

## Animal Healthcare - Packaging & Labelling Trends



Currently valued at around US\$ 27.8 million and expected to reach US\$ 41.3 million by 2019, animal healthcare is currently a keen area of focus for drug manufacturers. In recent years, the industry has experienced a high level of mergers and acquisitions and just 10 major manufacturers account for 75 % of the market share.

By comparison with human healthcare drugs and pharmaceuticals, animal healthcare products are manufactured and distributed in much smaller volumes. However, in recent times, there has been significant innovation in the range of treatments available for the treatment of animals. There are a number of factors that indicate that demand for veterinary healthcare products looks set to rise substantially:

- Longevity – with improved knowledge and healthcare products both humans and animals are enjoying longer life spans than ever before.
- The global population is on the increase.
- Demand for foodstuffs and production animals bred



for meat and milk-related products is therefore on the increase.

- Furthermore, we are generally becoming a lot more health-conscious so demands for protein-rich foods are on the increase, which has resulted in an increase in the number of animal farms globally.
- Income levels are on the rise, with more and more people being encouraged to adopt pets. (In 2012, 13% of all households in Germany had at least one dog and 16% had at least one cat.)
- Global transportation has become much more effective than in years gone by, which means the importation of more exotic species is more commonplace. This places a higher demand on veterinary practices and the need for specialist healthcare products.

Furthermore, development of drugs and medications for companion pets may well be down to investments towards private animal healthcare. An increasing population (UK) are investing in pet insurance (Pet Care estimate around 30% of the UK population has cover). Much of this is to cover conditions such as diabetes and arthritis and other acute conditions<sup>a</sup>.

What are the types of animal healthcare products on the market?

The industry split animal healthcare products into three main categories:

1. Feed additives,
2. Pharmaceuticals, &
3. Vaccines.

With increasing levels of both companion and production animals, there is a need for targeted medicines. In the case of pets, the emphasis is on preserving the long-term health of the animal. This is often in the form of a vaccine for preventative purposes, or perhaps antibiotics to help treat ailments and conditions.

Where production animals are concerned, animal healthcare products may also come in the format of feed additives such as nutritional additives, amino acids and vitamins and minerals.

**What are the anticipated challenges within this industry?**

First and foremost, manufacturers are taking a keen interest in the development of drugs and vaccinations more than ever before. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) estimate 320,000 cases of food-borne and zoonotic diseases annually within the EU. In 2012, 220,209 people in the EU were affected by campylobacteriosis, the most-commonly observed zoonosis in animals, due to the consumption of infected broiler meat<sup>b</sup>.

Additionally, the animal breeding industry cannot afford to suffer losses against epidemics as they have in the past such as foot and mouth disease. It is therefore very much in the interest of both the industry and the economy interest to continue to seek out solutions to protect and vaccinate against such diseases.

### Prescription Challenges

Where animal health products are concerned, only a qualified veterinary surgeon is legally permitted to write a prescription for a controlled drug or a medicine classified as a POM-V. It is therefore imperative that all of the necessary information is clearly outlined on the packaging and labelling so that other staff members involved in this process are clear on the directions of use.

### What information needs to be included?

- The name, address and telephone number of the person prescribing the product. It is considered good practice to include the registration number for the veterinary surgeon (MRCVS), pharmacist or SQP writing the prescription
- The qualifications of the person writing the prescription
- The name and address of the owner or keeper of the animal
- The identification (including the species) of the animal or group of animals to be treated
- The premises at which the animal(s) is kept if this differs from the address of the owner or keeper
- The date that the prescription is written
- The signature of the person writing the prescription
- The name and amount of the medicine prescribed
- The dosage and administration instructions
- Any necessary warnings.

### A Cascading Challenge:

Veterinary surgeons within the UK may opt to choose from a range of both animal health and also potential human health products, should they see fit under the Veterinary Cascade guidelines. The guidelines have remained largely unchanged since 1995. However, a revision by the European Direction and the subsequent Veterinary Medicines Regulation has tightened up the guidelines.

However, there is clearly a level of interpretation as well as knowledge and experience required here. The danger is that misinterpretation can in itself have the potential for errors to be made, something that must be avoided at all costs, regardless of whether it is a human or animal life in the balance.

### The Label is an Underestimated Form of Communication with the Consumer:

What's written on the label can also be far more underestimated than we might think, particularly where companion healthcare is concerned. Once the surgeon or dispenser has handed the medication over, it is up to the carer to interpret the instructions on the label. Clearly laid out user-instruction and product details are much better understood than those that might lead to confusion.

What this means for manufacturers of packaged products is that very clear instructions on usage, indications and contra-indications must be outlined within the packaging; a particular challenge when packs of drugs may have to be split and re-packaged into smaller dosages, or when the drug has been packaged and intended for use on another species.

### The Extended Role of Packaging in Animal Healthcare Products:

Animal healthcare labelling is fast becoming more than just a functional requirement for identification of product and the fulfilment of legal obligations. In fact, labelling and packaging is playing an increasingly important role within this sector than ever before. Manufacturers can see the importance of streamlining this area to improving efficacy in product communication, plus with the latest technology and careful planning, far greater benefits can be derived.

