



# JAVS

The Journal of the Association of  
Veterinary Students

SPRING 2014

## AVS CONGRESS

New  
vet  
schools

What is  
One Health?

*The voice for veterinary students in Great Britain and Ireland*  
**avs-uk.org.uk**



JAVS is sponsored and published on behalf of the Association of Veterinary Students by the  
BVA, 7 Mansfield Street, London W1G 9NQ  
t: 020 7636 6541. e: bvahq@bva.co.uk



## As a BVA member, you are eligible for free legal advice and support

The BVA legal advice line operates 24 hours a day and you may be referred to the BVA's free mediation and/or legal representation team.

Giving you peace of mind and security.



For more information, visit [www.bva.co.uk/legal](http://www.bva.co.uk/legal)

**Vet Record Careers app Version 2.0 now available**

New features include:

- View hundreds of careers based articles from Vet Record
- Reworked job alerts that persist until you view them
- Add a job's closing date to your calendar
- Find your new job by location
- See a job's location on a map

The Vet Record Careers app 2.0 is the ideal job search tool for veterinarians seeking their next role.

Download for FREE today from the iTunes app store

Vet Record Careers



## Information and support for veterinary professionals

- Go to [www.vetlife.org.uk](http://www.vetlife.org.uk) for advice and guidance on the following issues:
- Stress, depression, suicide
  - RCVS complaints
  - Financial issues
  - Employment
  - Relationships
  - Addiction and eating disorders
  - Sickness and disability
  - Isolation and loneliness
  - Legal issues
  - Recent graduate support

# Never forget where you can get help...

## VETLiFE.org.uk

Funded by VBF

Veterinary Benevolent Fund is a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee, Company No. 153010 at 7 Mansfield Street, London W1G 9NQ, Charity Registration No. 224776



## AVS CONTACTS

### President, Alex McGhee

avspresident@gmail.com

### Senior Vice President, Nic Wojciechowski

avsseniorvicepresident@gmail.com

### Junior Vice President, Helena Diffey

hdiffey1@rvc.ac.uk

### Secretary, Will Bayton

svywb@nottingham.ac.uk

### Treasurer, Jenny Brazier

jbrazier@rvc.ac.uk

### Welfare, Fliss Barber

avs.welfare@gmail.com

### IVSA Rep, Vicky Carliell

presidentivsauk@gmail.com

### JAVS Editor, Jordan Sinclair

javseditor@hotmail.com

### Marketing Rep, Supert Sheppard

rs12729@mybristol.ac.uk

### Web Editor, James Blaydon

jbladon@student.liv.ac.uk

## BRISTOL

Tom Cantor, Bristol Senior: tc1964@mybristol.ac.uk

Hannah Mason, Bristol Junior: hm12587@mybristol.ac.uk

## CAMBRIDGE

Eleanor Myerscough, Cambridge Senior:

eleanor.myerscough@gmail.com

Hannah Clifford, Cambridge Junior: hfc34@cam.ac.uk

## DUBLIN

Amy Fitzgerald, Dublin Senior: amyfitz@mac.com

Aine Gilmour, Dublin Junior:

aine.gilmour@ucdconnect.ie

## EDINBURGH

Lisa Main, Edinburgh Senior: sl104272@sms.ed.ac.uk

Maria Mylne, Edinburgh Junior:

maria.mylne@gmail.com

## GLASGOW

Alex Andryzak, Glasgow Senior:

1103112a@student.gla.ac.uk

Danielle MacGill, Glasgow Junior:

1105350m@student.gla.ac.uk

## LIVERPOOL

Sarah Boland, Liverpool Senior: hlsbolan@liv.ac.uk

## LONDON

Georgie Lethbridge, London Senior:

glethbridge1@rvc.ac.uk

Jess Timmins, London Junior: jtimmings3@rvc.ac.uk

## NOTTINGHAM

Jonathan Mayer, Nottingham Senior:

svyjm2@nottingham.ac.uk

Rosie Howton, Nottingham Junior:

svyrh1@nottingham.ac.uk

# From the editor of JAVS

Goodbye from me... with this being my last issue as editor of JAVS, I have been pleased to have received such a variety of article submissions over the past few weeks. While I always enjoy reading tales of exciting adventures abroad and student views of topical issues, it has been refreshing and encouraging to hear about the increasing interest in One Health, the contribution to charity and the extracurricular learning that vet students are pursuing across the country.

I was similarly encouraged, albeit slightly annoyed, to have to reject an invitation to the Cambridge University Veterinary Zoological Society (CUVZS) clinical talk recently, as it would have been my third evening of extracurricular talks in a row. In addition, I spent a weekend in Nottingham at AVS Congress, but I couldn't make the RVC's zoological symposium the following weekend and missed BSAVA congress because I was on a placement at Fitzpatrick Referrals. Consequently, I get a bit embarrassed when, in answer to my boyfriend's weekly question of 'What have you got planned for this week?', I honestly have to reply with a military-style list of lectures, practicals, talks, conferences, socials and rotations. We're busy people, but we are at a point in time when it's down to us to put the graft in.

This diversity so many of us are involved in is so important for the future of our profession. With the increase in vet student numbers, we have to prove not only our worth in society, but also society's need for us! By extending our reach, our scope and our relevance, we can not only ensure the continued success of our profession, but expand the impact we can have on society as a whole.

Max Foreman

JAVS Editor

javseditor@hotmail.com



*Max*

## CONTENTS

- 2** ■ News and reviews
- 8** ■ AVS
- 12** ■ Opinion
- 18** ■ Science and research
- 20** ■ EMS

# Flamingos in the peas at the RVC Zoological Society symposium

By Holly Asquith-Barnes, President RVC Zoological Society (London, 3rd Year)

**Last year the zoological societies of all of the UK vet schools got together and agreed to host one 'southern' and one 'northern' symposium among themselves every year. The first symposium of the new initiative was the 2014 southern symposium organised by the RVCZS.**

An exotic animals-themed pub quiz kicked off the event on January 31. Students from different universities teamed up to answer questions on a range of diverse and clinically relevant topics, such as what binturongs smell of, which animal has the largest penis and what colour hippo milk is! There were prizes for the best animal-themed fancy dress and for the highest scoring team.

The talks on Saturday were only slightly delayed after the roads leading to the Hawkshead campus disappeared under several feet of water overnight, but Catherine and Lily, the volunteer bus drivers, saved the day and got everyone to campus safely to collect their goody bags and settle down for a day of talks.



The speakers included Mark Stidworthy, a pathologist with the International Zoo Veterinary Group (IZVG) who described how to carry out a postmortem examination on a variety of exotic species from tortoises to gorillas; and Dr Ruth Cromie, head of wildlife health at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust

and a member of the UN Scientific Task Force on Avian Influenza and Wildlife and Ecosystem Health, who gave us a new perspective on ecosystem health as part of One Health.

The day ended with Steve Leonard telling us about his adventures in Borneo with orangutans and his involvement with Wildlife Vets International, including some useful tips on how to defend yourself from marauding baby oranges.

Our black tie dinner also had an exotic animal theme, with the tables being named after various exotic species and decorated with a sea of animal print balloons. Some of us even made it through the meal without the tiny animal shaped confetti getting lodged anywhere unfortunate. I personally had to pick a flamingo out of my peas, and it's not often you get to use that sentence. At the end of the evening, a number of delegates left surrounded by dozens of balloons and trailing tiny glittering elephants and giraffes in their wake.

On Sunday, the delegates enjoyed talks on parrot hospitalisation from John Chitty; zoo animal dentistry and the intricacies of elephant tusk extraction from Peter Kertesz of



ZOODENT International; diabetes in primates from Yedra Feltrer of the Zoological Society of London; and walrus anaesthesia from Dr John Lewis of IZVG.

Each day the delegates had their pick of several practical sessions, which ranged from rabbit, guinea pig and chinchilla handling to clinical pathology sessions looking at avian and reptilian haematology. One of the most popular was the clinical skills sessions where Faye Bethell, an experienced exotics vet, trained

delegates in placing intraosseous catheters, O-tubes and intubating creatures including rats, quails and even a guillemot.

While the delegates waited for their practical sessions to begin they could enjoy lunch and browse the sponsor area: Bayer, Burgess and Meadows Animal Healthcare, among others, had set up stalls of really useful literature and free goodies for them to take away.

One pound from every delegates' ticket price was used to enter them

into a raffle for prizes such as fleeces and BSAVA exotics manuals donated by our sponsors; extra tickets were sold and we raised nearly £200 for the Wildlife Rescue and Ambulance Service, a local charity that rescues and treats injured wildlife.

All the RVCZS committee had a brilliant weekend and it seems that all the delegates did too. Hopefully this will prove to be the first of many successful UK joint vet school zoological symposia.

