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PRESS RELEASE

The 15th VICH Steering Committee meeting determines the strategy for VICH until 2010 and finalises the VICH3 conference programme

The VICH Steering Committee determined its 5-year strategy 2006-2010 during its 15th meeting on 19 and 20 October 2004 in Berlin. VICH strategy will continue to include the development of new Guidelines; increased emphasis will however be put on a cost/benefit analysis. The Steering Committee recognised moreover that regular monitoring and updating of the implemented Guidelines will become more important.

An important step was achieved by the sign-off of the Phase II Environmental Risk Assessment - Ecotoxicity Guideline at step 6, VICH Guideline 38 *(Environmental Impact assessment – Phase II*), for implementation in the 3 regions by October 2005.
The Steering Committee congratulated the members and the chairman of the Expert Working Group for the successful conclusion of 2 VICH Ecotoxicity Guidelines and the sustained commitment to this difficult task.

The Steering Committee also signed off the first draft Target Animal Safety Guideline at step 4, VICH GL 41 (*Reversion to Virulence – Examination of live Veterinary Vaccines in Target Animals for Absence of Reversion to Virulence*), which was released for a 6-month public consultation period.

The Steering Committee confirmed the direction for the Pharmacovigilance activities and reviewed the work of the Expert Working Groups on Quality, Target Animal Safety and Biologicals Quality Monitoring.

The Steering Committee finalised the programme of the VICH3 international conference which will be hosted by the USA on 26 & 27 May 2005 in Washington DC. The programme will focus on some of the 41 Guidelines that have been published in draft form or as final Guidelines since the creation of VICH in 1996. VICH's strategy for future achievements in 2006-2010 will also be an important discussion topic of the conference.

Participants to the conference are therefore warmly welcomed to take part in the exchanges of information which will take place in special Focus sessions where the following VICH topics will be addressed: Ecotoxicity, Biologicals Quality Monitoring, Quality, Safety, Pharmacovigilance, Antimicrobial Resistance and Target Animal Safety.
FDA Acting Commissioner, Dr L. Crawford, will open the conference and key-note speaker Dr P. Lichtinger, President of Pfizer Animal Health, will address the Industry perspective of global trends in Veterinary Medicine.

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The 16th meeting of the Steering Committee is scheduled for 24, 25 and 28 May 2005, in Washington DC (USA).

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MEMBERS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE
EU: European Commission - European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products
JMAFF: Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
USA: US Food & Drug Administration – Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) and US Department of Agriculture – Center for Veterinary Biologics (USDA/CVB)
AHI: US Animal Health Institute
IFAH-EUROPE: A division of IFAH, International Federation for Animal Health
JVPA: Japanese Veterinary Products Association

OBSERVERS
Australia/New Zealand: Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA)/New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA)
Avcare/AGCARM: National Association for Crop Production & Animal Health (Australia)/Agricultural Chemicals & Animal Remedies Manufacturers' Association of New Zealand
Canada: Health Canada (HC) - Veterinary Drugs Directorate (VDD) and Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) - Veterinary Biologics Section (VBS)
CAHI: Canadian Animal Health Institute

ASSOCIATE MEMBER
OIE: International Office of Epizootics

INTERESTED PARTIES
AVBC: Association of Veterinary Biologics Companies (USA)
CAMEVET: Representing Authorities and Industry Associations from Latin American countries

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