

## **Animal health industry takes initiative on a unique identification system for animal health products**

**Brussels, 23 November 2004:** The animal health industry represented at the IFAH Board recently endorsed a unique identification system for animal health products. This industry initiative will begin in Europe where IFAH-Europe membership represents 95% of the European market for veterinary medicinal products.

The system will allow each product batch to be followed throughout the supply chain using an optical machine readable bar code. This is a pre-requisite for traceability of animal health products from production to application, and responds to the consumers' increasing requirements for transparent information on the origin of their food throughout the chain. IFAH members have agreed on a two-dimensional bar code (Data Matrix ECC 200), endorsed by EAN.UCC<sup>1</sup>. This advanced system is the most appropriate to carry the necessary information, including the product number, batch number and the expiry date. Data Matrix symbols will be printed on the individual packaging of the registered units.

Jean Claude Muller, leading the project, stated : 'Compared with other standards, the system chosen has the additional advantage of small size, expandability, low contrast requirements, manufacturing robustness and advanced error correction features, all of which increase the amount of data that can be encoded.'

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<sup>1</sup> EAN.UCC is the Global language of Business, a series of standards designed to improve supply chain management.

The implementation time line for the project is three years in the European Union. The system shall then be applied in other regions throughout the world when local conditions require product identification.

Patrick James, President of IFAH, said: 'I am delighted at IFAH's decision to adopt this unique identification system for animal health products. The technical solution chosen is applicable worldwide and can be easily implemented globally.' He added: 'The animal health industry, the users of its products and the Authorities will certainly see the benefits of this initiative. This is the act of a responsible industry and clearly demonstrates our willingness to facilitate the traceability of animal health products'.

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IFAH, the International Federation for Animal Health is a non-profit international organisation registered under Belgian law. For further information on IFAH, including a list of members, please visit [www.ifahsec.org](http://www.ifahsec.org)

*For further press information, please contact Diane Chevreux, Communications Advisor*

IFAH  
Rue Defacqz, 1  
B-1000 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 (0)2 543 7567  
Fax: +32 (0)2 537 0049  
E-mail : [d.chevreux@ifahsec.org](mailto:d.chevreux@ifahsec.org)