

## NEWSLETTER No 6 / 2014

### A Dissemination Strategy for Economics of Animal Health (in Italy)



Economics of animal health (EAH) is a poorly known and acknowledged area of education and research in Italy, where agri-food economists are more concerned about studies of the food supply chain and rural development.

At the beginning of my cooperation with NEAT I expected to initially manage the teaching of economics among vets with a renewed angle, and provide students with a more tailored economic background. Now my engagement is gradually changing towards a basic scientific choice, which also involves my relation with the academic environment of agri-food economists and veterinarians. I will explain this below and also my plan of action.

My feeling is that the current status of EAH in Italy could be defined as a structural problem, determined by the use of economics in veterinary faculties and the poor appreciation of agri-food economists about the connections between animal and human health. The result is that in many veterinary faculties and in other departments the veterinarians and economists are separated and work independently. This structural problem demands an answer and developing a connection between them is a critical point, initiating overlaps which will lead to sustainable synergistic relationships.

On the one side it's a great opportunity at scientific and methodological level: the interdisciplinary approach, the way farm-level problems acquire meso- and macro- economic dimension, changing their nature from private to social and public character are quite challenging aspects of this research field. On the other side, trying to develop this "mind perspective" in a new environment requires to carefully mixing and matching of many puzzle pieces. There is a possibility of failure, with a risk of being "stuck in the middle". But that risk and the consequence

are small compared to the benefits of improved synergies and other benefits this will create.

Therefore I have spent some time thinking how I could approach the problem. During NEAT meetings it was often said that before training students we had probably to think of how to train our colleagues. This problem would be evident in my own faculty: with many colleagues claiming not to care about economics and not seeing its usefulness, and others who appreciate the value of economics, but having no scientific means to properly translate this feeling into a focused demand. In both cases there are differing degrees of ignorance around where economics can add value to animal health.

Bearing this in mind I have conceived my EAH campaign in Bologna for the next months. Adopting a classical door-to-door marketing strategy, I'm going to programme with three steps:

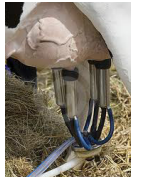
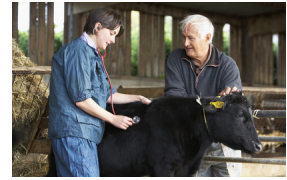
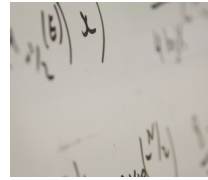
(a) create awareness about NEAT through the dissemination of our activities, especially the survey and literature review; the message here would be "NEAT works for you";

(b) organise focus groups to identify expectations and material needs on specific economic topics at local level. Groups may reflect the structure of the surveyed institutions, starting from my veterinary colleagues, according to their speciality, bearing the message "What do you need?".

(c) provide feedback of point (b) on both the teaching activities and the awareness about the role of economics among colleagues to put forward the message "Let's work together to meet your need".

Focus groups will be an opportunity to grasp the needs in different domain of vets' activity at practical level, to build up an understanding of the role of economics (in particular EAH) and obtain a more rational formulation of their needs at the same time. Finally this should also create good expectations to welcome the 3rd NEAT meeting in Bologna. Suggestions are welcome ("Good luck!" as well).

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## Content

- 1 Second NEAT Annual Meeting - Time to Get Ready!
- 2 NEAT Mid-Term Report
- 3 WP4: Workshop Outcomes
- 4 EU Monitoring Visit
- 5 COST ACTION Officially Approved
- 6 Latest Communication Material
- 7 Events

## 1 Second NEAT Annual Meeting - Time to Get Ready!

The Second NEAT Annual Meeting is approaching and will be hosted by Wageningen University in Wageningen, The Netherlands.



The meeting will take place from **Tuesday 14 to Wednesday 15 October 2014**.

Please remember that all NEAT partner institutions are requested to attend this meeting.

More information about the meeting address, accommodation and dinner location can be found [here](#). Please make sure to book your flights and hotel rooms accordingly.

Details about the agenda and exact timings will follow soon.

## 2 NEAT Mid-Term Report

End of April the NEAT mid-term report was completed and sent to the EACEA in Brussels.

The public report was sent to you by email, while the confidential and financial reports are available on the [NEAT DMS](#).

