

Parallel Sessions C
C3 – Veterinary Special Interest Group

Friday, September 20, Room D, 15.15

Noah's Library: Does Consumer Health Information Mean Anything in Animal Health?

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Humans enter into complex and many-faceted relationships with animals, for economic, leisure, and other purposes. Recent epizootics such as foot-and-mouth disease have focused attention sharply on the economic importance of animal disease and on the impact of such disease on rural communities.

However, in spite of this, there are as yet no well-developed information services to support those in relationships with animals who take the initial responsibility for health care.

In Britain, while the NHS (National Health Service) provides a framework for the delivery of health care to the adult population, and thus for the delivery of information services to clinicians and to consumers, for animal health care no similar framework exists. Further, NHS Direct has developed a national portal for patient information, a model that could be applied to the animal health field.

Initiatives by feed manufacturers and pharmaceutical companies have taken the first steps towards owner animal health information. More fully developed new services could tap the large market for such information and could involve other players as well, such as the animal charitable organisations, the veterinary profession including the major veterinary hospitals and larger practices and so on. Central to these services will be skilled and knowledgeable animal health information professionals.

The presentation will survey current practice and suggest a way forward.