

VETERINARY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT Ltd

IPSO Annual Report – Period covered: 1 January 2017 – 31 December 2017.

1. Introduction

Veterinary Business Development Ltd is a publisher of B2B publications and websites for the veterinary profession. Readers and users include veterinary surgeons (in practice or working within industry), final-year veterinary students, qualified and trainee veterinary nurses, veterinary practice managers, additional support staff and marketers/representatives of companies or bodies working within the sector.

We are based in Peterborough and have more than 30 staff, including editorial staff, production, design, sales and accounts. There were no changes to the staff during the period covered by this report.

Our publications are funded through advertising revenue and are supplied free of charge to qualifying readers. Our titles/products for the period 1 January – 31 December 2017 were:

Veterinary Times: Market-leading, news-led weekly journal. Published 50 times a year (plus occasional supplements Veterinary Times Equine and Veterinary Times Livestock, each twice a year). Features news and clinical and other articles for veterinary surgeons. The publication was named Business Publication of the Year 2017 at the PPA Independent Publisher Awards. Controlled, free, ABC-audited circulation for January to December 2016 (latest publicised figures in this period are for Jan-Dec 2016): **19,640**.

VN Times: News-led journal for VNs and trainee VNs. Monthly (published 12 times a year). Features news and clinical and other articles aimed at a veterinary nursing audience. The publication was a finalist in the Business Publication of the Year 2017 category at the PPA Independent Publisher Awards. Controlled, free, ABC-audited circulation for January to December 2016 (latest publicised figures for this period are for Jan-Dec 2016): **14,371**.

VBJ: Covers management and financial aspects of running a veterinary practice. The publication was a finalist in the Business Publication of the Year 2017 category at the PPA Independent Publisher Awards. Not separately audited, but monthly, published 12 times a year and sent out to the full readership of Veterinary Times (plus additional practice managers).

Congress Times: Newspaper for the major veterinary congresses. Produced in partnership with leading veterinary associations and veterinary show organisers. Published periodically, at least 5 times a year. Sent out to full Veterinary Times circulation and available at shows.

vettimes.co.uk: Online resource for veterinary profession, featuring daily news updates, articles from our journals, blogs, additional articles/content, CPD diary. Supplemented by Facebook and Twitter accounts (some publications also have their own social media presence). Supplementary websites: vettimesjobs.co.uk and

cpd.vettimes.co.uk

The publications' responsible person is **Paul Imrie, editorial manager, and editor of Veterinary Times.**

2. Our editorial standards

The editorial team consists of 11 people (10 of them FT), including editors for each of the above publications. Editors' remit also includes any of their content posted online at vettimes.co.uk (a digital content manager is responsible for other content, but is not managed by the editorial manager).

While a B2B publication, we have for a long time adopted a regional newspaper structure. A team of two reporters is managed by a news editor. We also have a team of five subs, including a chief sub (their direct manager) responsible for style guides, standards and subbing tasks. Each publication has its own editor. We also have an editorial coordinator, responsible for commissioning external content across the publications. This is largely clinical feature content supplied by veterinary professionals.

The structure of the editorial team encourages cross-working, closer team work, and also contributes to maintaining our high standards. Most of our team has been trained by either NCTJ or equivalent bodies, or has studied journalism or media at university/colleges. VBD also has an ethos of training. Legal refreshers are arranged when necessary (annual or biannual historically; there was not one in 2017, but one is possible Q1/2 of 2018 to discuss editorial implications of the GDPR), and we continue to engage the same media law provider on an annual retainer to provide us with media law advice when we require it. This has tended to be when we receive complaints from readers or for pre-publication help with stories or letters on controversial subjects.

His services were utilised extensively in 2017, not as such to deal with complaints, but for pre-publication checking of news stories and letters. He was required to help with specific complaints, details of which follow later.

All editorial staff and the wider company are aware we are members of IPSO. All have been informed of our official complaints procedure (hosted online at <https://www.vettimes.co.uk/veterinary-business-development-editorial-complaints-procedure/>)

We are also members of the PPA, and receive updates, advice and guidance from it as necessary.

All new starters in the editorial team receive a copy of:

- The IPSO Editors' Code
- VBD's editorial style guide (copy enclosed)
- VBD staff handbook (copy enclosed)

All editorial staff are reissued with these when updates are made. Copies of the staff handbook are also available on Croner Simplify (the HR portal we use). Additional to these, reporters are given guidance as necessary.

We strive to ensure all news items are fair and balanced, with parties given full right to reply. Veterinary Times, VN Times and Congress Times are magloid format, VBJ is B5 in format. All contain news, largely at the front of the publications, but also spread throughout on some occasions when space allows. Our website also carries news items daily, many expanded later for print publication, and abstracted news items from our print publications.

The news editor has extensive news experience, with us and in regional papers, and is fully immersed in the profession. He holds regular meetings with both our reporters, both away from and at their desks, and has daily discussions with them about story ideas, angle approaches, story structuring and best people to contact.

I also play an active part in discussions on stories and can offer input, guidance and support where needed. The reporters also routinely discuss their stories with each other, and assist one another as required.

If necessary, wider discussions are held with sub-editors, the **chief-sub and editors** on story angles and legal issues. Discussions take place routinely on best choices of headlines to ensure full accuracy. Our retained media law expert is also contacted if needed, and he also supplies media law updates or information on relevant court rulings as necessary, which are then passed on to the wider team as appropriate.

We will go to multiple sources if necessary for verification or quotes for lead stories, and always seek to get as “expert” an opinion as possible. Our ethos is to be questioning in our stories, but not sensationalist in our approach.

We have a **style guide** that is worked to by all editorial staff. The **chief-sub** refreshes this as necessary, and it underwent a full revision in 2015. The guide was resupplied to all editorial staff. Revised updates are made and notified to all staff. Copy enclosed.

Although funded through advertising, our editorial standards are such that we choose not to publish any FOC feature articles supplied by them.

All feature content is from independent veterinary professionals working in practice or academia. In the past few years, we have sought to commission the majority of articles on our features lists from specialist vets. All commissioned authors are sent guidelines about how to write and submit features (copy enclosed). They are also required to sign an author agreement. We have an editorial board of vets who we will seek advice from if needed on clinical content within submitted features.

We do not shy away from covering difficult topics that may affect existing or potential advertisers.

If we carry advertising features paid for by companies we will always make this clear on the page, in line with ASA guidance. Guidance on the standards we expect are

supplied to advertisers enquiring about advertising features. This is also clearly marked on sponsored/native content online.

Finally, as a requirement of the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, we supply, on request, to any advertiser a pre-publication version of any feature they intend to advertise against (up to two features per issue are on our pre-publication features list and available for advertisers to buy space against). This is to ensure we and advertisers comply fully with the strict animal health legislation regarding correct use of veterinary medicines. It is also an additional check of information within articles, and while we retain editorial control of all articles and authors are not duty bound to make amendments, such checks have previously revealed errors in information, specifically product and dosage information supplied to us.

Copies of the new Editors' Code are supplied to the full editorial team (the latest as of January 2018 will be likewise), and our membership of IPSO is reiterated to each team member. Each member of the editorial team understands we must adhere to the standards of responsible journalism at all times and adhere to the Editors' Code. All stories are fully researched and verified before publication, where necessary with quotes from multiple sources, to ensure accuracy. As some of our stories can be clinical and complex in nature, to ensure factual accuracy, contributors are allowed sight of quotes pre-publication on request, on the proviso we retain copy approval.

All feature content is subbed thoroughly, read by the sub-editor, and then by a colleague (i.e. chief sub), corrected/amended where necessary by the original sub-editor before going through to a final read by the relevant editor. Further checks for accuracy of headlines and content are done before print at the PDF stage.

We did not contact IPSO for pre-publication guidance in 2017, but would do so whenever we are concerned about adherence to the code, and most likely specifically for any guidance on privacy or public interest issues.

All news content, including for online publication, is read and subbed by the news editor before being made available to a sub-editor and going through the above processes. We checked in 2016 and were assured by IPSO we were compliant regarding the requirement to save all versions of copy appearing online. If copy is amended or corrected online, this is pointed out within the content. An example is included.

We use the WoodWing Content Station programme, which saves versions of all content (for print and online), and therefore allows to check fully all content and investigate any complaints. WordPress also logs who has worked on content published to the web.

