

VICH reaches out to non-VICH regions

Paris, 24 June 2010 - Regulatory authorities, animal health industry experts, and other interested delegates from around the world gathered in Paris this week to learn more about the activities and progress of the VICH project since its inception 14 years ago, and how it plans to reach out to other regions of the world not actively involved in VICH¹.

The fourth public conference on the International Harmonisation of Technical Standards for Veterinary Medicinal Products - "VICH impact and future expectations"(VICH 4) - is taking place on 24-25 June 2010 at the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Headquarters in Paris. More than 160 delegates from 30 countries are expected to attend the event. Bernard Vallat, Director General of OIE, states, *"Access to good quality and officially registered veterinary medicinal products for all veterinarians and animal owners in the world is crucial. To this end, the OIE works closely with and fully supports VICH activities which it considers the reference international body to issue guidelines on technical requirements relating, among others, to the registration of veterinary medicinal products."*

The 4-yearly event rotates between the three member regions (Japan – US – Europe) and on this occasion is hosted by Europe, through the European industry association IFAH - Europe. Martin Terberger from the European Commission underlined the importance played by VICH and stressed the European Union's commitment to actively engage in the process

Eric Marée, President of the International Federation of Animal Health's (IFAH) Board of Directors and Chairman of the Management Board of Virbac explains, *"VICH is a unique project which brings together the regulatory authorities of the European Union, Japan and the United States, as well as experts from the animal health industry in these respective regions to discuss scientific and technical aspects of new product registration."* Regulatory authorities and industry experts from Australia, Canada and New Zealand participate as observers. The OIE is an associate member of VICH and on this occasion the direct involvement of OIE in the development and hosting of this conference facilitates participation from OIE's member countries.

This week's conference has two main objectives:

- To publicly review the achievements of the VICH initiative since its inception in 1996; to critically assess the benefits and the impact on companies and regulatory agencies; to discuss the future expectations of all VICH stakeholders.
- To learn directly from non-VICH member countries what their needs and expectations are from VICH.

The conference provides direct access via 6 workshops to members of the expert working groups responsible for drafting the VICH guidelines. A further 3 workshops are devoted to exploring the role of VICH in the global regulatory environment, plans for a VICH Global Outreach Strategy, and the value and future vision of VICH.

In his role as chair of the 24th VICH Steering Committee meeting, which takes place the same week, David Mackay (Head of the Veterinary Medicines and Product Data Management Unit, European Medicines Agency), presents some thoughts surrounding the

conference: *“The VICH process is now sufficiently mature to start looking beyond the initial aim of harmonising technical requirements in participating regions. It is time to start considering how the achievements made to date can impact at a global level. We look forward to hearing from our stakeholders how best they think this can be achieved. ”*

¹ VICH: The International Cooperation on Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for the Registration of Veterinary Medicinal Products

For further information on VICH, please consult the VICH website at :
www.vichsec.org

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Note to Editors:

IFAH, the International Federation for Animal Health, represents the manufacturers of veterinary medicines, vaccines and other animal health products in both developed and developing countries across five continents. Its goal is to promote a harmonised, science - based regulatory and trade framework, and marketplace environment that supports an animal health industry which is economically viable and innovation -driven, contributing to a healthy and safe food supply as well as high levels of animal health and welfare. For further information on IFAH, please visit www.ifahsec.org.

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