### Multi-market Distribution of Animal Healthcare Products:

With an increasing number of mergers and acquisitions, including the recent acquisition of Novartis by Eli Lilly, manufacturers are becoming increasingly aware of the need to create packaged products for multi-market distribution. Country-specific packaging is not only limiting but requires additional storage space and handling if products are to be aimed at, for example, a Europe-wide market.

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Couple this with the need for increasing amounts of information on the packaging itself, and manufacturers are likely to consider alternative methods of labelling and packaging. But sometimes there simply isn't enough space for all of this information, especially where a number of languages need to be included on the packaging.

#### **The Role of Leaflet Labels in Animal Healthcare Products:**

One method of ensuring all of the information can be fitted into the container or pack is the use of leaflet labels. Combining a self-adhesive label alongside a printed and folded leaflet offers anywhere between two right up to 100 additional pages for complex user-instruction, in one or more language/s, as well as any necessary charts, diagrams or even pictograms.

#### **Product Labelling for Improved Production Communication:**

There are further benefits of opting for a leaflet label system which can be translated into improvements within the production processes. Leaflet labels are supplied on reels and therefore can be applied directly onto the product or container at high speed using standard label application equipment. A leaflet label may be used in a number of ways to assist with the production processes:

#### **Security and Anti-counterfeiting Measures:**

Counterfeit medicines cost the global economy an estimated \$1000bn annually. Additionally, they undermine public trust and integrity in brands, and at worst could cause a fatality. Like most forms of labelling and packaging, there are a variety of optional security and anti-counterfeit measures that can be incorporated into the leaflet label.

Anti-counterfeit technology may be incorporated into the artwork of both the label and the leaflet, either overtly or covertly, allowing for quick and easy detection of genuine products within the supply chain. A trust-seal or hologram may be added to the product or even a simple tamper-evident strip extending the label onto the lid or closure of the container.

#### **Specialist User-instruction for Seagreens Products:**

By example, Anglo-Scandinavian seaweed specialists Seagreens recently utilised a leaflet label on the lids of their pet & equine products as an addition to their packaging to educate the customer of the benefits of the product range. This entailed 18 pages of images and information, all printed complete with a tamper strip on the lid.

1. **Packaging Enhancement** – the most common reason for switching to a leaflet label is when a manufacturer simply has too much information to include on the label. 2D matrix, pharmaceutical and bar codes, as well as variable data such as batch codes and serial data, can all be added directly onto the leaflet label following strict production guidelines. Scanning equipment ensures correct leaflet to label matching, resulting in fault-free product.
2. **Cost-reduction** – leaflet labels are frequently used to help a manufacturer reduce production costs. A loose leaflet and carton may be replaced with a single multiply label including all the necessary product information in several languages too. This can reduce procurement costs, minimise inventory and also eliminate additional production processes.



3. This Tick & Flea spray by **Bob Martin** (South Africa) is an illustration of how this can be achieved. A simple four-panel label has been applied to the front of the spray pump, containing all of the necessary product and user information. There are both manufacturer and consumer benefits to be had here. Firstly, the consumer has all of the information attached to the product for reference both initially and throughout the course of medication. Secondly, consumers have a tendency to discard any outer packaging and loose leaflets initially - as this information is securely attached the manufacturer is less likely to receive a customer call or query.



4. **Over-labelling** – frequently leaflet labels are incorporated onto drugs and medicines that have been parallel-imported. This avoids the costly measure of having to remove existing labelling or even re-package vast quantities of product. Leaflet labels can be produced to fit neatly over an existing product label, avoiding consumer confusion and adhering to re-sale guidelines.
5. **The Drive for Sustainable Packaging Solutions** - packaging line efficiencies, packaging reduction and the need to source sustainable packaging materials have fast become priorities for manufacturers. Not only does this help to raise awareness of the brands' green credentials, but more importantly it aids in keeping costs down and often results in significant long-term returns on investment.

Multi-page labels provide additional pages for the inclusion of well-laid-out user guidance and copy, and remain securely attached to the product or host container throughout the cycle of the medicine being taken. Furthermore, they help to simplify and reduce packaging and can be offered in a range of formats to keep costs down. A single leaflet can have anywhere from two to 100 or more pages of patient information, user guidance and instruction in one or several languages.

One of the main concerns a manufacturer will have when considering switching to a leaflet label solution is the effects it may have on the packing line. Loss of production means a loss of output and revenue, something that no manufacturer can afford. Multi-page labels are supplied on reels and so can be applied using standard label application equipment just like a normal label, with little or no effect on line speeds.

**Conclusions:**

There are many benefits to be had by choosing to use a multi-page label on your product, and they are not just restricted to solving packaging problems. Multi-page labels can enhance



the appearance of the packaging as well as informing the consumer of vital user-instruction and encouraging correct usage for the pet or animal.

Remember, the label on the packaging is the only form of communication you have once the medication has been handed over to you by the veterinary surgeon or dispenser.

**References**

- a. Pet Care/ August Equity.
- b. Transparency Market Research.com - animal-healthcare-industry report.



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