3. VBD's complaints handling process

The company has guidance for handling external complaints (copy enclosed). This refers to "customers", but this term applies equally to readers as well as advertisers or suppliers. It lists the process for handling complaints for the first person taking such calls. The guidance is included in the VBD Staff Handbook, copies of which are available to all members of staff (copy enclosed for information purposes only).

Editorially, people with a concern will either ring or email the reporter they originally spoke to or the editor of the publication. Concerns/complaints are therefore noted, investigated and outcomes are reached. Editors are expected to reach a satisfactory conclusion as soon as possible. Most concerns received in this period covered minor factual errors in print, usually in supplied feature content where either the submitting author has made an error or a subbing error was made. Wherever something has appeared incorrectly, we always try to correct this error by the next available issue. For more serious errors involving dosage or product inaccuracies, where necessary we will reprint the information in full.

A record/database (updated weekly by the editorial coordinator) is held of every article or story we publish in Veterinary Times, including news stories, and this includes any notable corrections.

In line with IPSO rules, we have developed and published an Editorial Complaints Procedure (copy enclosed). This explains we are members of IPSO, how to complain and the full processes. Details of the policy and our IPSO membership are included in the journal information panels, where they are pointed online to <https://www.vettimes.co.uk/veterinary-business-development-editorial-complaints-procedure/> The guidance also features links to the IPSO website and the Editors' Code. An example of the information panel from Veterinary Times is enclosed. Staff were also notified of this procedure.

Pre-publication guidance issued by IPSO would be heeded and taken into account by all editors. Paul Imrie, editorial manager for VBD, would be the first point of contact for sharing such guidance. He would then speak with the news editor, sub-editor or the editors of other journals to discuss the guidance and implement any actions. All staff would be advised of policy changes via email or staff meetings.

vettimes.co.uk has separate procedures for complaints about comments on the website. A copy of this is also enclosed.

4. Our training process

The company has an ethos of providing **on-the-job training** when necessary. It also sends members of staff on external courses or has external course providers in-house to run sessions.

These cover specific skills or staff's personal development, for example a confidence-building/assertiveness session to aid a reporter in interview techniques.

No formal legal refresher took place in this time period, although we did call on our retained media law advisor to assist with specific complaints, as outlined below, or for guidance on handling sensitive subjects in the news section. Editorial staff are advised we can call on him for assistance as needed. We have not needed to seek formal legal help from solicitors (although we retain their services as needed).

Monthly one-to-one meetings were held across the business between staff and their

direct managers as part of a performance-related appraisal system. Both the chief-sub editor and news editor meet with each member of their respective teams to discuss personal development and on-the-job training/task needs and how well they are doing in meeting pre-set job-related objectives. Specifically, set KPOs have related to ensuring near-perfect accuracy at the first-read stage of all print content and development of wider reporter contacts.

Later in the year, we revised our appraisal process, and introduced individual performance diaries that staff and their managers could update on a rolling basis. This replaced the formality of the documented monthly one-to-one meetings, but staff meetings still take place as and when needed.

Staff are immediately informed of any style guide or editorial policy changes via email or in one-to-one meetings.

5. Our record on complaints

No complaints ruled on by IPSO's complaints committee were received by VBD during this period. Where IPSO finds against any publication, we will comply with the findings and any actions required by the regulator in full.

We received a **formal complaint under our Editorial Complaints Procedure** on 20 January 2017. This related to an article published in issue 3 (23 Jan issue). The complaint was made under section 1 (accuracy) of the 2017 version of the IPSO Editors' Code of Practice. The author, who asked for (and was granted) anonymity, objected to the editor removing (at the final read stage) a paragraph she felt was pertinent to the remainder of her article, which was on the well-being in the veterinary profession. While the editor felt the paragraph in question was incongruous with the remainder of the article, hence his editorial decision to remove it, after mediation between the parties he reinserted the paragraph in question (viewable at <https://www.vettimes.co.uk/article/assessing-and-addressing-poor-mental-health-in-veterinary-profession/>) along with a paragraph at the footer explaining this, and clarified it in print on page 2 of issue 5 (pdf enclosed). This concluded the matter.

Although not made under the formal complaints procedure, an **email complaint** from a vet, where he alleged defamation and libel in a letter we published that related to changes he was required to make to his website by the veterinary profession's governing body, the RCVS, was fully investigated. Advice was sought from our media legal advisor, and following this I concluded the letter, and the original news story that prompted it – based as they were on privileged information – did not breach the code. However, I accepted the vet was entitled to a right to reply under the Defamation Act 1996, and I also sought to clarify his view that the original letter did not take into account his compliance with the undertaking. His right to reply (published in issue 2 of 2017) is enclosed.

In 2 May 2017, we received **correspondence** from lawyers acting on behalf of a company about what they termed "false and misleading claims" made by a person quoted in a story in the 10 April issue. We sought advice from our media law representative, and while standing by our article, after discussions with parties we

did agreed to run a clarification that addressed matters for all concerned. This was run on page 3 of issue 20 (22 May issue). A copy of this is enclosed.

In VN Times, a **correction ran** in issue VNT17.10 (October), correcting two technical errors from the previous issue. These were an incorrect abstract being run with a clinical article and an incorrect url for video content being added. A correction for both is included (VNT17.10 p02)

6. Appendices

Appendices and enclosures should be treated as confidential supplementary documents to this report and are not for wider distribution or publication without consent.

- 1. VBD Style Guide**
- 2. VBD Staff Handbook**
- 3. Author guidelines/checklist**
- 4. External complaints in handbook**
- 5. Editorial Complaints Procedure**
- 6. Example info panel**
- 7. vettimes.co.uk comment terms and conditions**
- 8. VT47.02 page 27.pdf**
- 9. VT47.05 page 02.pdf**
- 10. VT47.20 page 03.pdf**
- 11. VNT17.10 page 02.pdf**
- 12. VT information panel**

**VETERINARY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT LTD
AUTHOR GUIDELINES**

VETERINARY TIMES, VN TIMES AND VETERINARY BUSINESS JOURNAL

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for considering writing for our publications. We really do value our contributors, and are striving to attract top authors from across the profession. Our aim is to only publish original feature material that has not appeared elsewhere.

These guidelines are based on our publishing requirements and feedback from our readers -they are by no means exhaustive or set in stone.

Veterinary Times is mailed to more than 19,000 veterinary professionals, VN Times to almost 13,000 veterinary nurses.

We carry at least one veterinary focus article in each issue of Veterinary Times on a clinical topic and support this with other clinical and veterinary/animal health relevant articles. We also feature news, letters, classified and recruitment sections.

We work mostly by seeking out authors on a particular subject that we want to focus on, but we are also happy to accept pieces sent in speculatively by contributors.

Veterinary Times – a weekly publication, distributed to UK vets, final-year students, VNs, practice managers and industry specialists.

VN Times – a monthly journal, read by UK veterinary nurses.

The Veterinary Business Journal – a monthly publication covering management, financial and personnel concerns in the veterinary world.

Congress Times – Distributed with Veterinary Times or VN Times and produced to coincide with BSAVA, BCVA, BVNA, BEVA and London Vet Show congresses.

Relevant editorial contacts

Veterinary Times

Editor – Paul Imrie [REDACTED]

Editorial coordinator – Jackie Morrison for articles – clinical, research, comment,

reviews, charity reviews [REDACTED]

Reporters – Holly Kernot and David Woodmansey. Current events, forthcoming events, charity events, press releases, meetings, points to be raised, news in brief
[REDACTED]

Veterinary Times Letters Page – Jackie Morrison [REDACTED]
VN Times

VN Times Editor –Rebecca Hubbard – [REDACTED]

Editorial coordinator – Jackie Morrison – articles – [REDACTED]
Veterinary Business Journal

Veterinary Business Journal (VBJ) Editor – James Westgate – [REDACTED]
Congress Times

Congress Times Editor – Rebecca Hubbard – [REDACTED]

Editorial coordinator – Jackie Morrison – [REDACTED]

Please note we are primarily publishers of clinical and practice-based articles. We do not carry peer-review articles, although some are reviewed/read by members of our editorial board/s. We rely on our contributors to be sure of the facts they are presenting and, if necessary, to pass their copy to a senior vet for checking prior to submission. They must also obtain all permissions necessary. Veterinary Times is happy to credit others for images and references. Please make Jackie Morrison aware of all credits at time of submission.

We only accept articles from independent vets, researchers and other professionals. We do not publish features from PR companies or from or on behalf of technical vets or product managers in commercial organisations.

VBD Ltd retains the copyright for any article we publish, both in print or for use online, and, therefore, as original author, you should not offer or publish the article elsewhere without our prior permission.