## Getting involved in emergency care

By Stef Phillipps, RVC SVECCS President 2014 (London, 3rd Year)



**The Student Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Society (SVECCS) at the Royal Veterinary College was founded in 2011 by a passionate team of students. It was the first chapter to be formed in the UK, and was met with great enthusiasm from students and staff alike. Membership has steadily grown and we now have just over 100 student members.**



Peripheral catheter placement practice in the CSC

The high-adrenaline aspect of emergency care and the importance of working in a tight-knit team make this field of veterinary medicine a fascinating and exciting one to work in. With increasing understanding of the physiology underlying emergency patient presentation and how available diagnostics can guide the approach, specialist ECC departments continue to grow throughout the UK and beyond. Of course, animals will not always encounter difficulties in close proximity to such referral centres, and these skill sets are crucial for anyone entering clinical practice in order to assess, plan and carry out stabilisation where possible. Our mission as a society

is to enhance the education of our students in emergency medicine. Whether their individual goals are to go on to specialise in ECC, or simply to feel more confident dealing with the plethora of emergency presentations that arise in first-opinion practice, we are committed to providing our members with relevant lectures and practicals alongside curriculum learning.

The SVECCS committee is made up of veterinary students of both clinical and preclinical years, and it is this hard-working group of people who recruit speakers, organise room bookings, gain sponsor-

ship and advertise and run events. Essential to the success of the society is the support provided by the fantastic staff at the RVC, with those based at the Queen Mother Hospital for Animals (QMHA) in particular providing consistent support throughout the year. Our supervisors Lindsay Kellet-Gregory and Dan Chan share their vast experience and expertise to advise on choices of event, and Shailen Jasani runs 'SVECCS Rounds' every three weeks, where students discuss the approach to various cases, focusing on a different topic every time.

SVECCS events occur in many different formats: as well as rounds we run lectures and practicals throughout the year and hold an all-day symposium annually in February, where members can enjoy a range of high-calibre speakers across a range of ECC subjects.

This year we have received wonderful enthusiasm from a number of people and our symposium included speakers such as Amanda Boag (clinical director at Vets Now, president of EVECCS and coeditor of the BSAVA Emergency and Critical Care Manual); Lindsay Kellet-Gregory (QMHA); Rachael Kilroy (senior veterinarian at the PDSA's Bow Hospital); Dr Holger Volk (clinical director and head of neurology and neurosurgery at QMHA), and Sotirios Karvountzis (XL Vets). Such events aim to provide a variety of topics with speakers of varying backgrounds for a well-rounded experience, and many participants will take this opportunity to inform delegates of graduate training schemes that their practices may offer. The symposium also offers a choice of practicals for attendees.

Practicals are particularly enjoyed by our members and we recognise that it is important to provide students with a 'safe' environment in which to practice essential clinical skills. The clinical skills centre in the LIVE centre at the RVC provides a perfect environment for enhancing these skills. Past events have included catheter placement labs, where students from all years have been

able to practice peripheral, intraosseous and central line catheter placements as well as have a chance to discuss the indications and possible complications associated with such procedures. We are eternally grateful to QMHA ECC residents and junior clinical training scholars who give up their (rare) free time to help run these events.

We have also held cardiopulmonary cerebral resuscitation labs and hope to improve this practical this year by coordinating with RVC veterinary nursing students, thereby reinforcing the essential communication and teamwork skills required in emergency environments and recognising the absolute importance of good relationships between vets and vet nurses.

Recently, with support from the RVC's CPD department and BCF Technology, who both kindly provided portable ultrasound machines, SVECCS held an A-FAST/T-FAST lab. Students were introduced to the importance and method of free fluid abdomen and thorax scans by Dr Pete Mantis and were then able to practice these techniques on live animals, guided by Pete and Annie Makin from BCF. Ultrasound can be particularly daunting to veterinary students, and often real-time imaging is first encountered on EMS, with scarce opportunity to actually ultrasound animals ourselves. Dogs kindly provided by SVECCS members exchanged dodgy haircuts for just over an hour of fuss and treats, and the feedback from this event

has been so fantastic that we are going to run it again at the next available opportunity.

Although many of our topics concentrate on small animal practice, we also hold equine and farm animal events and, naturally, many emergency skills are transferable across species.

We've had a lecture entitled 'Approach to the downer cow' by Vikki Wyse of XL Vets, and our farm animal clinicians John Fishwick and Steven Van Winden held a practical session on carrying out an emergency caesarean at the February symposium, where delegates practised interlocking suture patterns and discussed approaches to anaesthesia and surgery.

We hope that as the society continues to develop we are able to offer our members a wider variety of events and that our growing presence will attract yet more speakers and sponsorship to run practicals that require specific equipment. The dramatic increase in membership over the past couple of years has confirmed our belief that the material we cover is of benefit to our members and is enjoyable.

With Liverpool Vet School now running its own chapter, the prospect of further universities following suit and national events occurring is an exciting possibility.

■ If you would like to consider starting up a SVECCS chapter at your university or would like more information please e-mail: sveccs@rvc.ac.uk



Our amazing helpers! QMHA staff clinicians, residents and interns

# The Glasgow Vet School Rodeo: a fun day out for all

By Jordan Sinclair (Glasgow, 2nd Year)

**The Glasgow Vet School Rodeo is an annual charity event organised by vet students. Each year, we support several (usually animal-related) charities with the aim of hosting a fun-filled family day out while raising money for worthy causes. Last year, we raised £15,000 in total, but this year we aimed to make the Rodeo bigger and better.**

The 54th annual Rodeo was held within the grounds of Glasgow Vet School on April 12. The day included displays of falconry and duck-herding in the main arena, with TREC and horse rescue demonstrations in the horse arena. There was also a dog show that offered all dog owners the chance to enter their dog in a variety of classes; as well as an animal tent, a reptile tent and pony rides. If that wasn't enough, there were craft stalls in the marquee, bouncy castles and horse and carriage rides. Local animal charities also came along to promote their work.

As has become traditional, we ended the day by drawing our 'rodeo raffle'. We had some fantastic prizes, such as a family pass for Blair Drummond Safari Park, afternoon tea at the Hilton in Glasgow, 'Tee Time' at Royal Troon Golf Club, and many more and we are grateful to various organisations for providing these.

We've not yet had time to count up the money, but we are confident that we can beat last year's total to help all our worthy causes. The charities being supported were:

■ World Horse Welfare, which is an international horse charity that



'improves the lives of horses in the UK and around the world through education, campaigning, and hands-on care'.

■ The Blue Cross, which 'finds the right homes for unwanted pets throughout the UK', treats sick and injured animals at its hospitals when owners can't afford private fees, promotes animal welfare and provides the Pet Bereavement Support Service.

■ Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, which helps people experiencing hearing loss throughout the UK by creating 'life-changing partnerships between deaf people and specially trained hearing dogs'.

■ Veterinary Development Fund: the James Herriot Scholarship fund will enable Glasgow Vet School to award scholarships to excellent undergraduate and postgraduate veterinary students who, through financial constraints, may otherwise not be able to study at Glasgow.

■ Inti Wara Yassi – a Bolivian charity that works to rescue wildlife by confiscating illegally kept wild animals or by offering sanctuary to animals that are voluntarily brought to



the charity. These animals are cared for in one of three parks throughout Bolivia.

■ Hesselhead Wildlife Rescue – a charity in North Ayrshire, Scotland, that aims to rescue, treat, rehabilitate and release birds and animals back to the wild.

■ Students for Animals In Need – a charity made up of veterinary students from the University of Glasgow who work together to provide treatment to sick or injured animals that might not otherwise be treated, due to financial difficulties.

■ Riding For the Disabled Association (RDA): Glasgow RDA provides equine therapy to over 300 children and adults with disabilities from across the greater Glasgow area.

# Gaining confidence with exotics

By Will Seymour (Edinburgh, 5th Year)

**Imagine yourself waiting quietly with anticipation, stethoscope in hand, for what lies in the next room: a species with which you have had minimal contact. You might be seeing practice, be in an exam or, most crucially, consulting as a qualified vet.**

For a lot of vets in this situation the chances are this is an exotic species, and this is becoming ever more likely for a qualified vet, as the popularity of exotic pets has steadily increased. One estimate puts the number of exotic species in the UK at 42 million, with 1.1 million households owning a reptile species.

A source of confidence comes in the form of Jo Hedley – one of our exotics clinicians in Edinburgh – who is going south of the border to the Royal Veterinary College to set up its exotics clinic.

'There are a lot of exotic species for the clinic,' Jo explains. 'The number of exotic pets in the UK is increasing, especially in the south east.' Alongside a huge rise in pet ownership, this area also has the highest number of veterinary positions advertised, further establishing it as the nucleus for veterinary careers.

Jo obtained her RCVS diploma in zoological medicine in 2011 following a residency in exotic animal medicine. She subsequently worked for two years in the specialist exotics clinic, providing a renowned service to pets around Edinburgh. As a first-opinion and referral practice, the clinic also provided teaching to veterinary students, especially during the final-year rotations. Many students will have memories, such as taking a buzzard consult, assisting with iguana surgery or carrying out echocardiography on a chicken.

Jo talked of her anticipations for the clinic at the RVC: 'I'm look-

ing forward to teaching students there, as I've very much enjoyed teaching here [in Edinburgh]. I'll be taking some of what I have learned in Edinburgh, and the experience I previously had as a vet in London to build up a varied caseload from which the students can learn.'

