VetCAST newsletter, December 2017.

1. **JPIAMR project.** By the end of 2016, VetCAST was granted 50000 Euro from the JPIAMR call for transnational working groups in 2017. The five main deliverables (a-e) and progress of the project are highlighted in the following:
   
a. **VetCAST position paper:** by late November, the manuscript “En Route towards European Clinical Breakpoints for Veterinary Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing: A Position Paper Explaining the VetCAST Approach” was accepted for open-access publication in Frontiers in Microbiology (http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fmicb.2017.02344/full?&utm_source=Email_to_authors&utm_medium=Email&utm_content=T1_11.5e1_author&utm_campaign=Email_publication&field=&journalName=Frontiers_in_Microbiology&id=314351). During the past year, the paper has been circulating in the VetCAST group, in the EUCAST Steering Committee (SC), and in the Committee for Veterinary Medicinal Products (CVMP). Thanks to Pierre-Louis Toutain for taking the lead on this important position paper.

b. **Roadmap describing how to access, validate and organize MIC, PK, and PD data.** Such a roadmap has been prepared by Ludovic Pelligand and Pierre-Louis Toutain. They have also developed an Excel sheet for entering data. This sheet has been sent to three pharmaceutical companies with a request for tetracycline PK data. Currently, it is still uncertain if we will get the PK data needed for PK/PD analysis of tetracyclines.

c. **Workshop on PK and setting of clinical breakpoints (CBPs) in veterinary medicine.** The workshop “Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing (AST) with VETCAST breakpoints: quantitative methods” was held in Toulouse, September 12-15. The first day was a conference with an overview on antimicrobial susceptibility testing, breakpoint setting, etc. The last three days functioned as a course with more in-depth teaching on mathematical modelling etc. to determine breakpoints. The workshop comprised 17 invited speakers and was well-attended with 63 attendees from 13 nations.

d. **One CBP established as a proof of concept.** Initially, the intention was to establish tetracycline CBPs. However, this is one of the most challenging drugs to determine a PK/PD based CBP for. Instead, VetCAST is currently working on florfenicol breakpoints for Pasteurellaceae in cattle and sheep (see also point 3 below). The intention is to have one or more florfenicol CBPs published by early 2018.

e. **Promotion of VetCAST activities** VetCAST has been presented by the Steering Committee to stakeholders at various conferences (e.g. ECCMID-2017 in Vienna). Also, the VetCAST initiative has been communicated to national chief veterinary officers, in an attempt to obtain more formal support from European Agencies. Further initiatives such as brochures, articles, etc. have not yet been planned.

2. **Declaration Of Interest (DOI) policy and DOI form.** A written policy on COI has been prepared by the SC. It will soon be uploaded to the EUCAST homepage. A new ESCMID DOI form should be filled out by all VetCAST members annually. The SC will send this form to all VetCAST members in early 2018.
3. **MIC data collection.** Kees Veldman as MIC-data manager is collecting MIC data, and VetCAST currently has more than 25000 MICs of tetracyclines for veterinary pathogens in the database. Recently, the focus changed to florfenicol MIC data for the reasons mentioned above. In October, Kees sent out a request to VetCAST members asking for MIC data for veterinary isolates, in particular *Mannheimia haemolytica*, *Pasteurella multocida* and *Histophilus somni* from cattle and sheep. All VetCAST members are encouraged to provide data and/or spread the news about this ongoing data collection.

4. **Contact to EMA.** VetCAST will not be financed by EMA, nor become a formal EMA breakpoint committee. Nevertheless, the intention is to have a more clear formal working relation between EMA and VetCAST. EMA has promised to draft such a relation once the position paper is out, and the SC will follow up on this in 2018.

5. **Applications for funding and promotion of new projects:**
   Please contact Peter ([pedam@sund.ku.dk](mailto:pedam@sund.ku.dk)) if you are working on a project of high relevance to VetCAST or if you recently received funding for such a project. Peter will then help promoting such projects on the VetCAST homepage. Current projects and applications that the SC knows of:
   a. In September, Peter Damborg applied for a COST-Action network for optimizing diagnostics in veterinary medicine. Some of the activities relate to ongoing VetCAST activities, e.g. establishing a European collection of veterinary bacterial isolates will facilitate generation of novel MIC data.
   b. An EJP-AMR1 project proposal by Kees Veldman has been accepted and will start in January 2018. This project contains a work package on the collection and MIC-determinations for setting ECOFFs.
   c. Ludovic Pelligand and Dik Mevius are involved as advisors in a project of the Sardinian Instituta Zooprofilattico Sperimentale di Sardegna on PK/PD analysis of antibiotics use for pathogens in goats.

6. **New VetCAST members.** The VetCAST group is expanding, since five pharmacologists and one microbiologist from around Europe recently joined the group. Currently, anyone (including pharma industry representatives) can become VetCAST member. The main criterion is that the person has some interest in the work of VetCAST, and wishes to contribute in one way or the other. Any changes to the composition of the SC must be via an election process.

7. **Upcoming VetCAST events or events where VetCAST will be presented**
   b. March 2018: Meeting for VetCAST members March 16th in Schiphol (info to be circulated soon)
   e. October 2018: 14th CSVPT Congress, Qingdao, China.
On behalf of the VetCAST Steering Committee

Peter Damborg (Scientific Secretary of VetCAST)