

**European Association  
of Establishments for Veterinary Education**

**Association Européenne  
des Etablissements d'Enseignement Vétérinaire**



**FINAL REPORT ON THE RE-VISITATION TO  
THE FACULTY OF VETERINARY MEDICINE OF MESSINA, ITALY**

**17- 18 March 2015**

**By the EXPERT GROUP**

**Visitor on Training in Animal Production**

**Dr Thierry CHAMBON, practitioner, Brest, FRANCE**

**ECOVE member**

**Dr Karel DANIEL, Osava Bityaka, CZECH REPUBLIC**

## **FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 20 MAY 2015**

### **INTRODUCTION**

On 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2015, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of MESSINA, ITALY, was revisited to evaluate the progress done in solving the major deficiencies identified in the first visit in March 2013.

The decision by ECOVE following this visit in 2013 was: NOT APPROVED

The major deficiencies which led to this decision were:

1. Inefficient number of necropsies in large and companion animals resulting in insufficient hands-on-training
2. Lack of isolation unit especially in large animals
3. Lack of mobile clinic
4. Low case load in the small animal teaching hospital

### ***Status of the faculty as decided by ECOVE November 2013: NOT APPROVED***

On 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2014, less than one year after the first visit, EAEVE office received a letter from the DEAN, Antonio PANEBIANCO, asking for the revisit of the Faculty of Veterinary medicine of Messina, now called Department of Veterinary Sciences of the University of Messina.

The Faculty sent the Interim Report on 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2014.

On 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2014, EAEVE office confirms that ECOVE unanimously agree on accepting the revisit request. The period for revisit desired by the Faculty was March 2015, and has been scheduled as forecast.

### **PROGRAMME OF THE RE-VISITATION**

The program of the revisit covered all topics mentioned in the four major deficiencies.

The two members of the team would like to underline how the reception and the revisit were well prepared, with very warm and professional welcome, answering every wish.

We arrived on Monday and were ready to start our visit on Tuesday morning.

First, Pr Antonino GERMANA gave us a general presentation of the Faculty, and especially the evolution of the enrolment since the last visitation.

In 2006, more than 100 students entered the veterinary faculty, and in 2014, only 25 were selected by the national examination. It is a general trend in Italy to decrease drastically the number of veterinary students, according to the recommendations of FVE.

Following the EAEVE visit, a new strategy has been decided, and 639 000 € invested in new facilities and contracts with local practitioners to organize the venue of groups of students night ad day, with refurbishments of large animal surgery unit.

At the same time, an applied research lab will be built inside the veterinary faculty, for the amount of 22 millions €, financed by the Ministry of University of Italy.

About the functioning of the Pathology Department, of the VTH and every practical activities, new guidelines and protocols of biosafety and biosecurity have been put in place and applied, with the general acceptance of staff and students, who show their commitment to these new methods, reaching the European standards.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Major deficiency no.1 - Inefficient number of necropsies in large and companion animals resulting in insufficient hands-on-training**

After the visit in March 2013 pathology teaching activities have been reorganized, external teacher hired and increased collaboration between pathologists and clinicians (academic and practitioners) introduced.

**To the best of our opinion this deficiency has been rectified by:**

**BOTH INCREASED EXPOSURE OF STUDENTS TO LARGE ANIMAL POST-MORTEM EXAMINATIONS IN FIELD AND SMALL ANIMAL NECROPSIES**

This being reached as hands on training in small student groups on the cadavres coming from:

a) **Small and medium-sized animals**

Kennels (Millemusi, Hellen Keller) (70%), VTH (25%) +private owners (pet owners, including legal necropsies and small ruminant and swine farms) (5%)

b) **Large-sized animals**

IZS(EZI) – Ragusa (90%)

Private owners (mainly cattle and swine farms) (10%)

### **Major deficiency no. 2: Lack of isolation unit especially in large animals**

**To the best of our opinion this deficiency partly has already been completely rectified (SA) and partly is being rectified (finishing LA Isolation Premises equipment + refurbishment).**

The Isolation Units for small and large animals are now within Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) premises.

- The small animal Isolation Unit is already fully operational and available for any suspicious infectious emergency with standard operating procedures in place.
- To date of the re-visit the large animal Isolation Unit appears ready to be operational within coming days ensuring option for the isolation of suspicious or infected large animals together with prevention of cross infections. The unit is divided into 6 rooms, two separate dressing rooms with access from the outside, two independent corridors and two isolation stalls.

### **Major deficiency no. 3: Lack of mobile clinic**

The mobile clinic is now well organized. It involves in particular internal staff in Herd health management with six persons, mobile clinic itself with 9 persons, emergency attendance with 3 persons and 2 PhD. 27 local practitioners participate in the mobile clinic as contracted staff.

On a mandatory basis, term A on 4<sup>th</sup> year and term B on 5<sup>th</sup> year, for a total amount of 4 weeks, students are faced to practical duties with availability even during the night. We verified that these tasks are always supervised by an internal staff.

Time is shared in order to have one third in surgery, on third in medicine and one third in reproduction, for each species, equines, bovines, swine and small ruminants.

Day-one skills are recorded in a logbook, signed by the teacher supervising the task, and verified by a committee one a year.

Students send to a coordinator on a daily basis the duties performed during the mobile clinic.

Two vehicles are available for transportation of students and internal staff on call at the University, where they answer to the request of any farm animal owner.

### **Major deficiency no. 4: low caseload in the small animal teaching hospital**

When we visited the Faculty of veterinary medicine of Messina in March 2013, the hospital just opened to the public one month earlier. So, it was not functioning on a regular basis, and the report mentioned a lot of remarks.

The favourable evolution of the caseload in the following months encouraged staff and students to improve their methods.

It results now in an increasing frequentation of the veterinary teaching hospital, with a high level of satisfaction of staff, students and clients, based on anonymous survey.

The small animal public service is now located at the VTH, and provides many opportunities for microshipping, castration and sterilisation of cats and dogs by students, under the supervision of internal staff.

A software (ESYVET) recording the caseload at the VTH shows the increase of the number of consultations and hospitalizations, with all the details.

According to the graduating students last year (69) and the number of small animals seen at the faculty in 2014 (3792), the denominator of the ratio is: 54,95 (R16)

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The denominator of the ratio calculated in 2013 after correction during the visit was:  
60.8/1699: 27.94 (R16)

We can also mention that the ratio will getting better and better, considering the number of students admitted in:

2009: 67  
2010: 59  
2011: 54  
2012: 41  
2013: 25  
2014: 25

Which leads to the following previsions:

Number of graduating students in 2015: 60  
2016: 52  
2017: 45  
2018: 32  
2019: 19

The caseload at the small animal teaching hospital fits to the requirements of the SOP.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

**The team's recommendation for the ECOVE is:**

***Based on the fact that he Faculty has rectified 4 out of 4 major deficiencies, we recommend that the Faculty be granted FULL APPROVAL***

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### **ANNEX 1 DECISION OF ECOVE**

The Committee concluded that the deficiencies identified in 2013 had been rectified.

The Department of Veterinary Sciences, University of Messina is classified after the Re-visitiation as holding the status of: **APPROVAL**.