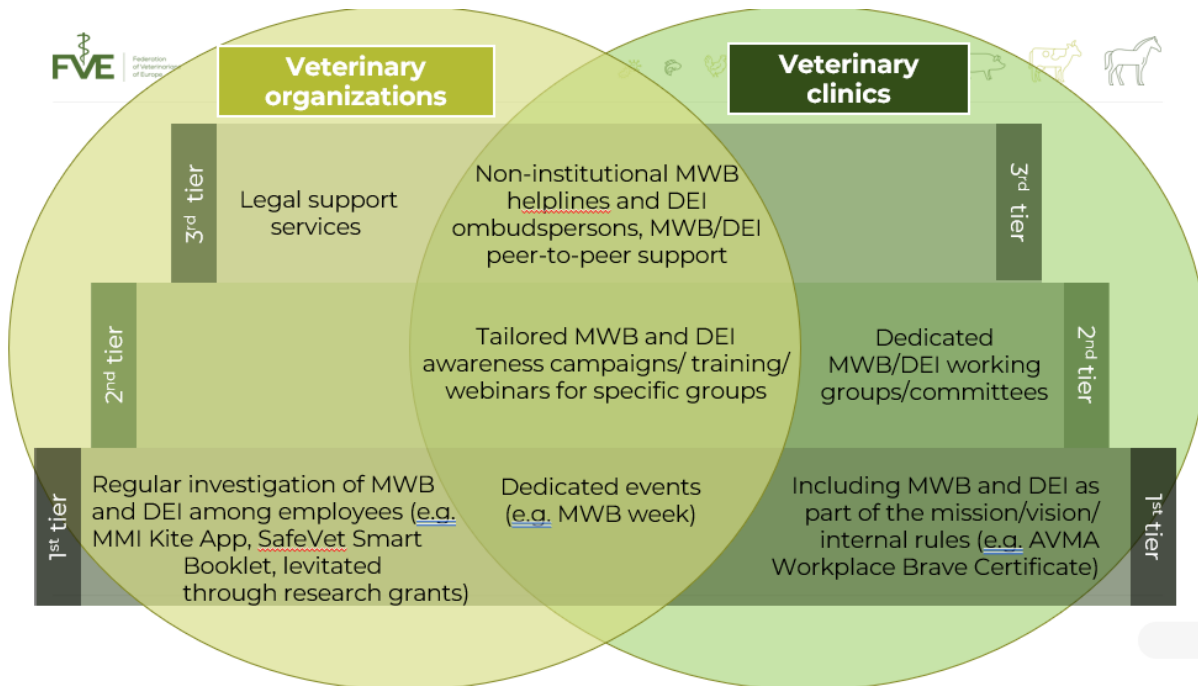




FVE/2022/reports/116

Name of Representatives: Rens van Dobbenburgh, Mette Uldahl, Nancy de Briyne, Wiebke Jansen, Megi Tahiri	
Title of Meeting: FVE Webinar on mental well-being, diversity, equity and inclusiveness in the veterinary profession	
Location: Online	Date & Time: 16 December - 15h00-16h30 CET
Attached information: Slides HERE - Agenda HERE	
Areas for FVE action: MWB and DEI	
<p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>FVE & Zoetis hosted a joint webinar on December 16th to present the report on mental well-being, diversity, equity and inclusiveness in the veterinary profession!</p> <p>FVE & Zoetis were pleased to have had the opportunity to start a dedicated project looking at available support programmes for mental well-being and diversity, equity and inclusiveness including a global survey, two webinars and targeted interviews.</p> <p>At the webinar, the key findings and recommendations on the outcomes were presented and discussed with an expert panel to shape the future of the veterinary profession.</p> <p>Please find the key findings HERE - Recommendations HERE - Full report HERE</p> <p><u>Report</u></p> <p>The event was moderated by Patric Maurer, LGBTQI+ Germany and brought together students and industry representatives, young graduates, practitioners and veterinary associations to discuss the key findings and recommendations based on the 2021 FVE/WVA/Zoetis survey. R. van Dobbenburgh (FVE President) welcomed all the participants and highlighted the FVE work tackling the issue of veterinary well-being, while there are many areas of the intersection between MWB and DEI that remain to be elucidated. The FVE president highlighted the unique situation of veterinarians, torn between passion and compassion-fatigue.</p> <p>Florentine Timmenga presented the outcome of the FVE/WVA/ZOETIS mental health & DEI Survey 2021, on which her 4-month internship in 2021 at the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe focused.</p> <p><i>‘While surveying the FVE and WVA members last year, we discovered that MWB programmes with 93% are more prevalent than DEI programmes with 44%.</i></p> <p><i>However, 54% of veterinary organisations and 26% of veterinary clinics who answered our survey had explicitly designated MWB as a key priority area within their dedicated budget and 58% of the veterinary organisations and 33% of the veterinary clinics explicitly designated DEI as a key priority area within their designated budget. DEI support programmes are much less available compared to MWB support programmes. Programmes that do exist are often in their infancy.’ She said</i></p>	