During the process of finalising the documents a number of issues that need to be improved have come up.

Jonathan and his team have developed a strategy that will help to ensure a smooth delivery of the final report at the end of the project.

We would like to thank all partners who helped to make this report a success and who submitted their information on time.

## 3 WP4: Workshop Outcomes

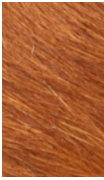
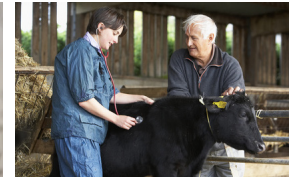
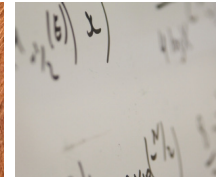
A workshop was organized in March 2014 in Wageningen, with the primary focus to define topics with regard to economics in animal health (EAH) that need to be taught to veterinary students.

Four levels of teaching EAH were defined: (1) Economics for 'day-one' veterinarians; (2) Economics for veterinarians who advise on specific problems on request by farmers of production animals; (3) Economics for veterinarians who give more generic advice at farm level, including setting of goals and (4) Economics for veterinarians working on animal health problems on a regional or at sectorial level.

Since the fourth EAH teaching level involved a specific group of veterinarians, requiring tailor-made education materials it was concluded that this level fell outside the scope of NEAT. For the other three levels, basic materials and topics to be covered should be defined to assure that required knowledge and skills were met.

Topics for the first EAH teaching level were discussed and agreed, namely (1) the role of a veterinarian from an economic perspective, (2) resources for veterinary work, (3) benefits of veterinary activity, (4) costs of veterinary activity, (5) decision-making context, and (6) tools. Members of the workshop are currently working on materials that could be used for each of these topics.

The second annual meeting will be used to test materials and to define topics for the second and third EAH teaching level.



## 4 EU Monitoring Visit

The Erasmus project manager of NEAT, Katia de Souza, carried out a monitoring visit to the RVC on 21 March 2014. The aim of this visit was to assess the operational performance of the project and its financial management and also to identify good practices and lessons learnt.

Katia met Jonathan and other partners from the RVC team including people from the finance office. Partners from MTT, NVH and accelopment were also able to join the meeting by Skype.

Jonathan presented an update about work progress, the different outputs from the project and future plans. Information about financial aspects including the disbursement of money, how finances are handled in the RVC and an update on the financial information collected from partners were provided by the finance team and Johannes from accelopment.

There was a general discussion in the end where the partners had the opportunity to raise different issues that needed clarification and get advice from Katia. Positive feedbacks were received on the overall project management and the different activities within all WPs. We would like to thank all NEAT partners for their active work.



Left to right: E. Jackson, K. de Souza, B. Haesler, H. Bennani, J. Rushton

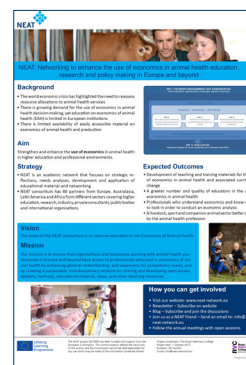
## 5 Latest Communication Material

During the last weeks, three NEAT factsheets covering important project-related topics have been produced.

The following factsheets are available:

- Survey factsheet
- Literature review factsheet
- EAH in standard curricula factsheet

All factsheets can be downloaded on the NEAT website [here](#).



We encourage you to actively use this communication material to distribute it during conferences and seminars. It will help to network and to increase the awareness of the NEAT project.

Besides the factsheets a general NEAT poster and a NEAT vision & mission poster have been produced. Both posters are available [online](#).

## 6 COST ACTION Officially Approved

RVC with the support of NEAT partners and other colleagues has successfully submitted a proposal to the EU COST scheme to create a Network for Evaluation of One Health (NEOH)!

If you would like to get further information or are interested in joining, please check the [NEAT blog](#), the [COST webpage](#) or contact [bhaesler@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:bhaesler@rvc.ac.uk).

## 7 Events



The Nordic Association of Agricultural Scientists will organise a **seminar on Economics of Animal Health Welfare**. The seminar will

be held in Hämeenlinna, Finland from 2 to 3 October 2014.

For more information, please click [here](#).