Education as a whole in exotics medicine is in need of change. As the number of exotics being owned increases so does the need to know how to treat them in general practice. In the past decade, the profession has moved away from general practice dealing with few exotics and specialist clinics dealing with the rest. Practices are seeing many more exotics in their clinics, and now 30 per cent of small animal practices in suburban and urban areas are hiring vets with knowledge of exotic pets. Our veterinary courses, which are mostly teaching us to qualify as ambitious and versatile mixed species vets, need to move dynamically with this trend. As Jo puts it: 'The other vet schools have needed to develop their exotics teaching for some time. Things are changing slowly, but everyone is a lot more aware there are more exotics pets being kept and our knowledge just isn't keeping up with that.'

Knowledge of handling and husbandry is an area where veterinary students find it hard to gain experience outwith vet school – mostly in pet shops and rescue centres – and there is no control over the quality of the experience gained. With a dedicated exotics facility at Edinburgh, vital restraint and handling skills can be learned. Jo explains the importance of this: 'We need to have new grads ready to handle any of them, especially



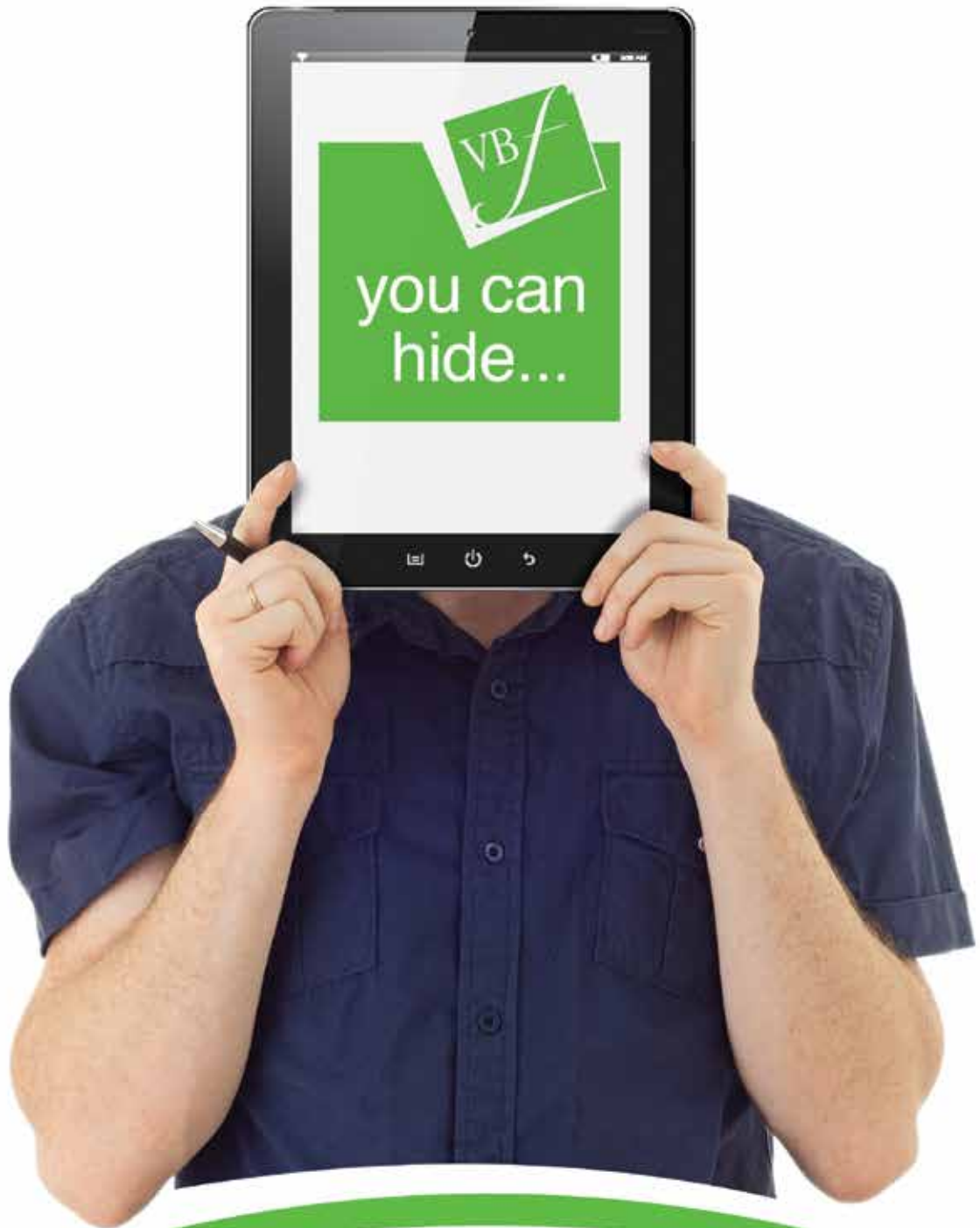
rabbits and other small mammals, as they really will form an everyday part of most vets' caseload.'

As exotics will be an inevitable part of practice for us future vets, we will need to come out of our comfort zone to deal with them – not an uncommon scenario for a newly qualified vet. But this may be no bad thing and, as Jo explains, this may be beneficial to treating more common species: 'The transferable skills gained from being able to apply small animal principles to an exotic species will apply to all mixed practice, building confidence with treating domestic animals in a mixed practice job.'

So, Londoners, as an exotics clinic comes to your hospital, you might be enjoying the fun of dealing with out-of-the-ordinary species – formulating a weight-loss plan for an obese boa constrictor, or advising on a misbehaving parrot, perhaps. But though these unusual memories ring with novelty, the most important aspect taken from the rotation for us Edinburgh folk was confidence. We gained confidence in dealing with species, with which most of us have had only a few hours, if any, contact time. At the end of practical teaching, the exotic in the next room will seem less of an alien beast and more of an interesting clinical challenge.

Edinburgh students wish Jo the best of luck.





## ...but we can talk

We all need support sometimes but we often don't want other people to know this.

That's why Vet Helpline understands if you want to talk to us on-line or by phone without telling us who you are.

We've even designed our new email response service so that your email address isn't visible.

Register on our website with whatever username you like and you will be able to exchange confidential emails with one of our trained volunteers, for as long as you need support.

We will reply to every email within 24 hours. You can also still phone Vet Helpline, day or night, on 07659 811118.

[www.vetlife.org.uk](http://www.vetlife.org.uk)

**VBF - Here to help vets get back on track**

FREE • CONFIDENTIAL • INDEPENDENT • SUPPORT

Veterinary Benevolent Fund is a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee, Company No. 153010 Charity Registration No. 224776.

# AVS Congress 2014 – a look to the future

By Oli Gilman (Bristol, 4th Year)

**It was with some uncertainty that I loaded up the car at an ungodly hour in the morning and set off for Nottingham Vet School. This was to be my first AVS event; I'd made a last minute decision to go and I had absolutely no idea what to expect.**

I think we all know what AVS Sports Weekend entails; even if you haven't been; the tales of various antics are legendary among vet students. However, if AVS Congress has passed under your radar so far, make sure it doesn't in future.

When I arrived and collected my welcome pack, I was struck by the variety of lectures, seminars and practicals that had been organised for the weekend. Even though we'd been given the choice of a 'stream' – farm, small animal, equine or exotics – these seemed fairly flexible and being able to jump from lectures on small animal wound management to emergency equine colic and then onto clinical reptile cases would satisfy anyone even with the most mixed of mixed



practice ambitions! I particularly enjoyed the practicals; having the opportunity to have a go at cardiac ultrasound (something I'd previously not had the chance to do) was extremely beneficial, and I would now feel a lot more confident in using an ultrasound machine on EMS without either looking like a moron, breaking it, or both. I had chosen the small animal stream, where other practicals included wound management and a microbiology session on antimicrobial resistance.

Aside from the clinical lectures and practicals there were hugely informative talks from the presidents of the RCVS and the BVA, lectures on getting your first job and even a presentation from the head of Surrey vet school.

I couldn't make it up for the bar crawl on the Friday night, but the congress ball on the Saturday was great fun, with a particular highlight being the slightly distracting transformation of one dreadlocked man into what can only be described as a balloon spectacle during the speeches – Jimmy from Cambridge, I never had the chance to speak to you, but top effort!



Hair-raising experience, Jimmy from Cambridge with balloons attached to his dreadlocks



Erwin Hohn is a partner with Medivet and is also involved in mentoring and coaching

was 'The Future of Veterinary Medicine'. Nottingham put on a wide spread of lectures and practicals that were encapsulated by this theme, but the theme went beyond the organised events themselves: the weekend was a great way to meet fellow vet students from different universities, who could well be colleagues within a few years time.

As well as this, AVS Congress served as a look ahead and a timely reminder of the bigger picture: that being a vet student isn't just about desperately revising histopathology

## Bigger picture

The theme of this year's Congress



in a coffee-induced haze late in the evening, but is part of an exciting journey into the veterinary profession.



All in all, I had a wonderful time at this year's AVS Congress and would like to thank the Nottingham committee for organising what was a

highly useful and thoroughly enjoyable weekend – as well as all of our hosts for their hospitality throughout!

# Veterinary Record Open

Veterinary Record Open is a peer-reviewed journal dedicated to publishing specialist veterinary research across a range of topic areas including those of a more niche and specialist nature to that considered in the weekly Veterinary Record. Research from all disciplines of veterinary interest will be considered. It is an Open Access journal of the British Veterinary Association.

