

Dopharma opens state of the art production line

It is the last thing you want to happen as a veterinarian or farmer: a poorly animal and standing there empty handed. After all, you want to cure your animal and therefore a tailored treatment is needed with the right veterinary medicine. Family-owned pharmaceutical company Dopharma knows the veterinary market like no one else and has already helped millions of ill animals by providing the right medicines.

A growing family business

The veterinary pharmaceutical company Dopharma was founded in 1969 by Wijnand de Bruijn sr. His three sons, Wijnand (left), Marcello (middle) and Ron, took over from their father in 1995. The production site and head office are situated in Raamsdonksveer, the Netherlands. The company distributes to over 60 different countries and is opening up branches in key countries. In 2006 a branch office was opened up in Romania and in 2008 in Belgium. An office was opened in Lithuania in 2010 and in 2011 a branch in the German town of Münster was established. Dopharma also owns its own research farm to accommodate the research and development of new registrations, based in Loon op Zand, the Netherlands. This family-owned company has over 44 years experience in producing veterinary medicinal products.

Make or buy

Dopharma's first production line for sterile liquid formulations was over 25 years old in 2010. Of course all the individual parts of this production line were replaced at regular intervals. Despite this production line still being completely in line with all regulations, the managing board of Dopharma wondered if a new production line would be an option. Ron de Bruijn, General Manager Internal Affairs: "We know that the quality requirements for the production of injectable solutions and suspensions will only increase in the coming years. We also see the margins for errors decrease. That calls for a "state of the art" production line. After some deliberation we decided to keep the production in-house and to start building our own new production line. We wanted to make optimal use of our pharmaceutical and technical knowledge and not let it go to waste." With the reduction of antibiotic use in farm animals, the managing board expects to see a continual rise in individual animal treatments instead of herd treatments. Wijnand de Bruijn, General Manager External Affairs: "We are now mainly expanding outside the Netherlands and are continuing to achieve an annual growth of a large percentage. That calls for extra production capacity. After all, we would like to be able to continue to grow for another 25 years. The new production line can also be used to contract manufacture products for other companies."

The customer

The previous line for sterile liquid formulations was able to produce 10.000 vials of 100 ml per batch, the new production line will double that output to 20.000 vials per batch. What makes this new production



line so unique? Ron de Bruijn: "The processes on this new facility for making sterile suspensions and solutions are much more secure than on the previous line. In the old situation many proceedings were still done by hand, posing the risk of contaminating the end product. The new production line has been automated in such a way that the human variable has been reduced to the bare minimum." In the old situation, after each production run the system was cleaned and disinfected by two operators. In the new situation, this process has been automated and happens without human interference. This way the production line is ready to start a new run the next morning. Commercial Manager, Marcello de Bruijn is also happy with the new production unit: "We always aim to endorse the faith our customers have in our quality products. Therefore we always enjoy inviting veterinarians over for a tour of our facilities so they can see for themselves how modern and automated the production of veterinary medicines is within our company." It took 3 years to go through the development phase, the acquisition phase, the building phase and finally the validation phase with all the necessary documentation. To make sure that the whole production line was entirely secure, Dopharma has spent an entire year testing and validating each and every part of the production line.

Quick change

In January 2014 Dopharma received the green light to start the production on the new sterile line from the Dutch Health Care Inspectorate. Ron de Bruijn: "So 4 years after starting this adventure and an investment of roughly 6 million Euros later, we can finally start production. We are very proud of the result and are convinced that we can deliver top quality products to the veterinarian with a short delivery time as well." On the new line we will produce antibiotics as well as corticosteroids, NSAIDs and vitamin- and iron formulations. The line has an output of 4.000 vials of 100 ml per hour and can also handle vials of 50 and 250 ml. Wijnand de Bruijn: "We have lots of different products in our portfolio so we need to be able to switch quickly and reliably from product to product on our production line. And with the new production line we are now perfectly able to do just that. Veterinarians and farmers can count on us for another 25 years coming."



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