Florentine highlighted activities in each tier that were identified to improve the MWB and DEI in the veterinary profession.



Conclusions

- Results from the English-speaking countries spotlighted the importance of MWB and DEI, but more research is needed in many other countries
- Implementation strategies to increase MWB/Dei awareness must reach all veterinarians at all levels of their professional careers
 - Webinars were universally stated as being very effective in creating awareness AND having a large impact, but underemployed
 - Individual veterinarians in need will highly benefit from a tailored approach
- More research is needed to design an objective and universally applicable scoring system to rate effectiveness
- Change will also be needed in the veterinary work culture and environment!

Jamie Brannan, Executive Vice President and President of International Operations and Aquaculture at Zoetis, and responsible for commercial operations in over 120 international markets and the global aquaculture business, underlined his leadership style with a focus on people, driving colleague



engagement, development and mental health and wellbeing programs to support colleagues around the world. He presented the support provided in the veterinary profession through the Zoetis foundation, including the “Vet for a Day” program allowing underserved students the opportunity to experience the veterinary profession.

Supporting mental health in the veterinary profession through the Zoetis Foundation



Scholarship funds support a Ph.D. fellowship for research to **improve understanding of suicide risk in veterinarians** and help inform suicide prevention



Veterinary Mental Health Initiative: **provide evidence-based, culturally competent, and multi-level mental health support services to veterinarians** by expert clinicians



Exploring the **vital role of the human-animal bond** in the health and well-being of people, pets and the veterinary community



Well on our Way: well-being program curated from notable well-being professionals in veterinary medicine
Pathways to Change: generate organizational well-being solutions for veterinary medical education through evidence-based approaches



zoetis

In the panel discussion, Konstantina Louka (IVSA), representative of the educational space, Tim Shearman (VetPartners), representing the practitioners and Léonard Théron (UPV Belgium) representing a veterinary association reflected on two poll questions answered by the audience and the key recommendations of the survey. The FVE President commented that this survey mostly touches on actions and wondered if it would be possible to elaborate on causes for the problem, which makes us different compared with other professions.

On a scale from 1 to 10, the participants (n=25) indicated that THE ISSUE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSIVENESS CONCERN OR AFFECTED them with a high score of 8.4.

Leonard Theron noted that UPV (Belgium Professional union) polled 550 vets, practicing or not, on why they don't believe being a veterinarian is a dream anymore. Lizzie Locket commented that the RCVS have been working in this area for a long time. The risk is that if you increase awareness around poor mental health and risk of suicide is that younger vets see it as a foregone conclusion that they will become unwell. So, they moved the narrative towards focusing on the positives and how to maintain health. This is an evolution: we needed to go through that first phase to get to this second one. Julija Abram (FECAVA) echoed Lizzies words on the necessity to build resilience and take responsibility, Maybe, talk less about the stress and burnout and more about what to do with it as stress is a part of life - we need to learn how to deal with it. Peter Graham agreed that helping develop increased resilience is a big part of the potential solutions but only in part. If the work environment is unhealthy, then we must be careful that when that environment causes damage, we don't have the message that "you didn't work hard enough on your resilience". Fixing unhealthy work environments (although multifactorial) must be part of the approach. Lizzie added that indeed,



workplaces need to work harder. But we need to reframe it all as 'things are getting better, here's what we are all doing to improve' rather than 'you will have a breakdown, it's a question of when'.

On the question HOW CAN WE PROMOTE DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSIVENESS IN THE VETERINARY COMMUNITY?, 22 participants gave answers, which were categorised and compiled in a word cloud (Tab. 1 and Fig. 1).