Payment for articles is made on publication and depends on the length and complexity of the article, the seniority of the contributor and the nature of the content.

Sending articles

Please send your article via e-mail, along with any covering message stating any agreements made or special circumstances, for example if the article is one of a series, if it is time sensitive, seasonal etc.

Focus articles will have deadlines as they are planned for specific issues. After agreeing in advance to write a focus article, please let Jackie Morrison have a bullet pointed summary of the article as soon as possible. This summary is utilised by our sales team to advise potential advertisers about the content of your article.

Together with the Focus article, please include an abstract of what will be covered. This should be approximately 200 words, with four or five key words. This does not form part of the word count.

The article is to be sent as a word document, using British spelling throughout.

Articles, especially clinical, practical or review pieces, are more likely to be accepted for publication if accompanied by images. All images must be sent with the article as jpegs and not embedded in the document, nor as PowerPoint slides (refer to them in the text as Figure 1 etc, and include captions at the end).

Images are best sent via e-mail, although they can be sent on a memory stick. Prints can be sent through the post if necessary.

Full captions for each image are required.

The images must be sent in high-resolution jpegs 300ppi (pixels per inch) and a minimum 10cm wide in resolution.

We are also keen to add digital content for articles received onto our web site. We don't expect a huge amount of interactive content and it is desirable rather than mandatory, but we feel that the clinical and practical nature of many of our articles lends itself to certain enhanced content, including:

- short audio files (examples of normal/abnormal heart beats, breathing/lung sounds etc)
- short video files (example of gait analysis, software demos, practical demonstrations, etc)
- Resources (templates, slideshows, PDFs, sample files for software, etc)
- Hi-res and/or additional image files

If you are able to offer one or more of these types of content, it would be of huge benefit to our readers / users, and would allow us to offer them examples of content that print

alone cannot offer.

I'm also not expecting high quality HD video productions – something filmed on a smartphone is more than acceptable.

Tables should be formatted separately and referred to as Table 1 etc.

Ensure you have any copyright permission (if applicable), for all images and diagrams that are not yours prior to sending them through and advise of the credit/acknowledgement required.

Articles also appear online in digital editions or in online archives (<http://www.vettimes.co.uk>) so ensure permissions cover this use or advise us accordingly.

Give your article a title; this is what the article will be filed under. The title will help the sub-editors to write a headline, but may not be used as you have supplied it.

If the article is part of a series, please make clear which part you have sent through. For example “Part one of two” If sending all parts and images of a series, please make it clear what part the images are for.

All articles must be original. We can only accept articles that have not been published by, or offered to, other journals or websites.

Please complete the checklist for authors prior to sending your article.
Writing the article

Please feel free to contact Jackie Morrison by e-mail as often as you feel necessary to iron out details of your article.

If your article has not been specifically commissioned, but you still wish to send it in for consideration, please e-mail the title and a brief outline of the contents to Jackie Morrison.

The length of articles varies for the type of article it is, and the complexity of the information it is conveying. Focus features and clinical or practical articles for Veterinary Times are in the region of 1,500 to 2,000 words and 1,500 to 1,800 words for VN Times. There is scope for longer or shorter articles; veterinary issues, politics point-of-view topics etc, are in the region of 1,000 to 1,500 words.

Academic articles are very popular, as vets like to know what the latest research and thinking is, but most of our readers are practising vets who want to know how the research applies to them.

Veterinary Times is very proud of its freedom to publish opposing viewpoints. We welcome all valid contributions. However, if you are aware that your view may not be seen in the same way by all readers, it may be a good idea to begin the sentence with “As some vets (controversially) believe”... or “ an alternative viewpoint, which some vets will disagree with...”

Follow general writing advice: Is the writing clear? Does it communicate at the right level? Does it make sense to non-specialists? Have you covered all the points you wanted to? Avoid repetition. Does it follow a sensible structure? Is it written in the most readable way? (Read it back to yourself after time away from the text). Does it sound “right” when read out aloud? It’s a very good idea to show the article to a colleague to double-check the pitch of the article, as well as the facts.

Ensure any mention of trade names is in context with the article, and where possible refer to a treatment by its active ingredient only.

Provide full, accurate, up-to date references and fully check their accuracy before submission. We welcome either references numbered in the text and listed in sequence at the end, or a full list in alphabetical order at the end. The format of each reference should be: author/s, year of publication in brackets, name of article, name of publication it appeared in and volume, issue and any page numbers. References can be added to the bottom of your submitted article. References in the text must be annotated in either of the following systems.
More than 50 per cent of cats suffer from laziness (Arnold 2009)
More than 80 per cent of dogs like two or more walks a day¹

Author biographies

Authors should supply a mini biography and a clear high resolution (300ppi 10cm wide) head shot to go alongside their articles. The biography should be 40-50 words and should include qualifications.

So you could write

XXX qualified from xxx university in xxxx and is currently leading the blob research team in the study of blobs and blobs. Previously of the Blob Institute with a special interest in blobs. Xxx is currently the vice-president of the Blob Protection League.

Focus and clinical articles

Focus articles are read by students and graduates for the technical information they cover, non-specialists in the field, colleagues who want to read about information and the views and methods of another vet, and vets interested in

current research and new developments.

They can have a clinical, surgical, technical, research or procedural angle

Focus and clinical articles can take various forms:

-Scientific research your department is conducting, or that you have specific knowledge of.

-A practical approach, outlining the features of an animal/disease/case, its occurrences, treatment, diagnosis and management and your own personal experience of it.

-A discussion of new developments in treatments/studies of the disease.

They can be broad and cover disease/treatment in general, or more usually, they are quite specific and focus on a very particular area of a topic.

Focus feature articles should be written by someone with extensive knowledge and experience of the topic. We aim to use only specialist vets or leading researchers to write these articles, as they are authoritative, challenging and informative.

They should be current and relevant. They should be thoroughly researched and make use of the very latest information. They should not be a review of current thinking, they should aim to educate and inform an already well-informed readership.

We know from our readership surveys that our readers particularly like to read about procedural tips and methods and to learn about other vets' way of doing things. Also, they want to know about new research being carried out, and how this applies practically to them as vets in practice.

The features must include suitable images/diagrams/tables etc. They must be captioned. Captions can either be sent with the images in a separate document or listed at the end of the text.

Reviews of events/meetings/conferences/congresses

These articles should be in the region of 1,000 words but can be longer – depending on the complexity of the content.

Please provide the name of the event, the location and the dates that it took place.

Specialist speakers at events often have interesting views and this is a great opportunity to get them published and read.

Do not be afraid to go into technical detail of material that was covered.

Keep to the useful content of the meeting. It is fine to mention things such as ticket price etc., but avoid discussing irrelevancies.

Companies often sponsor conferences in the veterinary sector. Often a method of treatment will be discussed that focuses on a product the company produces. As with other articles, use trade names sparingly in context and avoiding any hint of bias or over-promotion.

As with all other articles, images are helpful and improve the chances of publication. Images may be available from the organisers after the event. Please send all images with the article rather than after the event and include any necessary credits.

Book Review

Anyone can be a book reviewer. If you wish to be added to the list of reviewers, contact Jackie Morrison about the areas you would be interested in covering, including the address to post any books to.

Reviews should be around 500 words, and not exceed 1,000 words.

Consider the audience the book is aimed at? How general or specific is the book? Is the book logically structured? Is it easy to follow? Is it written in a readable style? Is it a read-through book or a dip-into book? Does it complement or conflict with other books published on the same topic? Are there any glaring omissions? Would you recommend it? Is it good value for the price?

Don't be afraid to express your personal opinions on the book's usefulness and interest to you,

It is totally acceptable to review the book in sections, describing it chapter-bychapter so the reader can get a feel for the book. However, don't let this affect your writing style.

We do not pay for book reviews -instead you keep the book either for personal use or for your practice library.

PR articles

We only accept articles written by independent vets, researchers and people

involved in the veterinary profession. We do not accept articles written by PR agencies on behalf of or from technical vets or product managers working in commercial organisations (ie nutrition or pharmaceutical companies), however well researched and written they are. However, we will accept press releases for possible inclusion in our news pages.

We can commission authors to write on topics suggested by commercial organisations and we are happy to hear or discuss any ideas. Jackie Morrison, who will offer necessary guidance to ensure the article is not submitted with bias to a specific treatment or product, will source authors for suggested topics.