FIND OUT MORE AT  
<http://vetrecordopen.bmj.com>

**OH NO! IT'S A BIG FAT BITCH SPAY**

Showing the **vascular knot** technique  
**1 HOUR ONLINE CPD**

[www.vets.tv/spay](http://www.vets.tv/spay)

# Great speakers, contentious issues, vocal students – plus free food and drink!

By Florence Bowman, AWF administration manager

## The AWF debate series is coming to your vet school.

Nottingham hosted the first Animal Welfare Foundation (AWF) debate in May 2012 and since then each vet school has hosted at least one such event. We started the debates after the decision was made to bring welfare issues to more students than had been possible through our welfare event that had traditionally preceded the final-year seminar at Lancaster. The welfare symposium had used roleplay and case studies to examine welfare issues that might be encountered in practice and discussed the legal, welfare and ethical aspects in each case. Although feedback from the students was excellent, it only allowed us to reach 45 final-year students. We wanted to raise animal welfare issues with a much wider student audience, and on a more regular basis, so we decided to take AWF on the road.

What hasn't changed is our enthusiasm to tackle contentious welfare issues and to find out what the next generation of vets think about them. In October 2013 we had our first double-header with Glasgow and Liverpool hosting events on the same night. In a rare foray out of the AWF office, I joined the audience at Glasgow for a presentation by Professor Bill Reilly, a leading speaker on issues around welfare at slaughter.

In terms of bums on seats, the Liverpool event set the current attendance record, with 250 students enjoying a feisty debate between AWF trustee Chris Laurence and Kennel Club chairman Steve Dean. For two hours they debated the motion 'The Kennel Club has a positive impact on canine health in the UK'. Judging by the tweets from the audience, Chris seemed to win the



argument against the motion by a nose. You can find out more about past events on the AWF website [www.bva-awf.org.uk/events](http://www.bva-awf.org.uk/events)

The popularity of the debates has enabled AWF to attract enough sponsorship to offer two events at each vet school per academic year. We have some topics and issues in mind – related to the priorities that we are working on – but you don't have to be limited to that list. We work with AVS reps to arrange the events and try to keep the administration to a minimum. Reps simply contact us with a topic/issue for the event, a preferred speaker (if they have one, but if not we can find one), decide whether the event will be presentation-style or a debate and suggest available dates. Speaking of dates, it can be tricky to find speakers at short notice, so we ask for as much lead time as possible (minimum of a month but more is preferable). AWF pays the speaker's travel, expenses and provides up to £200

for refreshments on the night, which is claimed after the event. It's always nice to know that some food and drink will be available, especially if it's free! All we ask in return is for a short report of the event. We are booking dates now for all vet schools for the remainder of 2014, so we really want to hear from you.

### About AWF

AWF has been described as the 'veterinary profession's best kept secret' so let's fill in a few facts. AWF is a small but ambitious charity, created and managed by vets. Our mission is to improve the welfare of animals through education, science and debate.

A key area of our work is funding veterinary research projects that aim to lead to practical outcomes that can be disseminated to animal owners and carers to improve animal welfare. A current example is our award of £200,000 to a team at Liverpool led by Dr Jennifer

Duncan, which is seeking a greater understanding of contagious ovine digital dermatitis (CODD). Despite the severity and rapid spread of this disease there hasn't been much research on it, and this project will improve understanding of the epidemiology, pathology and aetiology of the disease, alongside evidence based treatment trials to improve its control. You can follow the project's progress on Twitter [https://twitter.com/Joe\\_Angell\\_CODD](https://twitter.com/Joe_Angell_CODD) and read about AWF's other projects at [www.bva-awf.org.uk/grants/current-projects](http://www.bva-awf.org.uk/grants/current-projects).



Just like at the Oscars, the AWF sends out for pizza. Here, Glasgow presenter, Professor Bill Reilly, helps with delivery

### Discussion Forum

If attending an AWF event has whetted your appetite for debate, you might like to sign up for the AWF's annual Discussion Forum, which is being held on Monday, May 12, at One Great George Street, London. You'll be part of an audience from across the veterinary profession and

organisations with an interest in animal welfare who come together to address key issues with the aim of influencing animal welfare policy. It's also a great networking event. Every year AWF allocates two free student places (plus travel expenses) to each vet school. But if you miss out on a free place, undergraduate

veterinary students can attend the Forum for the discounted price of £30. The delegate fee includes an invitation to an evening reception at the House of Commons. To find out more about the Forum and to book visit [www.bva-awf.org.uk](http://www.bva-awf.org.uk) or contact us on 020 7908 6375 or [bva-awf@bva.co.uk](mailto:bva-awf@bva.co.uk)



**STUDENTSUPPLIES™**

**Run By Students For Students**

Are you looking for books, clothing and equipment, and do you want them at a great price?


Then come to us, we deal with publishers direct on your behalf to secure the best discounts.

We also supply books from America!!  
Contact us direct for great deals on bulk orders

**Web:** [www.vmstudentsupplies.co.uk](http://www.vmstudentsupplies.co.uk)  
**Email:** [vmssupplies@btinternet.com](mailto:vmssupplies@btinternet.com)

Let your ideas take off in

## In Practice<sup>®</sup>



Your idea could be our next article

Clinical and business/management articles published in **In Practice** are commissioned by the **In Practice** Editorial Board. However, the Board is happy to consider **your suggestions for articles**.

E-mail your ideas to: [inpractice@bva-edit.co.uk](mailto:inpractice@bva-edit.co.uk)

[inpractice.bvapublications.com](http://inpractice.bvapublications.com)

# New vet schools – what will be the result?

By Alex McGhee, AVS President

## The impact of new vet schools continues to be discussed in the veterinary press and at veterinary conferences.

The first cohort of students will begin studying at Surrey vet school this year; with a full year group starting in 2015. A number of universities have looked at establishing new vet schools, with both Ulster and Aberystwyth universities apparently having well developed plans. This is in large part due to the change in HEFCE funding to encourage competition between universities that has, in effect, removed the limits on veterinary places. This has prompted a discussion about the future of the profession.

While most of the debate focused on Surrey, there could be two more vet schools on the horizon. Ulster and Aberystwyth are said to be in the advanced stages of creating vet schools. This adds an extra dimension to the arguments, as both are motivated in large part by nationalistic desires to train vet students in their country. The Welsh university is, in part, motivated by the closure of AHVLA facilities and a desire for a Welsh research hub, and it seems a shame that undergraduate vets are being seen simply as a means to an end.

## What about my job prospects?

A key area of concern and the subject of several passionate discussions at both BVA and BEVA congresses has been the effect of new vet schools on jobs. Simple economics means that an increase in supply is going to have a damaging effect on wages and job security. I doubt many students enjoyed reading the rankings of salaries published in the *Daily Mail* that put veterinarians' average wage at £33,000, just below

'Rail construction and maintenance operatives'. As highlighted at the BEVA debate, there is also a cautionary tale in the form of Australia, where three new vet schools were opened in the early 2000s. A quadrupling in the number of unemployed vets over the past six years followed this.

Currently, each EU member state decides its own criteria for accrediting vet schools. The pan-European body – EAVE – that inspects European vet schools doesn't have the power to remove accreditations. This means that graduates are able to register with the Royal College having trained in vet schools that have either not been inspected or approved by the EAVE. To give an example, of four vet schools in Poland, three have not been approved by the EAVE and one has achieved a conditional approval. However, over the past six years more than 230 Polish graduates have registered with the RCVS. An increase in the capacity of the UK vet schools could simply decrease the flow of European graduates. Sadly, this is dependent on employers of vets choosing the best rather than the cheapest graduates.

## Will education change?

The argument about the effects on education is distinctly two sided. New vet schools come with a healthy dose of self-promotion and marketing. A good deal of this comes from the need to justify a new school and appeal to wary applicants – there are only so many ways to deliver the same content. What's more, new vet schools can poach more progressive veterinary academics, creating a hub of innovation, but no net gain for education in the UK. It is, however, true that new vet schools inject a much-needed shot of competition in the UK. They

benefit from generous university investment and a blank slate that presents a fantastic opportunity to create a progressive and modern course.

New vet schools, though, will also put pressures on the perilously small pool of veterinary academics. While some staff at new vet schools will be pulled in from practice, a sizeable portion will come from existing universities. The effects of Nottingham's startup were keenly felt at several universities. The increased frequency with which this happens is likely to compound this effect.

The rise of the 'partner practice model' presents an additional dimension to the debate. This formula, first used in the UK by Nottingham, represents a significantly different way of providing rotations and also removes a substantial barrier to entry for new vet schools. Proponents of the now well-established system at Nottingham say it provides unrivalled caseload and real work experience. It also allows practising vets, who have in the past criticised the quality of graduates, a greater stake in their education. There are those, however, who feel private practices aren't truly able to put student education ahead of the myriad of other pressures that teaching hospitals are not as encumbered by.

## How will EMS be affected?

EMS has become a key issue in the new vet school debate. The ability of UK practices to provide EMS can be incredibly hard to quantify. When looking simply at the numbers of practices that provide EMS (according to the RCVS) and the number of students that require it, each practice should have to provide less than eight, two-week placements per year. With some practices having almost eight students every

week this provision of EMS seems attainable. The waters are muddied slightly by specialist practices such as farm, equine and exotics making up a relatively small proportion of EMS provision but a large part of demand. It has been suggested removing requirements by individual universities for farm and equine may ease this, but can graduates truly be omniquified without it?

