HOW TO ENCOURAGE INDUSTRY TO COMMERCIALISE
HIGH QUALITY VETERINARY MEDICINAL PRODUCTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

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Animal production in the Middle East, in particular sheep and goat production, plays an important role in the national economies, providing up to 30% of total agricultural output. More than 60% of areas suitable for agriculture are permanent pastures. Most of the land classified as waste and barren is rangeland providing significant feed resources to nomadic livestock population. Water resources are limited, and only 20% of the rangeland is permanent pasture with a reasonable potential for intensive livestock production. While pastoralists adjust to climatic risks of drought by varying livestock numbers and/or migration, decline of traditional management systems leads to land degradation, hindering production increase.

Livestock products contribute significantly to the diets of rural and urban populations in the Middle Eastern region; furthermore the region adjusts to rapid population growth, significantly increasing the demand for animal protein. Animal diseases have a significant impact on production. The OIE estimates that, at the worldwide level, average losses due to animal diseases are more than 20%.

To produce high quality animal products, high quality veterinary drugs are needed for disease prevention and treatment of animals. This is encouraging to the animal health industry for commercialisation of veterinary products, as the market is changing from strongly price orientated to a quality based.

However, in order to make the Middle Eastern market attractive for the animal health industry in the long term, several parameters require improvement.

- Registration authorities (where they exist) have very limited human resources, competences and tools (chemical-analytical laboratory) to be able to register only quality veterinary drugs.

- There are few or no control authorities to stop import and circulation of non registered bad quality medicines or fake products.

- No real pharmacovigilance systems are in place to control the efficacy and safety of drugs on the market.

- Distribution systems for veterinary drugs still require improvement.