General Advice

We cannot let authors know, in advance or on receipt, which issue your article will appear in. Only the focus features are decided a year in advance.

Because of the tight deadlines we work to, it is not possible to send a proof copy back to authors prior to the issue going to print.

We will keep all articles submitted, but acceptance of an article is not an agreement to publish. Most articles commissioned will be published, but those submitted speculatively may not be.

The editors of all our publications reserve the right not to publish any article that is sent in, and to edit them as they see fit, in line with our in-house style guidance.

Veterinary Times, VN Times and VBJ have editorial boards, consisting of people with extensive knowledge in their fields of expertise and, on occasions, we will forward an article to them for review and comment

Articles for VN Times, must be reviewed by a colleague/vet/specialist prior to submission. The reviewer must be someone who is willing to have his or her name and qualifications added to the article as being the reviewer. This does not mean they are listed as co-author.

Company policy is that payment for all articles is made on publication not on submission. Payment is made by BACS; please let Jackie Morrison have your bank account number and sort code at the time of submitting your article. This information will of course be treated in confidence. These guidelines maybe updated from time to time.

CHECK LIST FOR AUTHORS

So we don't have to bother you once you have submitted your article, could you please take a minute to check that everything below has been completed/submitted.

1	Have you had this article published elsewhere or has it been offered to another journal?	Yes/No
2	Have you attached a 200-word abstract of your article with five key words at the bottom?	Yes/No
3	Have you submitted your article in Word format?	Yes/No
4	Is your article totally generic? We are unable to accept articles overtly promoting companies and products.	Yes/No
5	Your article is in the region of 1,800 to 2,000 words for Veterinary Times or 1,500 words for VN Times. (Though we are quite happy to accept an article in two parts if it is in excess of the 2,000 word count.	Yes/No
6	Appropriate pictures attached. Pictures should be in separate jpeg attachments, at a minimum resolution of 300ppi at 10cm width. PLEASE DON'T SEND IMAGES IN A WORD DOCUMENT	Yes/No
7	Digital Content included	Yes/No
8	Have you added captions at the end of the article?	Yes/No
9	Have you annotated the pictures in the text?	Yes/No
10	You have obtained permission to use pictures that are not yours and the credit for them is mentioned with the pictures.	Yes/No
11	Your article is referenced where appropriate, and a full list of references is included at the end of the article, along with any further reading material.	Yes/No
12	You have avoided mentioning unlicensed drugs, but if it is unavoidable, these have been flagged up at the time of submission.	Yes/No

13	You have attached a short biography including your qualifications; 40 to 50 words is ideal.	Yes/No
14	You have attached a head and shoulders biography picture at 300ppi resolution.	Yes/No
15	You have included details of who payment should be made to and have advised of an address for the self billing invoice is to be sent to.(For audit purposes)	Yes/No
16	I am aware that Veterinary Times and VN Times retain the copyright to articles that are published and that the article should not be used or published elsewhere without express permission from Veterinary Business Development.	Yes/No
17	I am aware that articles published in our journals will be placed on to our website, www.vettimes.co.uk	Yes/No
18	You have supplied the name and qualifications of the person reviewing the article (where necessary)	Yes/No
19	Payment for your article is by BACS. Please submit your bank account number and sort code when you send your article. This information will be treated in confidence	Yes/No
20	You have forwarded bullet points of what will be covered in the article.	Yes/No

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Complaints Procedure

Veterinary Business Development (VBD) believes in, and strives for, the highest standards of journalism, and is committed to accuracy and fairness in its journals and digital content. However, despite our best intentions, mistakes can sometimes happen, and where we have got something wrong we will endeavour to rectify it as soon as we can.

We take all complaints about editorial content seriously, and, as members of the new **Independent Press Standards Organisation** (IPSO), VBD is committed to abiding by the rules, regulations and **Editors' Code of Practice** IPSO enforces.

About this procedure

VBD's **Editorial Complaints Procedure** applies to printed editorial content in publications and digital content it controls in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man.

The procedure does not cover complaints regarding:

- taste/decency, or due impartiality;
- advertising (this is regulated by the Advertising Standards Authority);
- complaints about “user-generated content” (ie material on digital services, including websites or apps, that was not posted by us or on our behalf) that we have not reviewed or moderated; or
- complaints about books.

How to complain

You must clearly state if you are making a formal complaint under our **Editorial Complaints Procedure**.

Complaints should be made no later than **four months** after publication. If an article remains accessible on any digital platform, complaints will be accepted up to **12 months** from its first posting. VBD will consider formal complaints under this policy from:

- a. any person directly affected by the matter complained of; or
- b. from a representative group affected by an alleged breach of the Editors' Code that is significant and of substantial interest; or
- c. from a third party seeking to correct a significant inaccuracy of

published information.

Complaints should preferably be put in writing, either in an email to the relevant editor of the journal/website (contact details are below) or by writing to him/her at VBD, Olympus House, Werrington Centre, Peterborough PE4 6NA.

Veterinary Times: paulimrie@vbd.co.uk VN Times:
rebeccahubbard@vbd.co.uk The Veterinary Business Journal (VBJ):
jameswestgate@vbd.co.uk Congress Times:
rebeccahubbard@vbd.co.uk Online content:
nigelwoodbine@vbd.co.uk

You can also telephone 01733 325522 and ask to speak to the editor of the publication. If you are making a formal complaint under this procedure, you will be asked to document it in writing as below.

Complaints to us must:

- clearly state you are making a formal complaint under our **Editorial Complaints Procedure**.
- fully reference (publication, volume, issue number, page number and article title, or link to a webpage or web address) the article you are complaining about.
- outline the nature of your complaint, with specific reference to the **IPSO Editors' Code of Practice**.
- provide any documents that will help us assess your complaint.

Note: we reserve the right to reject, without further investigation, complaints that show no breach of the Editors' Code; that are trivial, hypothetical, abusive, offensive, or otherwise insignificant. If you are taking legal action, we may be unable to consider your complaint.

What will happen next

The relevant editor, on his own or in conjunction with other members of our editorial team, will investigate your complaint. If we find an error has been made, we will aim to rectify it as quickly as possible. We aim to acknowledge your complaint within **5 working days** of receipt.

Complainers should agree to respond promptly to any request for additional information. If we receive multiple complaints about the same issue, we may make one response to all.

We will resolve your complaint to the best of our ability within **28 days** of receiving everything we need from you to allow us to investigate. We will treat any complainant courteously and with respect, and expect the

same in return from any complainant.

Failure to agree: complaining to IPSO

If we fail to meet the timescale, or you are unhappy with our final response to your complaint, you can complain to [IPSO](#). IPSO offers a without-charge complaints handling service to the public in cases where there has been a disagreement between complainants and publishers over whether the Editors' Code has been breached.

Policy changes

VBD reserves the right to amend this policy as required to ensure compliance with IPSO and its regulations, and will update the guidance here or another url. Any complaints will be considered against the published policy at the date of receipt of any complaint.

vntimes

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Governance review to give members strong leadership

The BVNA's senior vice-president has said the association's governance review should give RVNs a "stronger voice".

According to Fiona Andrew, who led the review this year, the process had a number of objectives.

"Its aim was to take stock of the organisation as it was, and look at the direction of travel of veterinary nursing and the veterinary profession, ensuring the organisation was in the right place to lead veterinary nursing into the future," she said.

"While members will not see an immediate change, we have listened to them, and what we have done is align all our business functions around their core needs.

"The review is designed to allow our organisation to grow and give RVNs a stronger voice in veterinary politics and animal welfare through our elected council."

'New challenges'

Writing of the review's importance in September's *Veterinary Nursing Journal*, BVNA president Sam Morgan said the organisation was facing "new challenges from the outside".

She said: "The RVN workforce, as it stands, is largely a very loyal group, committed to animal welfare, compassionate and well trained. This must be maintained.

"However, as a developing

profession, there are more demands on us and we must ensure, as a profession, we learn to bend with these and not break. In short, we need to ensure we have resilience to match the pace of the world around us."

With "important debates" taking place, she said, such as a potential new Veterinary Surgeons' Act/Veterinary Services Act, an increasing need for collaborating with health care professionals and corporatisation of veterinary practices, the BVNA has found the role of officer on the council often "overstretched".

"Through personal experience, I can state it is very heavily focused on running the BVNA as a business, rather than being the leaders of the representative arm of the profession," she said.

"While new council members are coming forward for the BVNA, which shows how much individuals are prepared to drive change themselves, too frequently good people see the role as being too daunting.