The other issue is that of partner practices. By removing multiple practices, including highly specialist referral hospitals, the creation of partner practices compounds some of the problems associated with the provision of EMS. Students from the east of England have long bemoaned their difficulties in finding local EMS. If a similar problem arises in the south and on RVC's doorstep, this may come to a head. It is worth remembering though that partner practices can and should still provide EMS, just as university practices at existing schools do. From our first meeting, AVS has lobbied Surrey vet school to consider its impact on EMS and, at a recent speech at

the AVS Congress, Professor Gail Anderson confirmed that Surrey is encouraging all of its partner practices to continue to provide EMS.

#### **What can be done?**

What is important, when considering these issues, is what can be done. The desire to regulate student numbers simply isn't realistic, as the RCVS have 'no mandate to control student or graduate numbers'. The question of who is employing foreign graduates from non-approved vet schools and why is far more pertinent. Unfortunately, raising awareness of this issue may only go so far and graduates are going to have to be more willing to diversify. Clinical practice simply won't be able to accommodate the increasing graduate numbers. One key area that vets have traditionally neglected is the business aspect of practice. How many times have students grumbled though business lectures only to say they 'just want to be a vet'! The veterinary market can and should expand to create more jobs, and business acumen is essential for this.

The maintenance of educational standards falls to the RCVS, who will not only have to inspect the UK establishments carefully but also monitor their impacts on education in general. EMS is a key area of concern, for which much can be done to mitigate the effects of new vet schools. AVS has already been lobbying Surrey not to exclude EMS students from their partner practices and their commitment to not having negative effects has been admirable. The key to EMS, however, is allowing all students to identify all the practices that provide EMS and make a decision based on relative and current feedback. It is for this reason that the AVS is in the early stage of developing an EMS database that would allow universities and students to share EMS information.

Arguing about new vet schools can be a bit like arguing about the weather: it's going to happen whether we like it or not. It may just be time to put on a coat, slip on the wellies and start working on what can be done to maintain the reputation of UK veterinary education.

**NEW  
FOR 2013**

## **Veterinary Record casereports**

Veterinary Record Case Reports aims to publish a high volume of cases in all disciplines so that veterinary professionals, researchers and others can easily find important information on both common and rare conditions. All articles are peer reviewed and copy edited before publication. Find out about subscribing today and become part of our community so you can read all the published cases and submit your own.

Subscribers can:

- submit as many cases as they like
- access all the published material
- re-use any published material for personal use and teaching without further permission.

FIND OUT MORE AT

<http://vetrecordcasereports.bmj.com>

**BVA**  
British Veterinary Association



# International benefits

By Karen Richardson (London, 3rd Year)

**Barking out answers in lectures, mobbing professors during breaks, feasting on turkey in November and Skyping at odd hours in odder languages and accents . . . who are these people and why are they at your vet school?**

International students have become a regular fixture at most UK vet schools, particularly here in London, where they accounted for an eighth of the 2012/13 intake for the RVC's five-year BVetMed programme. That's consistent with the rest of UK degree-granting institutions, where 13 per cent of enrolments last year came from non-EU students.

Those overall numbers are poised to fall, though, if the Conservatives in power manage to meet their immigration goals, critics say. Prime Minister, David Cameron, has stated that his party 'has set a clear aspiration to reduce net migration to just tens of thousands' from the current hundreds of thousands. Next year's general election and the recent hand-wringing over potential new immigrants from Bulgaria and Romania add urgency to that goal, which could spell bad news for international students.

The net-migration figure – what's left after subtracting the number of UK citizens who move away from the number of people who move here – includes not only the EU-citizens who have the right to live and work here, but also vet students from further-flung lands. In fact, 'the largest component of the net-migration number is international students', explains Daniel Stevens, international students officer at the National Union of Students. Since the UK is an EU member, it has fewer levers to pull to curb the European component of the net-migration number. 'The only one

that's kind of flexible is international students,' Mr Stevens point out.

Indeed, the government hasn't been hiding how it feels about foreign students, and monitoring attendance is just the start. Since the Coalition Government came to power in 2010, it has imposed nerve-racking credibility interviews on some applicants before granting visas. International vet students are no longer eligible for post study work visas, and now the Government is proposing to charge students £150 for every year of their degree to pay into the NHS (free health care has long been a draw of studying

**'For our work in the future, we'll have to learn to get along with people from different backgrounds and cultures . . . I think it's a good thing'**

RVC vet student, Janie Pereira

here over the USA, Canada and Australia). 'All these things added together create a very hostile environment', Mr Stevens says.

With vet schools' draconian admission standards and gruelling curriculum, vet students don't appear to be the natural target of the government's gimlet eye. 'If you're looking to access higher education as a backdoor way of entering the UK, you'd be crazy to choose veterinary school', says David Church, the RVC's vice principle of student and learning experience. 'It's too hard.'

For its part, the RVC is committed to recruiting more overseas students, despite the political climate, and is pushing to enrol more non-North Americans. From 2009 to 2013, nearly a third of students in its four-year accelerated BVetMed programme came from the USA.

More surprisingly, only one student out of all RVC vet students enrolled over that period came from China. Compare that with all UK degree-granting institutions, where Chinese make up the biggest proportion of international students at 3.6 per cent of all students.

The benefits of international students may not seem immediately obvious. The RVC, for example, collects nearly the same fees from each student whether they're from Boston or Birmingham, since the government subsidises the full cost of UK students' tuition above fees. 'For the RVC, they're just another student,' Professor Church says.

What's key about International students' contribution is what he refers to as the hidden curriculum – an educational concept that values students' social and cultural encounters within, say, the give-and-take of rotations, weekly shopping and netball.

This is particularly important at the country's only dedicated veterinary university. 'By our very nature, we tend to have a relatively narrow world view, and that's focused on animals,' says Professor Church. Unlike other vet students, RVC students have little opportunity to rub shoulders with architects, lawyers or classical scholars of Greek literature. In what can feel like a stultifying grind of lectures and humbling path labs, engaging with different cultures, learning styles, politics and religions is something that can be experienced through international students, he says. As we progress through vet school, the distinctions fade for some. Janie Pereira, a London-born-and-bred RVC third year, now shares a house with one Canadian-American and one Korean-American classmate; with them she's hosted pot-lucks and Thanksgiving parties, while introducing them to Dr Who and beans on toast.



# Wildlife rehabilitation: making sense of an oxymoron?

By Jo Hardy (London, final-year)

**I recently entered an essay about wildlife rehabilitation, in a competition to win a wildlife rehabilitation placement. I was a finalist but didn't win, which made me reflect why . . . maybe I didn't present myself well enough, or maybe it was because I spent the whole presentation de-fluffing the concept to make people think twice about what they're supporting. I'd like to think it's the second!**

Wildlife. Rehabilitation. Isn't it interesting that when put together these words create emotive and positive thoughts despite the phrase being an oxymoron? The thought of bottle feeding cute animals and nursing animals you rarely get to touch is exciting to most. But is it really what it's cracked up to be?

Wildlife defined is 'undomesticated animals living in the wild', which, when paired with rehabilitation, creates a direct contradiction, as rehabilitation involves human contact and confined rest: not the usual life for wildlife. So can wildlife rehabilitation really be ethical?

Wildlife rehabilitation is an excellent means of reconciling for human mistakes. Naturally, wildlife should not suffer a detriment as a result of human fault as, by definition, the life of a wild animal should not be influenced by the life of a human. Therefore, in a scenario where a wild bird has been caught in plastic six-pack rings, and would suffer without human intervention, then human intervention would be the most ethical approach as it is a correction of human cause and would return the animal back to the way of life it had before the insult.

However, a scenario where a hyena breaks its leg in a fight for domi-

nance would be entirely different, as hyenas live in complex social pack structures, and so the suffering would simply be a result of natural selection, and not of a human changing the course of that hyena's life. The reality is, the leg could potentially mend by itself after a few months of the hyena living at a lower level of the hierarchy and on three legs, and so even though human intervention may result in a neater, quicker healing, it must be considered what would be the lesser evil: a better healing, yet stress of human contact, temporary captivity and an upset of social dynamics of the pack by removal and later reintroduction of the hyena, or prolonged hardship in its normal circumstances?

While doing some zoo veterinary work experience in my final year, I came across a situation where some dholes had been fighting. One had died, and then another was picked on. There was a dilemma about whether to take out the one being picked on and clean up her wounds, but it had to be considered that if she was removed, the next in line for the bottom of the pack would then get picked on as, like hyenas, dholes live in a very complex social structure. Rehabilitation may not always be the best thing for the welfare of the animal or even the other animals surrounding them.

It is not always as clear-cut as these scenarios though. For example, what happens when an animal cannot be rehabilitated for re-release due to a new inability for survival in the wild, and it has to live permanently in captivity? This is when conservation is a big factor in the decision-making process, and careful thought must be put in to deciding whether letting nature run its course outweighs the stress and unnaturalness of captivity. Is the animal endangered? Are

the genetics valuable? Could it be used in a breeding programme to conserve the future of the species? Could the animal be used for educational purposes to inspire and energise people to support conservation efforts of that species? Or is the animal likely to end up in captivity for tourist purposes, for a petting experience that may add unnecessary stress to the animal? Or could it live a life of boredom in a confined area behind bars with no purpose? Each case should be considered individually to decide whether the ends justify the means.

