

Research project IZS VE 21/10

An experiential undergraduate public health education programme in Veneto Region (north eastern Italy) (IZSV-EDU)

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Animal health is a concern for all the European citizens. This concern stems from the public health and food safety aspects of animal health, but also from the economic costs that animal diseases outbreaks can trigger and the animal welfare considerations, including the implication of disease control. Within this context, the European Union promoted an animal health strategy for 2007-2013 (AHS) where "Prevention is better than cure". The actions planned are to promote the EU Animal Health Policy and to increase public awareness of animal health issues and their implication on public health. A key concept has been introduced, highlighting the importance of animal health to public health, so that "Animals + Humans = One Health", meaning that animal diseases are having an increasing impact on public health and that therefore high standards of animal health have a positive impact on human health and consumer wellbeing. In particular the objectives of this strategy aim at ensuring an high level of public health and food safety, not only trough the minimization of the incidence of biological and chemical risks to humans, but also trough clarity and transparency when communicating with consumers. This strategy aims at ensuring a coherent message and at enhancing public confidence, promoting public awareness and knowledge on sanitary risks related to animal-human relationship and to consumption of food of animal origin; Moreover at highlighting the important role played by European veterinarians in society.

The aim of this project is to propose and implement, through a partnership with the Competent Regional Education Authority a public health education programme in secondary schools, in order to promote the knowledge and awareness of public health concerns in young people as future citizens; moreover to introduce, from a practical perspective, in secondary schools, the scientific method applied in research institutions like Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie (IZSVE) and to promote, according to the above mentioned EU strategy, the work of veterinary public health institutions in this framework.