"Intimidated due to the business-like nature of some of the work, some people can miss the bigger picture of facing challenges and taking away valuable life lessons from the experience of being a BVNA officer."

The review, therefore, identified four main tasks:

- maintaining the relevance and value of the VN profession

The RVN workforce, as it stands, is largely a very loyal group, committed to animal welfare, compassionate and well trained

- future-proofing the organisation of the BVNA

- getting better at identifying, selecting, developing and supporting council members

- investing in staff as a modern workforce and organisation

Results

As a result of the review, said Mrs Morgan, new job roles are being introduced to help manage the growing workload of staff, including a new strategic director to "take pressure off" BVNA officers.

The association has also reviewed the process of selection and support for officers and president, with any prospective candidates for the latter having to go through an interview process with its advisory committee.

Said committee has also been "formalised", said Mrs Morgan, to contain a range of VN experience and other expert knowledge - such as commercial and other non-sector specific skills - to help a "modern representative membership body".

There has also been a legal exercise to confirm the rules by which the BVNA is organised, ratifying changes made

over the years, while refreshing them against legislation changes.

Mrs Morgan said: "Ultimately, we want to ensure the sustainability of the BVNA to point to a more robust future. The discoveries we have made will also be helpful for planning and development, while the changes put in place will make the organisation stronger.

"We will be closely monitoring the outcome of any changes put in place to see if it is paying for itself and the benefits this will bring. We are, however, projecting a positive return over the first couple of years and we hope our members think so, too."

The BVNA is urging its members to attend its annual meeting at this month's congress to ask questions and endorse the association's changes.

"Our new staff structure will formally start on 9 October, but we are already working on the transition process," said Mrs Morgan. "During this period, while people and systems get settled, your patience and understanding will be much appreciated."

The annual meeting takes place on 8 October at 10:45am in the Pattingham Suite. All congress delegates are welcome.

RVN sentenced for poisoning own dog with insulin

A Glasgow RVN who poisoned her dog with insulin has been banned from keeping dogs for two years.

Georgina Bretman, 28, of Treeburn Avenue in Giffnock, Glasgow, was sentenced at Glasgow Sheriff Court on 22 September.

She had been found guilty of causing her dog - a cocker spaniel named Florence - to suffer unnecessarily as a result of administering the insulin, causing the dog to collapse, convulse and suffer from a seizure.

Bretman was also ordered to do 140 hours of

community payback within six months, and given a deprivation order, meaning she had to give Florence up for rehoming.

Scottish SPCA inspector Laura McIntyre said the society was alerted after a colleague of Bretman suspected she was poisoning Florence to cause episodes of collapse.

She said: "Bretman is a registered veterinary nurse who used insulin to poison her dog - this not only caused her to suffer, but could have led to her death.

"Unfortunately this dog has missed out on a very

large chunk of her life due to the length of time it has taken for the case to go through the courts.

"Florence was only two years old when a report was submitted. It is only now, more than four years later, that she is able to start looking for a loving new home.

"Bretman caused Florence a great deal of unnecessary suffering and, while we're disappointed the disqualification isn't longer, we do welcome the fact that she has been dealt with by the court.

"We hope Bretman carefully considers her ability to care for animals in the future."

Editor's foreword

You find me an excited and happy editor this month, folks. To clarify, this does not mean I am a grumpy and miserable person - in fact, I'm proud to say I live in a near-permanent state of chirpiness. Just don't come near me when I'm hungry. You have been warned.

Why the elation? Two things. First, the story adorning our front page. What a fantastic milestone for the BVNA, and I am pleased the BVA's Gudrun Ravetz, in one of the last duties of her outstandingly proactive presidency, signed that memorandum's dotted line.

Sure, it may only be a piece of paper on the face of it, but what it stands for - a recognition VNs and vets are of equal importance in #TeamVet - is pretty darn major. I can only imagine how pleased the BVNA must be - they've been working towards something like this for years. I, meanwhile, am intrigued to see what impact - if any - this official signing has.

The second thing making me more sparky than usual? It's BVNA Congress month! Always an action-packed, laughter-filled three days, delegates once again descend on Telford for talks, happy hours, exhibition meetings and party night. The *VN Times* team, for one, can't wait.

We're on stand A1, so please come and say hi. Comments/complaints/compliments/suggestions are welcome.



Rebecca

Corrections

It has come to the editor's attention that two errors appeared in an article published in the September issue of *VN Times* - "Canine and feline IBD - causes, symptoms and treatment" by Helen Rooney (VN17.09).

The article contained an abstract from an earlier article on elderly pets, while the video link provided was incorrectly uploaded, belonging to a future article on diabetes.

Both errors - down to technical issues - have been corrected on the online version of the article (www.vettimes.co.uk/article/canine-and-feline-ibd-causes-symptoms-and-treatment).

We apologise to both Mrs Rooney and readers for any inconvenience caused.

Trending on social media...

Bonnie Takes Bombay is a hit with readers (bit.ly/2hq7ajA):

Jess Bowey
 Victoria Leggett think this could be the dream?

Victoria Leggett
 Would be mega wouldn't it!
Jane Rvn Davidson
 Being an RVN offers so many opportunities. This is amazing!

Jo Hinde's campaign garners action and applause (bit.ly/2husGjw):

Laura Bunnii Akers
 I did a few last night on my break at work.
Judith McCulley
 I report them when I can, but have found there is not always the option to report an animal for sale,

which makes it pretty difficult.
Lou Scott
 Great work Jo!

Last month's Around the World inspires (bit.ly/2yDXypw):

Tracey Maddocks
 This is great! I actually wrote an article to submit about my time there as a manager/vet nurse, but glad someone else is writing about this amazing charity. Hope it encourages people from our industry to help out at animal SOS and other charities around the world that are a really feeling the strain from the overpopulation of stray dogs and cats. We can really make a difference.

Jo Hinde
 Amazing work and an inspiration!

vet Times

ippa
**independent
publisher awards**
Winner

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January 16, 2017

Write to The Editor, Veterinary Times, Olympus House, Werrington Centre, Peterborough PE4 6NA or email paulimrie@vbd.co.uk

Is restriction in wider interest of profession?

Dear editor,

The defamatory letter from the politically motivated, so-called Campaign for Rational Veterinary Medicine (CRVM) naming and disparaging me (19 December issue) is wholly consistent with the cherry-picked "facts" and lies it presents as truth to the veterinary profession and the public regarding homeopathy and other complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) practices it is lobbying the RCVS to ban.

Regarding my case, without accepting any admission of guilt in any way, I agreed to modify my website in line with a previously made offer to negotiate seven months prior. I agreed to make the wording clearer and accentuate the distinction between my veterinary work as an MRCVS and my human practice as a complementary practitioner. There was no disciplinary hearing. I was not found guilty of anything and I have complied with my undertaking.

I do not know on what basis the CRVM thinks it has the authority to speak on behalf of the RCVS in the present tense regarding my website, my treatments or any of the products I use. I do not remember any voting opportunity for the veterinary profession to install the CRVM as self-determining thought police and/or enforcers. To suggest I would knowingly compromise the welfare of animals under my care flies in the face of 20 years of evidence to the contrary, as the testimonials on my website they chose to ignore bear witness to. None of the CRVM's members know me or have ever shown any genuine interest in finding out more about what I use and how I work, preferring to base their opinions on their own bias and flawed assessments.

Contrary to what the CRVM is telling the profession and the public that homeopathy has been "categorically proven not to work", a peer-reviewed paper published in *Veterinary Record* has found 54 per cent of 52 (n= 28) farm animal trials from 1981 to 2014 were in favour of homeopathy, with 26 trials showing a significantly higher efficacy of the homeopathic remedy in comparison to a control group (Doehring and Sundrum, 2016). The study concluded that "promising clinical trials should be repeated as double-blind randomised controlled trials, and their results confirmed on farm level". Did the CRVM forget to look at these 23 years of trials or were they deliberately omitted just because they don't fit in with their declared political agenda?

I will give the benefit of the doubt to the RCVS regarding its November statement regarding the review of CAM. I presume it will be bringing its statement in line with the EU directive and UK law that promotes use of homeopathy, phytotherapy and other similar practices in preference to synthetic chemicals, wherever appropriate, on organic farms, to encourage further study and inclusion of such modalities within current veterinary curricula. This should ensure future graduates are capable of fulfilling their legal obligation on organic farms that recent graduates can not.