The veterinary profession has a responsibility to any animal in facing the dilemma of whether rehabilitation is in its best interest. The first clause of the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons is, 'Veterinary surgeons must make animal health and welfare their first consideration', and therefore since the animal cannot be autonomous, the responsibility of weighing up the pros and cons of taking in a wild animal falls on vets. It naturally also falls on the vets to educate communities about the adverse effects of their actions on wildlife, as prevention is always better than cure; a concept taught heavily throughout veterinary education. It is always better to avoid the need for rehabilitation; which in itself is conservation.

So does the end result of a healthy animal justify rehabilitation for any ill or injured animal? A utilitarian approach needs to be taken to decide what is the greatest good for the animal's welfare, and conservation actions are imperative to avoid reasons why an animal may need veterinary intervention as a direct result of human error. But the answer to it all is that each case deserves individual consideration and an individual outcome.

# One health, one talk, one factor

By Amber Lee Rosenzweig (London, 3rd Year)

**Prominent figures in human and animal health, microbiology and epidemiology, along with enthusiastic students and professors, recently met in Cambridge to discuss One Health.**

One Health unifies the many fields and individuals involved in medicine, disease and related disasters. Initially, the theory was that, united, these fields would have a greater ability to address these problems, and result in a greater impact on the global problems that we face with in the areas of health and medicine today.

The day was organised by students from the Cambridge University One Health Committee, headed by fifth year veterinary student Joanne Harries, and featured lectures on a wide range of topics. Following an introduction the day opened with a revealing talk giving a humanitarian perspective on responses to natural disasters, reminding us of the social and cultural component that is often forgotten in these situations.

In the talk, Dame Barbara Stocking, former chief executive of Oxfam, discussed the need for knowledge of the people we are working to help, their culture and their systems. We cannot make assumptions about an individual's needs based on our own situations because they are so very different, she said. She then shared a story where the needs of the people were being met, but not those of their animals, meaning some of the human resources were subsequently being used for fodder. Another example she discussed involved bringing in feedstuffs from external sources, which resulted in the collapse of local markets. We also must be careful to preserve human dignity, leaving as much power as we can in the hands of local people. By provid-

ing knowledge, and in this case also monetary resources, to individuals, we can allow them to make their own choices in order to meet the needs of themselves, their families and their animals by sourcing from local markets.

This message was particularly striking for me because this is something that we also need to remember in our every day practices. Every animal comes with an owner. The choices that we make for the treatment of that patient always have to work within the confines of that particular individual's situation. Lifestyle and cultural habits must be considered. We may not be able to treat animals with chronic conditions because the level of care needed by that animal simply cannot be met by their current situation, either because of financial or time constraints.

We also must be careful not to extrapolate our own situations into those of our clients. We are often asked what would we do given their situation, but realistically this is not a practical solution for most owners, because they simply are not us. As vets this may be very frustrating. We hate to see a dog diagnosed with diabetes euthanased because an owner is unable to handle daily insulin injections, but sometimes this is the best decision for all parties involved. It can be hard for us to understand why someone cannot accommodate his or her pet's care, but we need to be realistic. There are going to be those owners who are willing to go to all ends to provide the best care for their pets, but for others the emotional stress alone may be too much.

This is also seen in production animal medicine where the economic costs of treating an animal for a particular condition must be weighed with its value. These animals have a purpose, and that is to generate an



income for the owner and create products for the general population such as meat, milk, and fibres. Once again, it may be frustrating as a clinician to have to euthanase an animal that may be easily treated, but this just isn't a practical solution. We must be careful to preserve human dignity in these situations as well. We mustn't put pressure on a farmer whose income and life can be greatly impacted by these decisions. A choice needs to be made in his or her interest as well that of their family and, of course, the animal.

In none of these cases does welfare need to be compromised. Animals must still not be made to suffer, to endure pain unnecessarily, and our goal first and foremost must be in the interest of the animal. At the same time, in all fields of veterinary medicine, and on all scales from addressing problems in private practice to those on a global scale, we must be careful not to forget that this is a people business. It's not just about the animals, but about providing a service to our community and the world, to the people who own pets and depend on us for their care, and the people who rely on production animals both for their livelihood and their products. Without working with these considerations, the best medicine and care from both the veterinary and human medical fronts cannot succeed and will never result in sustainable solutions to the problems faced by individuals, especially those in the most vulnerable situations.



# Vet Student Network

**[vetportal.royalcanin.co.uk](http://vetportal.royalcanin.co.uk)**  
**or [vetportal.royalcanin.ie](http://vetportal.royalcanin.ie)**

- Exclusive access to Royal Canin resources, online library and support materials
- Up to date information and news
- First notice of upcoming Royal Canin CPD events and webinars

## Plus even more if you're a Veterinary Student

- Exclusive access to anatomical learning tools
- Vet student newsletters
- Exclusive e-Learning access



© Royal Canin SAS 2014 - All rights reserved for Royal Canin and Crown Pet Foods Ltd. (Credit : Jean-Michel Labat)

# Campylobacter in poultry: how clean is your chicken

By Agata Witkowska (Nottingham, 4th Year)

**Do you wash your chicken before cooking it? Have you heard of campylobacter? If not, you better buckle up as it's the number one food-borne disease in the UK.**

*Campylobacter jejuni* is another of those gram negative bacteria that we have all heard about in our microbiology lectures . . . some-time, somewhere. But when it gets you, it gets you bad. Symptoms of the disease include fever; diarrhoea, abdominal pain and malaise. The disease is self-limiting, but can last up to two weeks depending on an individual. Now that's appetising, isn't it?



## Why is it such a big deal?

A study conducted by the Food Standards Agency in 2007/08 surveyed over 900 retail chickens and found that 65.2 per cent of them were contaminated by the bacterium. *C. jejuni* is a commensal organism of many species (including chicken) and can also be found in raw milk; however, the process of pasteurisation kills the organism. The most common route of infection is via meat. The bacteria are easily killed by freezing or heating the meat but not through washing; so, if you wash your chicken, you might have just spread campylobacter all over your kitchen.

I agree with you: giving your food a good scrub before eating it (hopefully you cook your chicken as well) seems like a reasonable thing to do. After all, we're all used to hearing about people getting ill from not preparing food hygienically; it wouldn't hurt to make that chicken sparkling clean, right? However, the meat is washed before packing, so why do we feel the need to wash it

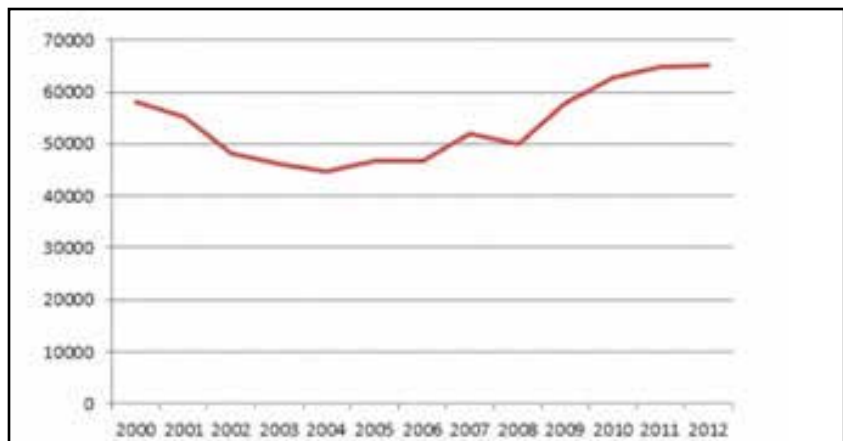
again? Maybe we're just getting really clean or maybe we're not aware of what happens in our abattoirs, but cross contamination remains the most common route of infection and the numbers of reported cases of *C. jejuni* infection are rising each year, making it the most important zoonotic disease in the UK.

## What can we do?

So, what should we do? Freeze the chicken; irradiate it; chill it? Or, maybe, simply not wash it. At a recent One Health conference in Cambridge it was suggested that

packaging might be the solution to the problem: adding a simple drawing to the label warning us not to wash the meat. But how likely are we to follow the packaging instructions? Do we read them or do we think we know better?

There seems to be no simple solution to the problem and it's getting bigger, but maybe the next time you're planning to have chicken for dinner, you'll think twice about washing it. Do you really want to cover your kitchen in campylobacter? Leave it be – after all washing is just extra effort.



Laboratory reports of campylobacter species infections by year in England and Wales, 2000-2012. With special thanks to Dr Robert Atterbury for supplying this graph

# One health: ‘What on earth is it?’

By **Antonia Matthews** (London, intercalating)

**The curriculum at every veterinary school in the country now seems to include specific lectures discussing the importance of One Health, and the American Veterinary Oath recited on graduation refers to the importance of vets in public health, yet many medical professionals and students have never heard of it.**

As the world has become more interconnected and globalised, the requirement for developments in global health has been identified. The importance of combining the expertise of medics and vets to cope with emerging zoonoses, feeding populations, border controls, combating vector borne diseases, risks of biological weapons and greater use of animals in human palliative care has been recognised within the veterinary community, and by some medical professionals. However, many, if not most, medical students appear to have never heard the expression ‘One Health’, and many medical professionals involved in global health projects and teaching also appear to be thrown by the concept.

