

## **Veterinary Public Health Association and One Health involvement**

The recently launched UK One Health Coordination group has had a busy year. The group was created in September 2017, but in this short time, we have managed to bring together the leading organisations in veterinary science, medicine and the environment. The VPHA is one of the organisations represented in the Group.

You can find lots of information on the issues the Group has been discussing by looking at the blogs and reports of the other Group Members (BVA, RCN, BVNA, BMA, Wildlife Trust and National Trust).

VPHA has contributed to the Group with dissemination of some of the latest advances that have taken place in controlling foodborne zoonoses, in particular Salmonella, Campylobacter and Hepatitis E.

VPHA has also been active in promoting the One Health concept through the Veterinary Schools and students' associations; we continue to be active in contributing to Master classes in public health and inviting students to our conferences.

### **A good example of promoting One Health - VPHA Tapeworms conference**

One of the latest conferences organised by the VPHA – in conjunction with the Association of Government Veterinarians – focused solely on Tapeworms. In a major departure from the traditional format of this meeting, covering a wide range of public health topics, this focused purely on tapeworms and a review of their control, titled “Controlling tapeworms: established and emerging”. It was well attended and generously sponsored by Bayer Animal Health. The event attracted an audience of veterinarians, NHS doctors and food safety professionals to address the risks posed by tapeworms.

Three of the main themes to emerge from the conference were the large economic losses still being sustained by farmers through meat and offal condemnation, the re-emerging risk of hydatid disease, and the rapidly evolving risk of *Echinococcus multilocularis* becoming endemic in the UK.

Lectures and subsequent discussions considered the canine tapeworms causing zoonotic risk and economic loss in the UK, and the role of veterinary professionals in a “one health” approach in their control. In addition to this, consideration was given to the separate problem of *E multilocularis* in relation to pet travel, dog importation and the risk of this tapeworm establishing in the UK.

If tapeworm infestations are to be controlled, it is vital that pet owners and the general public are on board. The task is challenging but it is important to remember that there has been real progress in some areas, such as the elimination of *Taenia solium* from the UK.

As already noted, a One Health approach will be vital in order to eliminate the risks of hydatid disease. There is a need for continued educational efforts, not only in those areas where the disease is endemic but also in other parts of the country where awareness of the risks to human and animal health is not as good. There is some lack of awareness of the biology of the parasite and its management among small animal practitioners. The parasite disease information body ESCCAP UK and Ireland is working to improve knowledge of these organisms in the veterinary profession.

***Written by Enrique Vega, BVetMed, MRCVS***



Enrique is a Veterinary Consultant experienced in farm to fork production systems, animal health, animal welfare and food safety. He is a Council member of the Veterinary Public Health Association and represents the VPHA at the UK One Health Coordination Group. Enrique is also a Member of the Veterinary Products Committee (Veterinary Medicines Directorate), with two specialist positions: Veterinary Public Health expert and Food Safety Risk Assessor. He also works for UKAS as a technical expert covering veterinary, agricultural and food sector scopes.