescriptions are possible under certain circumstances (the veterinarian has to know the animal in order to perform a proper diagnosis). No further relaxation of rules at this moment.



United Kingdom

Under normal circumstances, this is not permitted by the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct however, RCVS Council has decided that there should be a temporary departure from this position and that **remote prescribing of POM-V medicines should be permitted** where it is appropriate to do so. RCVS Council will review this position on an ongoing basis and in any event, no later than 30 June 2020.

<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/coronavirus-covid-19/>