In September I started an intercalated degree in global health at King’s College London. It’s a fantastic degree and a brilliant opportunity

to expand my knowledge into the more medical perspective of the subject. As the first vet student to undertake this particular course I knew that it was going to be far more aimed at the medics. What I didn’t expect, however, was the reaction of complete shock and surprise with which I was met by the other 19 (medical) students on my course, all of whom are at various stages of their training.

Their lack of understanding of One Health was not their only obvious gap in knowledge, particularly with regard to the veterinary profession. I was asked a variety of questions about being a vet student, such as how was the vet course run; if vets were actually involved in global health; whether the vet course was seven years long (and that we couldn’t possibly learn about multiple species) and, finally, did horses really wear coats? Despite that, everyone was enormously welcoming and they embraced the idea of One Health once they knew about it; however, the lack of knowledge about the bare basics of vets and their diverse roles identified not only a hole in the medical course, but also a lack of social and professional interaction between vet students and medical students.

The lack of knowledge regarding vets and One Health is not just limited to medical students, but is also rife among many medical

professionals, who admit to just never having thought about a vet as any more than the person who vaccinates cute puppies. This misinformation may result in wasted opportunities, with vets not being involved in global health projects where they may be able to improve animal outcomes parallel to the human ones, as well as possibly directly improving human outcomes as well. For example, combining vaccination programmes for children and animals could increase overall uptake of vaccinations – a mutually beneficial arrangement.

As I write, I am waiting for my research proposal to be returned, in which I describe my plan for the summer to look further into how medical students view vets and how many of them have any understanding of global health. Most importantly, I want to look at how much respect they have for vets in global health, in terms of whether they would hire a vet or follow a vet’s leadership in a One Health project. However, the first step to combating this issue is surely as simple as ‘hug a medic!’ As much as jokes about ‘real medics treating more than one species’ seem to be mirrored around every veterinary school, the long-term benefits to One Health could be great and making friends with humanitarians who get to cut up people shouldn’t be such a bad thing!

Catch all our  
veterinary content online

**Veterinary  
Record**

[veterinaryrecord.bvpublications.com](http://veterinaryrecord.bvpublications.com)

**InPractice**

[inpractice.bvpublications.com](http://inpractice.bvpublications.com)

**Vet Record Careers**

[vetrecordcareers.com](http://vetrecordcareers.com)

**BVA**  
British Veterinary Association



**NEWS** **OPINION**  
**RESEARCH** **COMMENT**  
**CPD** **JOBS**

# Trapping, tracking and tamarins: adventures of a field assistant in the Amazon

By Renata Snow (Cambridge, 4th Year)

**The current EMS system is skewed, for obvious reasons, towards domestic animals. This means that vet students with an interest in wildlife often have to develop this on the side.**

Approaching an EMS-free summer between my preclinical and clinical years, I wanted to gain practical experience with data collection from wild populations of animals. Such data underpins our knowledge of non-domestic species and helps vets, conservationists and other interested parties make important decisions. During my search, I came across PrimatesPeru ([primatesperu.org](http://primatesperu.org)), a not-for-profit organisation which was founded on the basis of one researcher's PhD on saddleback and emperor tamarins, but which has since expanded to include other areas of wild primate research.

Saddleback and emperor tamarins are two species of Callitrichidae, tiny New World primates with a fascinating reproductive system. Of physiological interest, pregnancies almost always produce twins, and stem cell exchange in utero makes twins genetic chimeras (cellular mosaics) of each other. Of behavioural interest, groups of tamarins typically include one breeding female and several male mates. The males all assist in the care of her twins (regardless of which is the genetic father); this is termed 'alloparenting'. The group may include one or two other females whose reproductive cycles appear to be suppressed until they split off to become a dominant female in another group.

PrimatesPeru's research is based at a field station in the Amazon rainforest, five hours by boat from the nearest town. I was involved in both the trapping and behavioural aspects of their work. Where trapping is concerned, PrimatesPeru has

developed a high-welfare capture and release programme that brings the lab to the animals, minimising the disruption to them.

On a typical trapping day, we would hike through the forest to set up our equipment in a tent before dawn. We, the field assistants, would monitor the tamarins' temperature and depth of anaesthesia, take hair and nail samples and vaginal and buccal swabs, and hold them for blood draws and dental casts. I also recorded details of injuries (a parallel research project for which I received funding). All trapped tamarins were microchipped and identified with markers; they were then released but can then be studied year on year.

On the behavioural front, I learnt to use radiotelemetry to locate groups of tamarins. Two or three of us would follow them for hours at a time, recording grooming sessions, feeding patterns, interactions with other groups and (using GPS) details of their route. Keeping rat-sized primates in sight as they speed through the trees several metres overhead – without tripping over tree roots underfoot or falling into a ravine – is every bit as hard as it sounds!

More seriously, this represents a valuable opportunity for conservation-focused vet students to acquire a wide range of fieldwork skills and experience of the challenges of working in a remote environment. And, in between all the lectures and farm husbandry EMS, the preclinical



Photo credit: Kaya Swenn

veterinary course puts you in an excellent position to apply: a thorough grounding in multiple areas of animal biology? Check. The ability to live and work with the same small team of people in an isolated setting for an extended period of time? Check. Up for early starts and physically hard work? Check.

There are, however, some things for which you cannot prepare – for instance, the disgust of watching bot flies grow under your friend's skin, or the vulnerability you feel in treading the same paths as the local jaguars. Or the sheer delight of seeing capybaras, macaws and howler monkeys in the wild, or the thrill of being in one of the most biodiverse places on the planet.

■ My injuries project was generously supported by the British Veterinary Zoological Society's Zebra Foundation and St Catharine's College, Cambridge.

# Being a vet is much more than working with animals

By Annika Little (Glasgow, 2nd Year)

**Ever since I've had my heart set on veterinary medicine, my head has been filled with dreams of all the amazing places and animals I would get to see.**

I've dreamt of orangutan centres in Indonesia, pictured myself with manatees in Belize and alongside elephants in Thailand – and I still do! As vet students we get a unique opportunity to experience these crazy things and call it work experience, but I think in all my excitement for the exotic, I forgot some of the most important and fulfilling work experience of all – lambing. Interestingly enough, this essential preclinical experience occurred only 10 minutes down the road from where I grew up in the middle of Scotland. The Christies have a fam-



ily farm, with a herd of Charolais cows, some Texel sheep, two cats, two border collies, and a flock of pedigree Suffolk sheep.

As I was on my way to meet them on a miserable winter day that should really only have been spent in bed, I was filled with that pre-work experience cocktail of nerves, excitement, and the knowledge that I was going to be very tired, very soon. More than anything, though, I wanted to show them (and even more so, myself) that I was capable and not some incompetent nuisance. Hopefully, I could relieve some of the countryside stresses that haunt and bless this time of the year.

The 60 Suffolk ewes due to lamb

during my stay had no consideration at all for when the vet student decided to show up, and lambing was already well under way. This meant throwing myself straight into every part of husbandry and gaining countless bruises from colliding with pen partitions as well as a stiff back from bending over the lambs. However, at the end of the day, the pervasive feeling was that invigorating satisfaction you get from doing hard physical work and getting instant results.

I had not been there long when John, the farm owner, pointed out a ewe to me that was lambing. Deftly and without panicking the other sheep, he had the ewe on her side before I had even completely comprehended the situation. His experienced hands slipped some string behind the lamb's ears and around its neck before gently pulling it out. Those first few seconds of touch and go spluttering when a newborn life gets its first glimpse of the world, as the steam still rises off its hot little body into the cold air, remain the most precious of all. Even after seeing it many times now, even if it's two o'clock in the morning and so bracingly cold that you can't feel

**AFRICAN CONSERVATION EXPERIENCE**

Make a difference as a conservation volunteer

**WORK WITH THE WILDLIFE**

- Wildlife Veterinary Experience
- Wildlife Care & Rehabilitation
- Conservation and Wildlife Management

[www.conservationafrica.net](http://www.conservationafrica.net)  
T. +44 (0)1454 269 182 E. [info@conservationafrica.net](mailto:info@conservationafrica.net)

your own fingers, you cannot help but lose your breath at something that is momentarily between two worlds.

My first lambing experience the year before had been with mule ewes and so I arrived with the optimism that I had a basic level of competency when it came to lambing a ewe. I was wrong. Suffolks are a completely different ball game and I had a lot to learn. Not only did the value of these lambs add pressure, but Suffolks are more difficult to lamb than the mules I had worked with. Their reluctant offspring more often than not seemed to be positioned in anything but the way they should have been. On several occasions I found myself awkwardly fumbling for my phone while pinning down a strong ewe with my pretty weak arms to call John to come and help. John has a lifetime experience of working with these animals and his way with them was instinctive and fluent. He could

coax out even the most awkward of lambs with patience, determination and apparent ease that made me almost embarrassed to have woken him in the middle of the night. All the while he would explain what he was doing and answer my incessant and obvious questions.