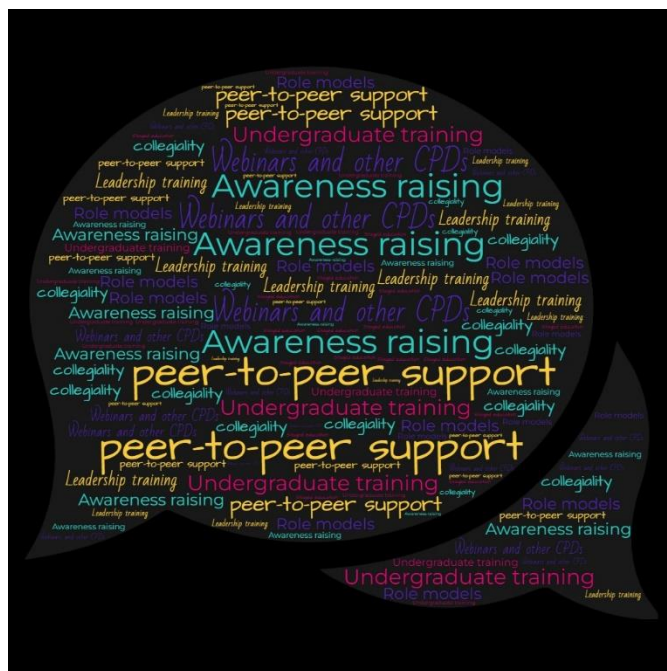
Table 1. Reflections from 22 webinar participants on how to promote DEI in the veterinary community.

Answer	Thematic categories
Making everybody feel welcome	peer-to-peer support collegiality
Meetings or webinars dedicated to the topic	Webinars and other CPDs
Increase awareness for global HR science in our core training. More and more vets are company owners with a lot of people working for them. We are not trained.	Leadership training
By making sure no one is left behind. It's all or none kind of thing	peer-to-peer support collegiality
Continue conversations and trainings	peer-to-peer support Webinars and other CPDs
More knowledge and information:)	Webinars and other CPDs
Both awareness and direct action in specific areas	Awareness raising
Teaching these topics at University, create awareness there.	Undergraduate education Awareness raising
Awareness is everything it should start with!	Awareness raising
Awareness one relevant topics or challenges due to. eg trough webinars?	Awareness raising Webinars and other CPDs
create rollmodels, awareness campaigns	Role models Awareness raising
By discussing about it more and more, fighting the stigma, promoting the importance of supporting one another and staying together.	peer-to-peer support collegiality
Staged education/awareness. That is so often what is available on EDI awareness covers simple/early review which doesn't encourage people to keep coming back to the topic. A level 1, level2 etc approach might help keep people engaged in the longer term with eg webinar programmes.	Staged education Webinars and other CPDs
Just talk about it. We need more collegiality in veterinary community. More team events to make better bonds. Good leadership - as vets who are the owners of the clinic, are not always (actually rarely) good leaders and business people.	peer-to-peer support Leadership training
Development of the culture in the veterinary profession	Awareness raising



Leaders in the veterinary profession must show their support and dedication to DEI. They need to “talk the talk” and “walk the walk.” We all need to be willing to have difficult	peer-to-peer support Leadership training
actions in veterinary schools, to promote changes in veterinary culture "from the beginning"	Undergraduate education Awareness raising
Focus on the positives not the negatives. Show-case the great talent the profession has from under-represented and minority groups. This will encourage more people to come into the profession from those groups, and encourage those with old-fashioned views to reassess their motivation for resisting change. Meanwhile we need to sort out any systemic bias within the veterinary structure - from vet schools, to regulation, to practice employment behaviour.	Role models Awareness raising Undergraduate education peer-to-peer support Leadership training
You may establish a working group in each country	peer-to-peer support
we need to talk more about it - it's still far from being widely discussed in the profession	Awareness raising
disseminate information to vets and vet students	Undergraduate education Awareness raising Webinars and other CPDs
Infor	Awareness raising

Figure 1. Categorized reflections from 22 webinar participants on how to promote DEI in the veterinary community in a worldcloud





From the floor, Peter Graham comments on staged education were in relation to improved DEI awareness in the vet community. The training/webinars generally available are often "entry level" and repeated availability of the "level 1" content doesn't encourage people to engage and keep coming back to the topic - having staged content in awareness delivery might encourage people to engage in the longer term.

