



Seminar “Stray dogs: present and future”

3 June 2015, Iași, Romania

REPORT

Welcome by Chair, Christophe Buhot, FVE President

CB welcomed all participants and congratulated the Romanian colleagues for organising such a meeting.

Opening speeches by

- Christophe Buhot, FVE President Stray dogs is a One Health issue where veterinarians play a vital role. It causes serious risks for animal health and welfare but also for public health and welfare.
- Viorel Andronie CRV President

Presentation by DG Sante European Commission by A. Kostorz (given by Nancy De Briyne, FVE due to sickness Mrs. Kostorz)

The presentation underlined the limited competence of the European Union in the field of the welfare of companion animals, with stray animals in particular the enormous amounts of concerns they receive from EU citizens on the issue of stray dogs and the activities the European Union supports in this field.

See presentation online

Presentation by OIE on Stray dog strategy from OIE AW Platform Europe by N. Leboucq

The presentation showed the OIE stray dog strategy in the Balkan area (11 countries) in regard to stray dogs. The aim is to get all these 11 countries compliant with the OIE standards by 2025. The OIE developed a self-assessment survey, aiming to assess the situation in the country and to identify the main challenges. On a later stage, this same survey will be used to assess progress. The data out of



the first survey will be used to set up stray dog country profiles and dedicated programs. The first self-assessment was launched in February this year and the aim was to assess the situation in the countries. 10 out of the 11 countries answered.

Main weaknesses identified were the lack of resources and insufficient enforcement. Most countries identified they need external support, mostly on education and raising awareness.

A first OIE region meeting was held in Bucharest in 2014, a next stray dog conference will be held in

June next year. N. Leboucq also presented the awareness campaign OIE is developing in regard to stray dog.

See presentation online

Stray dog situation in Romania by Dr. Ciurea Adina

Romania has about 3.5 mj owned dogs and about 300 000 stray dogs (2014 data). Romania has 125 dog shelters; 82 belonging to municipalities and 43 to NGOs. She explained the legislative framework in respect to stray dog in Romania. The law allows euthanizing dogs if not claimed after 14 days. All owned dogs need to be sterilised and identified and registered. So far more than 1, 2 Mj have been I&R and over 110000 have been sterilised.

All shelters need to be visited at least once a year. She presented the number of dogs in 2014 being brought into shelters (both public and private shelters), the number of animals adopted and the number of animals euthanized.

See presentation online

Discussion

Zsolt Pinter, Hungarian Vet Chamber, congratulated FVE, FECAVA and UEVP with the adoption of the position paper on stray dog management.

Veronique Bellemain, President EASVO, underlined the importance of government leadership in this issue.

Some discussion took place on the critical issue of euthanasia. When should euthanasia be allowed and who should do it? It was generally agreed that euthanasia should always be done by a veterinarian and in accordance with agreed standards. Euthanasia should only be done when the welfare of dogs or the safety of persons cannot be assured. Euthanasia is no solution for the core problem and the possibility of doing euthanasia should not be abused. Veterinarians are educated to cure animals; they do not like to euthanize healthy dogs and cats! It should be discussed per country and per region with all actors involved including citizen's when euthanasia is the most fitting outcome. Data collection on euthanasia and transparency in the issue is crucial.

Erik van Tilburg, OIE focal point Animal Welfare, congratulated OIE for the development of the communication campaign. He wondered whether this campaign will be available in the different languages. OIE answered that they will need the help of the member states to organise all



translations.

Some questions were asked on the effectiveness of trap/neuter/release programs.

Trap/neuter/release programs should only be used as part of a holistic program, otherwise they will be very resource demanding and will not solve the root of the problem.

Presentation FVE/UEVP/FECAVA position (Monique Megens/ Andrew Robinson)

Monique Megens, President FECAVA and Andrew Robinson, President UEVP, presented the recently adopted FVE, FECAVA and UEVP paper on stray dog control: Every dog deserves a caring owner.

http://www.fve.org/uploads/publications/docs/003_stray_dogs_position_paper_adopted_22_may_2015.pdf

See presentation online

ICAM-coalition: protocols to measure effectiveness of dog population programs by Joe Anzuino

The ICAM coalition is an umbrella organisation of several animal welfare and veterinary organisations.

