

Future, Moving Forward

AS LONG AS IMPORT RULES ARE DIFFERENT BETWEEN COUNTRIES, AND RESULTING SERUM PRICES VARY BY UP TO A FACTOR OF 10, TRACEABILITY-RELATED CRIMES CAN OCCUR. ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES MUST BE STOPPED BECAUSE THEY NOT ONLY NEGATIVELY AFFECT SERUM USERS AND THE IMAGE OF THE SERUM INDUSTRY, BUT THE LONG TERM VIABILITY OF FBS AS A PRODUCT. ISIA MUST INTENSIFY EFFORTS TO EDUCATE AND TO PROMOTE THE HARMONIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL IMPORT RULES.

Since FBS is initially a non-utilized byproduct available from slaughterhouses worldwide, the global supply of FBS has permanently exceeded global demand. Today, conditions are favorable for uniform and stable purchasing and sale prices at more affordable levels. The problem has been barriers to trade and the lack of scientific information to FBS users. This has generated a fragmentation of the serum world, with different supply/demand constellations in different segments, and price differences between origins sometimes exceeding 1,000%.

If FBS is dealt with in a transparent, customer-friendly, scientifically-correct way and trade barriers and misinformation are eliminated, FBS will be more abundant and less expensive, and there will be no economic incentives for criminal activities. This is how it should be. Instead, historically, the serum industry has occasionally interrupted collection, creating shortages; objected to opening imports of FBS into the USA from South America as proposed twice by the USDA; and misinformed serum users and regulators

about the safety of different sources. The concept that Oceania is safer is still part of some marketing campaigns, even after BSE has been found to be a spontaneous event in all cattle populations (Nobel Prize winner Stanley Pruziner), and it has been determined by OIE **not** to be transmitted by blood products.

Cases of FBS fraud can be elaborate, with an extremely low probability of being detected.

This type of activity can only be eradicated by eliminating economic incentives, via science, education, and harmonization.

The damage done to researchers and other serum users includes inexact or invalidated results in research and diagnostics, virus risks, product recalls, etc. From a financial viewpoint, losses include costs of lost research, **plus** the difference between FBS prices actually paid and the much lower prices that should have been paid for the same product if it had been justly declared. The damage to competitors consists of lost FBS business and the cross-effects on sales of media, reagents, plastics, and equipment.

The vast majority of serum companies have always worked legally, taking traceability compliance seriously and controlling their supply chain. With the traceability laws that have been implemented by the EU and other countries, as well as the new ownership

of companies historically associated with questionable practices, illegal schemes are no longer likely to happen. Today, all serum companies adhere to strict codes of ethics. However, the risk of misrepresentation still exists in cases where the product goes through a chain of intermediaries. To eliminate potential illegal activities, economic incentives must be attacked at the root, by the harmonization of import rules and the education of serum users and regulators, based on science. ■

NOTE

Lined area for notes, containing horizontal dashed lines for writing.