The panel discussion continued with the experiences shared on FVE key recommendations: On Recommendation no. 3: The impact of DEI on veterinary wellbeing should not be underestimated. Veterinary organisations and clinics should look to improve DEI by creating more awareness and a more inclusive environment', Tim Shearman noted that situations in clinics with clients and colleagues can be unacceptable. It is important to call out in these moments, use safe words and take time when needed with support from team members. Learning and learning to see help-seeking behaviour is a challenging but essential step. Lizzie commented that the narrative which blames the client, which we see a lot now, is particularly unhelpful. Working practices need to change to better support our veterinary teams, but alongside this, we also need to give people the tools they need to deal with the daily pressures of life, veterinary or not.

On Recommendation no. 4: It's important to focus on MWB and DEI from university onwards. Universities should also look to work collaboratively with professional organisations and practitioners to ensure research-based methods are implemented to increase DEI in the veterinary profession, Konstantina referred to IVSAs survey results. This Survey indicated regional differences, with an all-or-nothing situation in many vet schools. She pointed out how important it will be for faculties to offer more courses on MWB and DEI for the future professionals. Leonard shared his experience from Liege university, where across specialities, practitioners receive training on mindful decision-making. From the floor, Farah Gonul AYDIN agreed with Lizzie and Julia that we need to start raising awareness at the faculty level.

On Recommendation no. 1: Veterinary organisations should continue raising awareness and preventing stigmatisation by offering webinars/training/education, Leonard noted how welcomed all initiatives are though they realise that suicide is still a huge issue which needs to be addressed. Reasons are multiple, but some work environments can be overwhelming, and most veterinarians are not well enough trained in business decision-making. UPV had excellent experiences with second-line professionals from outside of the veterinary profession, e.g. clinical psychologists, which makes it easier for veterinarians to accept help. The recent discussion on DEI was eye-opening for him and the potential impact these have on minorities, i.e. LGBTQI+, and this already at vet school, and it is thought to be enormous.

Patric wrapped up the panel discussion in three take-home messages.

Take home message 1

Openness to MWB and DEI issues is prerequisites for a striving profession. Attention to veterinary MWB and DEI has increased substantially in the last decade, followed by the development of support programs by many veterinary organizations, companies, and faculties. Results from the English-speaking countries spotlighted the importance of MWB and DEI in the veterinary profession, but more research is needed in many other countries, especially those in which some aspects may still be taboo.

Take home message 2



Implementation strategies to increase awareness of MWB and DEI must reach all veterinarians at all levels of their professional careers. Positive rewarding programs help to raise awareness, e.g., rewarding “good workplaces” with employers or organizations that “go the extra mile” to create an inclusive and positive workplace for their team. In particular, 2nd tier activities such as webinars were universally stated as being very effective in creating awareness and having a large impact. Individual veterinarians in need will highly benefit from a tailored approach (e.g., helplines, peer-to-peer support groups).

Take home message 3

DEI support programs are currently less available to create opportunities for open conversations. At the beginning of veterinary training, all students need positive and inclusive role models as well as diverse examples from the veterinary profession. More research is needed to design an objective universal applicable scoring system to objectively rate the impact of different support programs available and elaborate evidence-based statements. MWB and DEI should be seen in a wider perspective, and a change will also be needed in the veterinary work culture and environment, so that veterinary professionals can thrive in the profession.

The webinar ended with a presentation of FVEs next steps including the DEI campaign by FVE Vice-President Mette Uldahl. Mette expanded on her experience and the work of the FVE Board on developing the future narrative of the veterinary profession by leading by example. She presented the DEI campaign, how to contribute and called for action to share each of their specific views in her very unique inspirational way.





FVE Diversity, Equity & Inclusiveness Campaign

How can we contribute?

1. Member perspectives

FVE asks members with a perspective on DEI to record a video or make a written statement
Answering three questions

- 1) WHAT IS YOUR NAME, AND WHAT IS YOUR JOB WITHIN THE VETERINARY PROFESSION?
- 2) HOW DOES THE ISSUE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSIVENESS CONCERN OR AFFECT YOU?
- 3) WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE WE COULD DO TO IMPROVE IN THE VETERINARY COMMUNITY TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSIVENESS?



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Can be circulated to FVE members? (Yes)