Looking at the CRVM leaders themselves, one is an American vet (DVM not MRCVS, to my knowledge), who was one of an equivalent group in the US that failed by a vote of 92 per cent to 8 per cent to get homeopathy banned there. I'm not sure on what basis he thinks he has any right to tell me or anybody else what I/we can do or use here in the UK? A similar attempt to ban homeopathy in Australia failed. Does the CRVM somehow think homeopathy works differently in the UK?

At least one other describes himself as an expert witness for evidence-based medicine (EBM). Perhaps he would like to remove this description, although maybe promotion would be more appropriate when considering the words of Richard Horton, editor of *The Lancet*, who described EBM thus in 2000: "The mistake, of course, is to have thought that peer review was any more than a crude means of discovering the acceptability – not the validity – of a new finding. Editors and scientists alike insist on the pivotal importance of peer review. We portray peer review to the public as a quasi-sacred process that helps to make science our most objective truth teller. But we know that the system of peer review is biased, unjust, unaccountable, incomplete, easily fixed, often insulting, usually ignorant, occasionally foolish, and frequently wrong [Horton, 2000]."

More recently, he said: "The case against science is straightforward: much of the scientific literature, perhaps half, may simply be untrue. Afflicted by studies with small sample sizes, tiny effects, invalid exploratory analyses, and flagrant conflicts of interest, together with an obsession for pursuing fashionable trends of dubious importance, science has taken a turn towards darkness [Horton, 2015]."

Dr Horton is not alone in his condemnation of EBM and external influences in the medical professions. Marcia Angell, a physician and long time editor-in-chief of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, which is considered to be another of the most prestigious peer-reviewed medical journals in the world, makes her view of the subject quite plain: "It is simply no longer possible to believe much of the clinical research that is published, or to rely on the judgement of trusted physicians or authoritative medical guidelines. I take no pleasure in this conclusion, which I reached slowly and reluctantly over my two decades as an editor of *The New England Journal of Medicine* [Angell, 2009]."

When insulting my intelligence, professional training and ability to judge what treatment is appropriate, there is also an inherent judgement against owners regarding their ability to assess and make judgements for their animals. It is a dangerous course to steer for the profession to insult and underestimate those who pay the bills.

When some within the RCVS and the CRVM are expounding the virtues of EBM to the exclusion of all else, I cannot help but wonder to what end? I leave it up to readers to decide to what extent Arnold Seymour Relman (1923-2014), Harvard professor of medicine and former editor-in-chief of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, was right when he said: "The medical profession is being bought by the pharmaceutical industry, not only in terms of the practice of medicine, but also in terms of teaching and research. The academic institutions of this country are allowing themselves to be the paid agents of the pharmaceutical industry. I think it's disgraceful."

I don't expect the rest of the profession to suddenly adopt what I or others do, and change from what they find works for them. Likewise, don't be dissuaded from finding something better, however different. I would ask you consider whether restricting what a professional is allowed to use, when there is no evidence of any harm being done, is in the wider interest. Bear in mind, before supporting professional restrictions, how much of what routinely goes on in veterinary practice has little or questionable evidence behind it, or emerging evidence that something currently routine has longer-term adverse implications.

Removing the right of excellent clinicians to use whatever they determine is in their patients' best interest, whether it is homeopathy or other CAM modalities, could be the thin end of the wedge that results in the transition of vets from being professionals

to technicians, dictated to by those with vested interests who'd rather you weren't told the full truth. Please support the right to remain a professional with the right to choose.

Yours faithfully,

ROGER MEACOCK, BVSc, MRCVS,
Natural Healing Solutions, 8 Woodbine Close, Branston,
Burton upon Trent, Staffordshire DE14 3FF.

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Horton R (2105). Offline: What is medicine's 5 sigma?, *Lancet* 385(9,976): 1,380.

Editor's note: Regarding the letter on 19 December, Mr Meacock would like us to point out to readers he agreed to make the wording on his website clearer and he says he has complied with his undertaking negotiated with the RCVS. He feels the letter from the CRVM suggested that the RCVS is not happy with his website in its present modified format, but he would like to point out his assertion that he has complied with his undertaking. We are happy to do this.

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Join the discussion

Jane Davidson (@JaneRVN) talks VN recruitment and whether adverts send the right message.



Laura Jeffery

I called several ads when looking for a job, asking what the salary would be as there's no point applying for a job that won't cover your bills. Some said it depended on experience and would need my CV before negotiating salary. Needless to say, I didn't bother.

Jo Hinde

It's frustrating to see very childish adverts. They would never dream to recruit for a vet in that way. Until our profession respects us more, how can we expect the wider world to?

Jane Rvn

I see many vet adverts very similar. Maybe less chocolate and more toys, but the same attitude. It needs to change.

Liz Marks

Spot on, Jane. The chocolate adverts make me cringe. If I want toys, I go to Smyths. But do I want to understand the salary, working hours and extra benefits? Yes please – and isn't that just basic in other industries?

Becky White

Potential for flexibility in hours as well. As a parent with limited outside help for childcare, this has been a stumbling block.

Kersty Ellis

Hear hear! About time someone said it! Well done, Jane!

Cheryl Mason

Well said, thank you. Job adverts that mention a potential employer supplies cakes once a week makes it sound like nurses are easily pleased, despite low pay and other compromised working conditions. I laugh when I see this.

Anna Ridout

Location – so many adverts that don't say where the heck the practice is. Hours and duties are very important. If you only want established staff to do ops and the new nurse to do consults all day, please say so. Otherwise, we don't find out until the interview. Last, but not least, saying "competitive salary" or "over minimum wage" makes us think it's not competitive or enticing enough and 1p per hour above the minimum. Be honest about the salary and make it a damn good one. People make an effort and give you more if you pay them well, particularly if they can get more out of life with their wage.

Read Jane's blog at vettimes.co.uk/?p=138936



Ali Devonshire – @AlidevonRVN

First impressions count. How your practice sounds in a job ad is where it all starts.

Inkie – @Cookiiedivine

The chocolate thing is patronising/demeaning. Do you want a nurse there for that more than patient care?

Jane RVN – @JaneRVN

Great mental image of nurses troughing sweets while animals miss getting meds. And am I uptight by thinking the ads portray a female stereotype?

Inkie – @Cookiiedivine

Very much so. And in an industry sadly short of male nurses, it's not encouraging them either.

vetnursechirp – @vetnursechirp

I can't bear them. But, for the record, I can trough sweets and see to my patients' needs. #multitasking 🙄

Jane RVN – @JaneRVN

As a skill, that was never in question. 🙄🙄🙄 But it is better to clarify.

Deborah Stafford – @vet_that_tweets

Thanks all, very useful info (especially when recruiting).

vettimes.co.uk | facebook.com/vettimesuk | [@vettimesuk](https://twitter.com/vettimesuk) | linkedin.com/company/vet-times

Space limitations means not all letters can be published. In some instances, and at the editor's discretion, letters will be shortened. The views and opinions expressed in any letter published on the letters pages are not necessarily those of the publication, the editor, Veterinary Business Development or any staff working for it.

In brief

CLARIFICATION: The article "Assessing and addressing poor mental health in veterinary profession" (V747.03) is now available at www.vettimes.co.uk and, at the author's request, includes a paragraph on executive pay the editor had edited from the print version. The omitted text is: "The packages, including bonuses, of the CVS directors S Innes and N Perrin were £713,000 and £317,000 respectively, in 2015. In 2014, they were £644,000 and £295,000 respectively. The CVS profit before tax was 35 per cent up in the year ending June 2015, compared to 2014 (CVS Group, 2015)." The author felt omission of the text changed the context of the piece and *Veterinary Times* is happy to address this.

MUSIC TO DOGS' EARS: Dogs have different music tastes, with reggae a firm favourite, according to a study from the Scottish SPCA and the University of Glasgow. Researchers examined the effect particular kinds of music had on dogs. Professor of integrative physiology at the University of Glasgow Institute of Biodiversity, Animal Health and Comparative Medicine Neil Evans said: "Overall, the response to different genres was mixed, highlighting the possibility that, like humans, canines have individual music preferences. That said, reggae and soft rock showed the highest positive changes in behaviour."

PRODUCTS ACQUIRED: Ceva Santé Animale has acquired a diversified portfolio of products from Boehringer Ingelheim following its acquisition of Merial Animal Health. Products include swine and cattle vaccines, and multiple species NSAIDs. All will be immediately available through local Ceva companies or its distributors, with no interruption of supply.