As vet students, we know how turbulent lambing placements can be. It can be heart breaking and thrilling, and takes its toll physically and emotionally. John Christie, his wife, Diane, and their daughter, Julie, made a big impression on me. When you witness the compassion, knowledge and work ethic first hand, it is inspirational. Indeed, you cannot help but do your utmost to try to absorb every ounce of knowledge from people who have lived what you have been trying to learn from a book.

I am so appreciative to the family for inviting me into their home and making such an effort, not just

welcoming me, but ensuring that I got as much out of the experience as possible. I was so impressed by the commitment the whole family put into taking care of their animals. Not only did Diane providing delicious food for all of us and explain the workings of the farm; she was also out in the lambing shed day and night feeding the lambs. Julie, who was working full time, would also come home at night and help with the sheep. This reminded me of the important fact that, while I may have decided to become a vet to treat animals, it is people I will be working with. People whose livelihoods depend on their animals and invest time, money, knowledge and so much care into them that it overwhelms me.

I have got a renewed passion for this wonderful career I've embarked on, and gratitude to the Christies for being the type of people that I can aspire to one day work alongside.

## Equine veterinary studies award

By Val Ellis, award administrator, Worshipful Company of Farriers

**The Worshipful Company of Farriers introduced the Equine Veterinary Studies Award (EVSA) in 2010. By encouraging veterinary students to become involved with the work of farriers, the Company aims to foster relationships between the professions.**

The annual award has been offered to UK veterinary schools. Each school, using its own selection method, advises the Company of the student nominated for the award for the year and he/she is then placed with a senior farrier for one week, during which, they experience the routine work of that particular practice. The Company underwrites the cost of their board

and lodgings, as well as their travel expenses. Following the placements the seven students each provide the Company with a report of their experiences as well as a day-to-day diary. Once the placement has been successfully completed the student is also offered the Freedom of the Company as part of the Award.

The Farriers Company, which is a City of London Livery Company, has excellent relationships with equine veterinary surgeons through its examination board and craft committee and looks forward to closer ties with the veterinary profession through the EVSA awardees.

Any student interested in applying to be nominated for an award by their university should do so via their head of department or EMS organiser.







Network • Debate • Influence

‘How do I make my voice heard on bovine TB control?’



[bva.co.uk/community](https://bva.co.uk/community)

# Five ways to deal with clients when the vet has gone

By Ed Crystal (Liverpool, 4th Year)

**We've all been there. The practising vet leaves you in the consulting room like Tom Hanks in Castaway while they pop out to grab whichever vial or tool they forgot to bring with them. They get distracted, and you find yourself waiting an eternity for their return.**

Being left with the client and their dear Rover or Tigger is challenging at the best of times, and is an emotional strain in your otherwise fading day in small animal practice. So, here are five ways to deal with a situation that we all have to go through. I would recommend mixing them up to find which one works best for you...

**Wait for them to ask a question and answer straight**

Most clients, if you wait long enough, will inevitably ask you where you're studying or what year you're in. While this is popular choice for students, I wouldn't recommend it. You can be left for hours waiting for them to make the move, and they may never make it. It's also depressingly monotonous telling

every client, every day that you're in whatever year at whatever vet school. Avoid this option.

**Wait for them to talk but then make it up**

A variation on the previous option. While this option doesn't decrease the inevitable risk of not being asked anything and standing in silence, it may lighten up your day. Try telling each client over the course of your placement you go to a different school. Much like the AVS challenge, you obtain a sense of achievement when you have claimed to attend all seven schools in a week's placement. Maybe even try throwing a curve ball: 'I'm in my sixth year at Newcastle'. They'll probably never know and you'll make yourself smile at least!

**Ask them about their dog**

DULL. Students often rely on this option, but is almost as predictable as the first. 'How long have you had Rover?'; 'How old is he?'; 'Did you decide on a Chinese crested because of your love of ugly beings?'; or 'Do you really hate having a healthy animal?'. This is OK as a last resort, but if you want to enjoy your week, I wouldn't start with it.

**Ask them, but get it all wrong.**

I would compare this to taking one for the team. Clients love to feel superior (who doesn't?), so why not give them that chance. The bonus is that when the vet does return, the client will be in such a good mood almost nothing could go wrong.\* Why not ask them if their Pyrenean is a St Bernard, or if their Burmese is an Abyssinian, or their great Dane is a horse? If you're feeling really brave, ask them what their cat was like when it was a puppy.

**Stare them out**

This is a personal favourite of mine. Pick a facial expression and really lock on to the client. Much like holding your breath when a character goes underwater in a film, you have no idea how long the vet will be away, and, therefore, how arduous your task will be. Do not break the expression and do not engage in conversation. This assertion of dominance is bound to immediately gain the client's respect without having to endure dire conversation. It's not one for everyone, but once mastered will make your week fly by.

\*No promises here; a lot could go wrong.

Veterinary Record and In Practice are now on [twitter](#)

Follow us on [Vet\\_Record](#)

Sign up to keep up with the latest veterinary news, research and CPD

Veterinary Record

BVA  
British Veterinary Association

In Practice

## Membership rates

Please note that some universities provide varying levels of subsidy for their students' BVA membership.

### FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

■ All veterinary schools..... Free

### SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS AND ABOVE

■ Cambridge and Nottingham ..... Free  
 ■ London (Years 2-3) ..... Free  
 ■ London (Years 4-5) ..... £19.50  
 ■ Liverpool ..... £36.50  
 ■ Bristol, Dublin, Edinburgh and Glasgow ..... £39.00

## The small print...

Membership of the Association is open to all members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), to those on the Supplementary Veterinary Register, to students studying for a degree entitling them to membership of the RCVS and to holders of EU veterinary qualifications which would entitle the holder to membership of the RCVS under the terms of the EU Professional Directives. I would like to become a member of the British Veterinary Association (BVA) and agree to abide by the rules as set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association (copy available on request). I agree to pay my subscription by the renewal date, and if at any time I wish to resign from membership undertake to send my resignation to the Secretary the year which I wish to resign.

## Your details

FULL NAME (INC. TITLE): ..... DATE OF BIRTH: .....

UNIVERSITY: ..... YEAR OF STUDY: .....

TERM-TIME ADDRESS: ..... HOME ADDRESS: .....

..... POSTCODE: ..... POSTCODE: .....

SEND JOURNALS TO: TERM-TIME ADDRESS  HOME ADDRESS

HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY BEEN A BVA MEMBER?  YES  NO

TEL: ..... MOBILE: .....

EMAIL: .....

SIGNED: ..... DATE: .....

We occasionally provide members' details to companies screened by BVA. If you would not like your details to be given out please tick here

## Payment details

Please indicate preferred payment method:

- Direct Debit** I have completed the Direct Debit instruction below (UK bank accounts only)
- Cheque** I enclose a cheque for £ ..... made payable to British Veterinary Association
- Credit/debit card** Please debit £ ..... from my Visa/MasterCard/Eurocard/Maestro/Solo card

Card number                 Start date (if present)

Expiry date     Issue number (Maestro)   Security code (last 3 digits from signature strip)

### Instruction to your bank or building society to pay Direct Debits



NAME OF BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY:

ADDRESS OF BRANCH:

NAME OF ACCOUNT HOLDER(S):

BRANCH SORT CODE:

ACCOUNT NUMBER:

MEMBER NUMBER:

PAYMENT FREQUENCY  MONTHLY  QUARTERLY  ANNUALLY

**INSTRUCTION TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY**  
 Please pay the British Veterinary Association Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with BVA and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.

SIGNED:

DATE:



BVA membership is **free** for all first-year vet students and is **just £3.25 per month** for those in the second year and above

# Supporting you while you study

## Free BVA journals

Personal copies of the BVA's world-renowned journals, *Veterinary Record* and *In Practice*, including access to the online versions via the **BVA Publications website**—an invaluable scientific resource.

## Free EMS insurance

Going out on EMS each year can be stressful enough, without having to worry about what will happen if you have an accident while on your placement. This is why the **BVA provides free insurance cover to all BVA student members**. So you can be confident you have the right cover when you need it most.

## EMS guide

*Making the most of EMS*—this student guide is a practical resource to help you get the most out of your EMS experience.

## Online student centre

A dedicated section on the BVA's website ([www.bva.co.uk](http://www.bva.co.uk)) designed to be a quick access point for all of your **veterinary-related queries**.

## Discounted travel insurance

Through Lloyd & Whyte, the BVA's insurance and financial affinity partner, you can get fantastic discounts on **specialist travel insurance**, which includes cover for working and EMS abroad.

## Travel grants

The BVA offers **four annual student travel grants**, which all have a relevance to research and the improvement of animal welfare, especially in the developing world.

## Free legal advice

**24 hours a day, 365 days a year**, a team of specialist legal advisors are there to help you with any problem and to give advice on any subject.

## Bupacare

Discounted **private health insurance** through Bupa.

## Professional guidance

Once qualified, you will continue to enjoy a wide range of **guidance and support for your professional life** from the BVA. See [www.bva.co.uk](http://www.bva.co.uk) for more details.

## The Webinar Vet

Discounted membership to The Webinar Vet plus **free membership** for final-year student members.

Join online at [www.bva.co.uk](http://www.bva.co.uk) or complete the application form on the back of this advert