Developing structured education of economics applied to animal health: Results of a worldwide survey


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Introduction and aim

- Animal health professionals need to have an understanding of the application of economics to animal health (EAH) to be able to advice clients in a more comprehensive way taking into account not only medical knowledge but also economic considerations.
- The current economic crisis and the increase of animal disease emergence and re-emergence have made the need for these skills all the more urgent.
- The NEAT project “Networking to enhance the use of economics in animal health education, research and policy making in Europe and beyond” aims to enable a wide cadre of people to teach economics and create educational materials.
- NEAT is a network of 60 partners from Europe, Australasia, Latin America and Africa.
- NEAT conducted a survey to assess current and future needs and expectations of people using economics applied to animal health.

Methodology

- Three online questionnaires were distributed in 35 countries (mostly European) for:
  - Educational Institutions
  - Private organisations
  - Public bodies

  - Contact lists were provided by NEAT partners and all partners contributed to the distribution of the survey.
  - 677 questionnaires sent: 256 to educational institutions, 285 to private organisations and 136 to public bodies.
  - The link to the survey was also made available on the NEAT webpage.
  - The questionnaires comprised three sections: 1) Respondent identification, 2) Current teaching and training and 3) Need of training today and in the future and related drivers of change.

Results

- Usable sample of 264 surveys (among which 46 answered through the public website) ➔ 39% response rate.
- Response rates for the different groups: 39% for educational institutions, 30% for private organisations and 57% for public bodies.
- Data were retrieved anonymously and descriptive analysis were performed.
- 50% of respondents considered economics a relevant topic and dedicated up to ¼ of their professional time to topics in this area.
- Teaching or training in EAH offered by 1/3 of respondents’ organisations mainly by educational institutions and the programme is generally based on general economic concepts.

Results summary

- Education in EAH is inconsistently offered and information on training opportunities are scarce.
- Education needs of educational and public organisations are related to decisions on interventions and disease impact assessment.
- Needs of private organisations are more focused on the use of economics for general management.
- The majority of respondents believed the needs were going to increase in the future.

NEAT planned actions

- Produce a book for undergraduates with basic concepts and cases that would combine theory and application.
- Adopt a practical approach of EAH teaching/training developments at undergraduate and postgraduate levels through the use of case studies.
- Promote the institutionalisation of EAH in the veterinary curricula by lobbying curriculum setting bodies.

How you can get involved?

- Visit the project Website www.neat-network.eu
- Newsletter – subscribe on website
- Blog: subscribe and join the discussion
- Join us as a NEAT friend – send an email to hbennani@rvc.ac.uk
- Follow the annual meetings with open session

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Project coordinator: The Royal Veterinary College, UK
Contact: info@neat-network.eu
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