PRIZE DRAW: Veterinary professionals can learn more about treating and managing feline hyperthyroidism – and be in with the chance of winning an Apple Watch – courtesy of Dechra Veterinary Products. To be entered into the prize draw, participants need to watch a two-minute online video about the condition then answer three questions before 29 February. To enter, visit <http://bit.ly/2ktduai>

SNAKE HOME SOUGHT: A bid has been launched to find a home for a snake that has been in a shelter for almost two years. Drax, a "well-handled" corn snake that could grow to be 6ft long, is being cared for at the Scottish SPCA Dunbartonshire and West Scotland centre in Milton. Anyone who can offer Drax a home is being asked to telephone 03000 999 999.

CAREER COURSE: A course supporting vet staff wanting to explore career aspirations has been launched by SkillsTree. Find out more about "Veterinary medicine: where to next?" at <http://bit.ly/2kjADc3>

Minimise antibiotics and CIAs in cattle sector, urges BCVA

PAN-EUROPEAN initiatives to reduce and rethink the use of antimicrobials in animals, in a bid to combat the spread of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), have been announced.

In the UK, recommendations to clamp down on use of critically important antibiotics (CIAs) when treating cattle – and avoid preventive use where possible – have been issued by the BCVA.

The move comes hard on the heels of a report, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the US, revealing how medical authorities were powerless to save the life of a woman who contracted a "superbug" that proved resistant to all known antimicrobial drugs (V747.04).

In Europe, the European Medicines Agency and European Food Safety Authority announced: "AMR is one of the world's most pressing public health issues and the use of antimicrobials in animals contributes to this problem, so limiting their use to the minimum necessary to treat infectious diseases in animals is crucial."

The two bodies, in conjunc-

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tion with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, are working on a report that assesses the link between consumption of antimicrobials and development of resistance in bacteria found in animals and humans – due to be published at the end of July 2017.

The BCVA's Elizabeth Berry noted the 10 per cent overall reduction in the use of antibiotics to treat UK food-producing animals, announced by the CVO in November (V746.48), but stressed more needed to be done.

Moving away

Dr Berry said, while the responsible use of antibiotics has been promoted for many years across farming sectors, the potential still exists to reduce use in some areas and move away from products that are important for human health.

"This is an official position

from the BCVA to our members, but we would like to see all in the cattle sectors embrace these recommendations in the understanding we need to play our part in increasing responsible use of antibiotics," she said.

"Work still needs to be done to establish the levels being used in cattle, so appropriate targets can be set, but there are measures that can immediately be adopted.

"So, we are recommending reducing both the overall amount of antibiotics used in cattle practice and minimising the use of the high priority CIAs – namely, third and fourth generation cephalosporins, fluoroquinolones and colistin.

"These drugs should only be used where they have been demonstrated by sensitivity testing to be the only suitable choice, to avoid unnecessary suffering."

The BCVA, which has more than 1,100 practising members covering around 85 per cent of vets working with cattle, is also recommending use of antibiotics as a preventive treatment is avoided wherever possible, as long as animal

welfare is not compromised.

"Where preventive treatment – or prophylaxis – is used, it should be regarded as an interim measure while alternative management or vaccination strategies are implemented," added Dr Berry.

"For example, all cows that comply with recommendations for using an internal teat sealant should be considered for non-antibiotic treatments at drying off."

Embrace all strategies

The BCVA continues to advise every farm should have a herd health plan that embraces the disease control strategies appropriate for disease reduction on that farm. In addition, farm management best practice should be followed, such as the guidelines issued by Red Tractor Assurance.

Dr Berry said the BCVA further recommended all herds should establish their BVD status and eradicate the disease where it is found.

"BVD can have a detrimental effect on incidence of many diseases and its eradication will have a significant impact on the

need for antimicrobial use," she said. "We also continue to recommend the use of diagnostics to identify disease so appropriate treatments can be selected and vaccination programmes instituted to prevent or reduce the severity of disease."

The BCVA's confirmation of its official position has been welcomed by the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA).

Secretary general John FitzGerald said, while RUMA's promotion of responsible use over the past 20 years means the UK remains among the lower users of antibiotics in farming in Europe, more needs to be done.

He said: "The BCVA's position is clear and leaves no doubt action needs to be taken. It is underpinned by science, recognising banning preventive use outright or access to critically important antibiotics is not an answer.

"Both are important tools in fighting disease and preventing suffering, so we still need them, but we need to use them more strategically and only when no other options exist."

Practice runs free weight clinics to help porky pets

A NORTH-WEST surgery has launched an initiative to tackle overweight animals by offering free 15-minute weight clinics.

Staff at Southfields Veterinary Surgery in Sale, Greater Manchester, are offering advice on the correct diet and exercise regime to suit the size and breed of clients' pets.

Southfields' head VN Paula Gallimore said: "Obesity is a major issue, as we have seen an increase in the number of overweight pets coming in. A lot of people who come in don't realise their pets are overweight. Many health issues come later in life when it is harder for them to lose weight, so it is a worrying situation.

"Just like humans enrol in slimming classes, we've set up clinics to advise owners on the best diet for their pets."

One pet to have already benefited from the weight clinic is nine-year-old cavalier King Charles spaniel Hattie, owned by Gill Rossini from Wythenshawe, Manchester. Thanks to the practice's advice, Hattie's weight has shrunk from 21.9kg to



VN Paula Gallimore with Hattie and her owner Gill Rossini.

19kg in three weeks, and is on target for her goal weight of 14kg.

Ms Rossini said: "Hattie is livelier and happier, and seems to be healthier in herself. She jumps up to go for a walk, is trotting along when she is exercised and isn't sleeping as much."

CVS and council team up for IVDD scheme

THE CVS Group has joined forces with the Dachshund Breed Council (DBC) in an x-ray screening programme aimed at reducing the prevalence of a crippling back disease in the species.

Intervertebral disc disease can affect around one in four dachshunds at some stage in their lives.

While many recover well in time, significant risk of permanent damage exists that is so severe, it could be life-changing or life-threatening.

According to the CVS, research in Scandinavia has shown a good correlation between calci-

fication of the discs and clinical disc herniations when dogs are x-ray screened between the ages of two and four.

The DBC has, therefore, based the screening programme on the Scandinavian protocols, with the CVS offering to screen the dogs in a cost-effective manner at some of its clinics.

The company will also be collaborating on a multi-year research study of dogs participating in the scheme to monitor its success.

For more about the scheme, visit www.dachshund-ivdd.uk/ testing-for-ivdd

Charity supports ponies

BLUE Cross is helping safeguard the welfare of neglected ponies on Bodmin Moor by supporting an initiative led by the Bodmin Moor Commons Council and Redwings Horse Sanctuary.

The charity has already helped the project organisers round up, identify and match ponies with owners in the East Moor area, and also taken in 26 neglected ponies for rehabilitation and rehoming.

Breakthrough for 'shaking piglets'

SCIENTISTS believe they may have identified the cause of "shaking piglets" – cases of which have been reported in Europe and abroad since the 1920s.

Researchers at the University Clinic for Swine, Institute of Virology, and Institute of Pathology and Forensic Veterinary Medicine at Vetmeduni in Vienna, said they have proved, for the first time, symptoms of tremors and shaking in newborn piglets are not a sign they are cold, but rather suffering from a specific viral infection.

Using a newly developed test, scientists detected a previously unknown virus – termed

atypical porcine pestivirus – in shaking piglets, making it possible to clearly diagnose the potentially fatal disease. The findings were published in *Veterinary Research*.

First author Lukas Schwarz, veterinary clinician at the University Clinic for Swine, said: "Depending on severity, congenital tremor presents a challenge for piglets and can be so severe, the piglet is unable to properly suckle. Yet, suckling is important for piglets in the first 24 hours. Only mothers' milk contains everything they need to survive. Without it, they have a low survival chance."



May 22, 2017

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Dog saved after eating rotten food

A VETERINARY practice has reported what it believes to be three cases of poisoning – thought to involve dogs eating rotten food from bins or rubbish bags – in eight months.

In two cases, the animals died, but the third pet – a Staffordshire bull terrier called Bailey – was saved after staff at Border Vets Galashiels made him vomit three litres of rotten food, along with the remains of biodegradable bags used for food waste.

Bailey began trembling and became uncoordinated within 15 minutes of scavenging mouldy food from a rubbish bag after being put into his owner's garden to toilet.

The dog's owners saw what had happened and rushed him to the surgery out-of-hours.