See <http://www.icam-coalition.org/>

See presentations given at the 2nd dog population conference of ICAM Istanbul, April 2015 :

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUxbHogTwKJIT15-UeeklKA>

ICAM also developed a guide to assess the effectiveness of dog population measures

http://www.icam-coalition.org/downloads/ICAM_Guidance_Document.pdf

The welfare basis for euthanasia of dogs and cats and policy development <http://www.icam-coalition.org/downloads/ICAM-Euthanasia%20Guide-ebook.pdf>

See presentation online

CARDog & CARocat: Key components for Responsible Ownership by Marlene Wartenberg

The presentation tried to explain the legal provision and a request for legal-linguistic clarifications. She presented the main components of the CaroDog and CaroCat website.

See presentation online

Showing veterinary leadership in this area: Poland by Dr Krzysztof Jażdżewski

Dr Krzysztof Jażdżewski, deputy CVO Poland, presented the main components of the stray dog management program they have implemented in Poland.



See presentation online

Discussion

Sara Turetto commented that in Romania both from the field of the NGO's and from the side of the Romanian government, communication has not always been perfect. She questioned the accuracy of the data presented by Mrs. Ciurea and requested these data to be made publicly available. Mrs. Ciurea responded that the Romanian government aims to work closely together with stakeholders. The data she presented were derived from the official reports.

Rafael Laguens, college of Spanish veterinarians, emphasised that identification and registration is crucial. Identification alone is not enough; it needs to go together with registration. In Spain the registration is 2,72 euros/dog/one time for all their lives. Transparency is very important both for NGO's and for competent authorities.

Mr. Dimitriu suggested finding a way to increase collaboration between Romanian authorities and NGO's. He requested some clarification about standards and the transparency of shelters and regarding the price of microchipping. Mrs Ciurea and Dr. Viorel Andronie answered the different questions. Mrs. Ciurea ensured veterinary inspectors are very committed to checking the standards in shelters and all shelters are regularly checked. However, resources of the veterinary inspectorate are limited and shelters are only one of the many duties they have. Dr. Viorel Andronie answered the questions in regard to the database.

Dr Krzysztof Jażdżewski emphasised that Rome isn't built in one day. Building a good dog population management program needs time and many resources. From an administrative point of view, you can make a perfect law but it will only be perfect if it implemented well and enforced well. This is much more difficult. It needs time and all working in the right directions. It also should be recognised that the power of the administration is limited; eg. If a shelter is not good, the government can close it. But what happens with all animals in the shelter? In the end, one has to think about what is best for the animals.

A veterinarian who is also an owner of a private shelter requests more clarity about what the rules are regarding shelters. Local councils are not always best informed. Mrs. Ciurea answered that it is important to work together and to have local councils very informed. He also asked to clarify if FVE/FECAVA and UEVP is against cross-country adoption. Mrs. Megens indeed clarified that the position paper asks to avoid cross-country adoption due to that this is no long term solution, different areas have different disease situations and in many countries shelters are full already. Mrs. Marlene Wartenbergh added that cross-border adoption is a tool for a crisis situation but is not a permanent solution.



Hans-Joachim Gotz, Germany asked about the difference between percentage euthanasia in private shelters and public shelters. Mrs. Ciurea answered that she is not sure of the reason as they have to further analyse this.

Conclusions by FVE President

- Collaboration is vital between all actors ; private-public collaboration
- No miracle solution exist, stray dog control can only work via a long-term strategy, multi-stakeholder approach and tailored to the region, no one size fits all solution
- Stray dog management needs a lot of resources and money and political will as well as a proper enforcement
- Having data, being transparent and measuring the effectiveness of all programs is very important
- Euthanasia needs special attention and needs good agreement on when allowed
- We should all together promote responsible ownership and ID & R, educate people, especially children.

Afternoon: shelter visit for max 50 persons (14.30-16.30)

In the afternoon a visit took place to a shelter nearby.