

Reports and Comments

CALLISTO: Reducing zoonotic disease from companion animals

CALLISTO (Companion Animals multisectorial, interprofessional, Interdisciplinary Strategic Think tank On zoonoses) is a three-year European research programme that aims to examine companion animals as a source of infectious disease for people and food-producing animals.

An increasing number of people worldwide are choosing to share their home with a companion animal, be it a dog, cat or more exotic pet. Serious concerns have been expressed about the risk of zoonotic infections being transmitted from companion animals to people and food-producing animals via physical injuries, direct contact, environmental contamination, ingestion of contaminated food or water or arthropod vectors. Transfer of zoonotic disease also has implications for the health and welfare of both companion and food-producing animals and so this is considered an important area upon which to obtain more information to ultimately reduce these risks.

The CALLISTO project is financed by the European Commission and is being implemented by an international consortium led by the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) and includes research institutes, universities and other animal health associations.

The CALLISTO project has just reached the end of its first year with a conference which took place in Brussels, Belgium from 24–26 October 2012. The conference focused on the determination of the current situation and current knowledge gaps in relation to companion animal zoonoses. The conference was attended by approximately 100 experts in viral, bacterial and parasitic infections, epidemiology, psychology and sociology, policy development and animal health and welfare.

The conference used a ‘Dahlem-like’ approach, which involved using many small workshops containing experts from the different fields in order to achieve a high level of

‘cross fertilisation’ between the different disciplines and professions. The conference was highly successful and the conclusions reached as a result of this conference will pave the way for progression into the second year of the project.

The second year of the CALLISTO project will involve performing risk assessments to determine the priority risk areas in companion animal zoonoses and to identify the knowledge and technology gaps. The third year will make recommendations and develop targeted actions to reduce the risk of transfer of zoonotic diseases from companion animals within the EU. It is anticipated that the targeted actions generated as a result of this project will ultimately have a beneficial effect on the health and welfare of companion and food-producing animals.

The Callisto Project: Reducing Zoonotic Disease from Companion Animals (2012-2015). Further information about the CALLISTO project can be found on the project website at: www.callistoproject.eu.

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New free video resource on aseptic technique for researchers using animals

A new freely available video resource has been published to help researchers working with rodents to reduce the risk of post-surgical wound infections that can negatively impact on the animals’ welfare and quality of science. This addition to the Procedures With Care tutorials site has been developed by Newcastle University with the support of the NC3Rs.

Procedures With Care: Aseptic Technique in Rodent Surgery (January 2013). The videos and further information are available online at: www.procedureswithcare.org.uk.

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UFAW*