Vet Mel Broad who, with her team, saved the animal, said Bailey's body

temperature was dangerously high and he started fitting. Ms Broad stayed by his bedside all night and Bailey has made a full recovery.

She said: "We see around half a dozen cases a year like this, and we don't always know what precisely has been ingested.

"We have had three similar cases. Tragically, the first two died, but the third was seen eating something in the garden, so we were able to definitively link the signs to eating mouldy food.

"If ever there is a suspicion of poisoning, knowing what the animal ate can make all the difference to the outcome, because we can give

specific treatment. If an owner can bring a sample, it makes our job easier. We use a fantastic toxicology service that can test food and clinical samples to help narrow down the cause."



Border Vets vet Mel Broad, with Bailey and owner Paul Lamb.

Watchdog/Pets at Home clarification

IN our article entitled "BBC Trust upholds Pets at Home report appeal" and published in our 10 April issue, we included a number of claims made by Mike Jessop in relation to the BBC Trust report, which upheld Pets at Home's complaint against a Watchdog programme broadcast in June 2015.

The BBC Trust ruled that the *Watchdog* broadcast lacked accuracy and failed to be impartial or fair in its portrayal of Pets at Home and that this constituted a serious breach of the BBC's own editorial guidelines.

Mr Jessop claimed he thought the *Watchdog* programme was a very fair and very accurate programme and that it was appalling that the BBC lost around half of the film footage. Mr Jessop questioned aspects of the BBC Trust's finding and the Animal Protection Agency claimed the BBC Trust had run a shoddy investigation.

We have been able to confirm that the BBC Trust made its decision following extensive investigations and with the benefit of a 57-page advisory report, which involved considering "a great deal of audio visual material", consulting two independent veterinary experts, and seeking other veterinary advice. We are further happy to clarify that the BBC Trust report makes no mention of

half the film footage being lost during the investigation process.

The BBC Trust noted that Mr Jessop was not present during the filming of sequences about pet health checks, or when advice was provided about appropriate temperatures for bearded dragons. The BBC told the BBC Trust that "It was not deemed necessary for Mike Jessop to view all of the rushes".

The BBC Trust did review the film footage and on the conditions of the animals sold by Pets at Home, and contrary to Mr Jessop's assertion that the lack of a health check was "just not acceptable", the BBC Trust identified that, not only had health checks taken place, but the film footage revealed "diligent staff who offered thorough advice and appeared on the whole to show care for and familiarity with the animals in their care".

An independent specialist reptile vet who viewed the advice offered in relation to temperatures for a bearded dragon stated "I have no problem whatsoever with anything the assistant said", "she knows her stuff". In contrast to this the BBC Trust found that Mr Jessop's view was based primarily on what had been reported to him by *Watchdog* researchers.

We are happy to clarify the position.

Chance to volunteer at islands practice? You'd be Scilly not to

ONE of the UK's most isolated vets is offering colleagues the chance to experience practice life – island style.

Heike Dorn is the Isles of Scilly's only vet, so has to turn her hand to many tasks – from caring for the pets of residents and tourists, to rescuing wildlife.

Since her arrival in 2007, Dr Dorn has had many unique experiences, including abseiling down a cliff to rescue a stricken steer, saving seals, and carrying out ministry work on the surrounding farms.

Vets, student vets and RVNs looking to spread their wings can undertake a week-long voluntary placement with Dr Dorn in the practice and community.

Prior to Dr Dorn's arrival on the isles, animal owners spent months without a vet because not enough business existed to maintain a small practice. Therefore, when their animals became unwell, they had to travel to the mainland, which proved costly and stressful.

To address the problem, the community pulled together to create The Isles of Scilly Veterinary Support Group (IOSVSG) to ensure the islands would never be without a resident vet again.

A practice cost £190,000 to build, fit and equip, and was made possible by the IOSVSG's fund-raising efforts.

Dr Dorn said: "When I came here, I had a 3m by 3m [room], which was the surgery and operating theatre. I didn't have a waiting room or dispensary, so medication was stacked against the walls and it wasn't very good. But now, the prac-

report by

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tice is very nice; I have a big consulting room, an operating theatre, x-ray room and office."

She is very grateful to the ongoing fund-raising support of the group, which means the practice is kept equipped with all the kit required.

"I feel very supported, and everyone is very welcoming and hospitable," Dr Dorn said.

Plethora of skills

Since arriving on the island from her native Germany, Dr Dorn has spayed raccoons ("much easier than spaying dogs"), cared for owls and repaired a blue shark's pectoral fin while fully clothed in the sea.

However, Dr Dorn warned prospective volunteers the variety of jobs they could encounter could be as unpredictable as the weather.

She said: "I never know what is going to happen because there is a limited amount of animals, but if none of them are sick and there are no seals to help, there is nothing to do.

"On the other hand, it could be very busy and so hectic that I have to be in three places at once, which makes it stressful.

"Whatever happens, they will have the opportunity to explore the isles, which are beautiful."

The nature of the role and its unique location mean Dr Dorn needs a varied skill set to deal

with all animals. But, on the whole, she said she believes mixed practice roles are in decline and such skills are not as vital as they once were, due to the trend for vets to specialise.

She said the profession would benefit from more mixed practice practitioners, with the volunteering post providing a "fantastic" opportunity to develop a plethora of skills.

"It is very old-fashioned here. I know all my clients' names and they know me. I do all the ministry work, including TB testing, so I know all the farmers as well as the pet owners," she said.

"I treat everything; whatever [clients] come with, I try to do my best. That is unusual because nowadays, if you are a vet, you tend to try to become a specialist, as human doctors do.

"If I was so specialist I did not recognise any diseases anymore – only the ones in my field – I would find it a struggle and very limiting. I like the 'James Herriot' way of life here – he had to do everything, too."

Dramatic career twist

The story of how Dr Dorn became a vet is as unique and fascinating as her job.

She said: "I always wanted to be a vet, but my parents didn't like the fact I would constantly have cow dung under my fingernails.

"I am quite a good painter, so my mother decided I should try conquering the entrance examination of the Mozarteum University Salzburg. I dutifully complied and was one of six they decided to let in. It took

five years and I was awarded the best stage designer of the year in Austria."

A career working in opera houses and television followed, but when working on a musical in Tel Aviv, Dr Dorn's passion for animals was reignited when she started to assist the director's son, who was a vet.

She said: "I was utterly fascinated. It was great; we even visited Bedouin families to treat camels. I was hooked and decided to try for my life's wish to become a vet.

"I had to do the preliminary examination for all students wanting to study anything in the

medical field. The examination was very hard and lasted nine hours. It turned out I got the second best result in Germany."

Dr Dorn moved to the islands after seeing a job advertisement.

Accommodation consists of a personal bedroom with shared living space with Dr Heike relevant to term time. If other accommodation is found, other dates could apply.

For more information, email references and a CV to heike.dorn@googlemail.com

To find out more about the IOSVSG, or to offer help and donations, visit www.vetsupportgroup.co.uk



Heike Dorn moved to the Isles of Scilly in 2007.

In brief

REPTILE ABANDONED:

The RSPCA is reminding prospective pet owners to do their research before getting a reptile after a member of the public found a yellow-bellied slider dumped in a glass tank next to rubbish in Denny Road, Edmonton, London. Animal collection officer David Eckworth said: "There was some white and pink gravel inside the tank and a small amount of water the terrapin was sitting in. But the light and cables were broken and hanging in the water." The terrapin was rescued and has been taken to a wildlife sanctuary for specialist care.

REUNION: A 10-year reunion

for Bristol vets who graduated in 2007 is being held at the Avon Gorge Hotel, Bristol, at 7pm on 30 September. It will feature a barbecue on the private terrace overlooking the gorge, followed by a DJ in the Clifton Suite. Staff who were involved with the year are also invited. Tickets are £40. For more information, email jemma_ry@hotmail.com

BEVA CONGRESS:

Tickets are on sale for BEVA Congress, which takes place from 13 to 16 September at Liverpool Arena Convention Centre. It will include a range of speakers, CPD opportunities and science demonstrations. It will also celebrate the realities of being a horse vet and explore how adopting simple procedures can reduce the effects of Murphy's Law. For more information, visit www.beva.org.uk

NUTRITION RESOURCES:

Education materials have been added to WikiVet in the third phase of a partnership with Mars Petcare exploring aspects of pet nutrition, the pet food industry, and ways to feed cats and dogs. For more information, visit www.wikivet.net

Section 11: Contributions to message boards, forums and chat rooms etc

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