

Veterinary Business Development Ltd

IPSO Annual report - Period covered: 1 January 2019 - 31 December 2019

1. Introduction

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

Based in Peterborough, we have a staff of approximately 30, including editorial staff, production, design, sales and accounts, all headed by a CEO. There was a restructuring of the business during the year, seeing the arrival in December 2019 of a new CEO. Some positions were lost from the editorial department during this year.

Our publications are funded through advertising revenue and are supplied free of charge to qualifying readers. Titles/products falling under IPSO's remit for the qualifying period 1 January – 31 December 2019 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. Business Publication of the Year 2017 at the PPA Independent Publisher Awards. Controlled, free, ABC-audited circulation for January to December 2019 (latest publicised figures in this period are for Jan-Dec 2018): **19,130**.

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. 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 2019 (latest publicised figures for this period are for Jan-Dec 2018): **14,223**.

VBJ: Covers management and financial aspects of running a veterinary practice. 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: Journal 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 with pre-show copies of Veterinary Times to species/topic-relevant audience and available at relevant congresses/shows.

vettimes.co.uk: Online resource for veterinary profession, featuring daily news updates, articles from our journals, blogs, videos, additional articles/content, CPD

listings. 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 above content is also served through a downloadable app available through the App Store or Google Play (launched in June 2018).

The publications' responsible person is **Paul Imrie, VBD editorial manager, and editor Veterinary Times (features/digital)**.

2. Our editorial standards - requirement 3.1

The editorial department reduced in number due to a company restructuring, and at the end of the period consisted of a full team of 7 (6 FT and 1 PT). All publications were headed by an editor throughout the period, although some in dual roles. VT editorship was split in to 2 during this period to reflect dual importance of features and news functions, and to ensure promotion for the news editor and reflect his important role in the business.

While a B2B publisher, we have for a long time adopted a regional newspaper structure. An editor (also editor of the VBJ) manages the VT news team. A chief-sub manages a team of 2 sub editors (1 PT). As chief sub, she is responsible for style guides, standards, layouts and subbing tasks. The editorial coordinator role became defunct in this period, and was absorbed under the editor (features/digital) role. External content, largely clinical features, is commissioned from vets. A senior reporter provides much of the news content, along with the editor (news).

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, 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 in management of complaints from readers or for pre-publication help with stories or letters on controversial subjects.

His services were utilised in 2019 when required for pre-publication checking of news stories and some letters. Depending on scenario, content was either not published or cut to ensure compliance with the editors' code.

All editorial staff and the wider company are aware we are members of IPSO. The "IPSO regulated" logo appears in our publications and on our website vettimes.co.uk (as of 2019 following a request from IPSO.)

All staff have been informed of our official complaints procedure (hosted online at <https://www.vettimes.co.uk/veterinary-business-development-editorial-complaints-procedure/>)

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

- The IPSO Editors' Code
- VBD's editorial style guide (*copy enclosed, not for publication*)
- VBD staff handbook (*copy enclosed, not for publication*)

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 one-to-one 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 elsewhere as space allows. Our website carries news items daily, many expanded later for print publication, and abstracted news items from our print publications.

The editor (news) has extensive news experience, with us and in regional papers, and is fully immersed in the profession. He holds regular meetings with the reporting team 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*).

All feature content is from independent veterinary professionals working in practice or academia. In the past few years, we commissioned 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*).

We have an editorial board of vets who we will seek advice from if needed on clinical content within submitted features. This has reduced in number in the past few years, but this will be addressed in the future.

As part of work to ensure company-wide compliance with new GDPR legislation, during 2018 we revised our author agreement and resent to all existing authors,

among other reasons to ensure we were still able to keep their contact details. We continued to send this form to all new authors in 2019.

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

We carry advertising features paid for by companies, both in print and online. These are always clearly marked as such, in line with ASA guidance. Guidance on the standards we expect are supplied to advertisers enquiring about advertising features. Sponsored/native content appearing online is also clearly marked "sponsored".

Finally, as a requirement of the Government's 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 or updates of the Editors' Code are supplied to the full editorial team, and our membership of IPSO is reiterated to each team member. Relevant updates as supplied by IPSO are also conveyed to the team.

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 2019, but we 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 aforementioned processes. If copy is amended or corrected online, this is pointed out within the content.

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. 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. PDFs of all published pages are also available and fully searchable.

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. The "IpsO regulated" logo was added to the panels later in the period covered by their report.

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 additional terms and conditions that cover contributions to message boards, plus an acceptable use policy Available at <https://www.vettimes.co.uk/terms-and-conditions/>.

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 needed, or for guidance on handling sensitive subjects in the news section (for instance, court proceedings). 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).

Meetings are held across the business between staff and their direct managers as necessary 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 job-related objectives. Set editorial KPOs relate to ensuring near-perfect accuracy at the first-read stage of all print content and development of wider reporter contacts.

Our appraisal process, revised in late 2017, 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 required.

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 – requirement 3.2

No complaints received by, or ruled on, by IPSO's complaints committee were received by VBD during this period. Where IPSO finds against any VBD publication or online content, 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 13 August 2019, sent via email and considered under section 1 (accuracy) of the IPSO Editors' Code of Practice. The complainant said an online article of a veterinary surgeon's disciplinary hearing featured errors about a court case for drink driving. The online version was amended and an apology published thus: "This article was edited on 14 August due to an error that incorrectly stated the extent of the number of times Dr Davies was over the legal blood/alcohol limit on her second court appearance. Veterinary Times deeply regrets the error and and we apologise to Dr Davies for any distress unintentionally caused." The court story was at <https://www.vettimes.co.uk/news/drink-drive-vet-reprimanded/> The correction and apology was offered and accepted as a full and final conclusion of the matter.

Clarifications for minor inaccuracies (complaints not made formally, but clarifications sought by concerned parties) were published as necessary during the year.

Examples from this year are included.

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. Clarification example 1

8. Clarification example 2

9. Correction: resolved complaint to a web story submitted under VBD editorial complaints procedure

<https://www.vettimes.co.uk/veterinary-business-development-editorial-complaints-procedure/>

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:
 - Feature content (print and online): paulimrie@vbd.co.uk
 - News content (print and online): jameswestgate@vbd.co.uk
- VN Times: rachaelbuzzel@vbd.co.uk
- Veterinary Business Journal (VBJ): jameswestgate@vbd.co.uk
- Congress Times: tomjackson@vbd.co.uk
- Other online content (blogs, careers features etc): 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.

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	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
11	You have avoided mentioning unlicensed drugs, but if it is unavoidable, these have been flagged up at the time of submission.	Yes/No
12	You have attached a short biography including your qualifications; 40 to 50 words is ideal.	Yes/No
13	You have attached a head and shoulders biography picture at 300ppi resolution.	Yes/No

14	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
15	I am aware that articles published in our journals will be placed on to our website, www.vettimes.co.uk	Yes/No
16	You have supplied the name and qualifications of the person reviewing the article (where necessary)	Yes/No
17	You have completed the required author agreement	Yes/No
18	I confirm that the images for this article are my own	Yes/No
19	The images are not my own, I have permission to use them and the credit required has been added in the captions	Yes/No

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December 2, 2019

Rafoxanide not appropriate alternative to closantel

Dear editor,
 Liver fluke is shaping up to be a significant challenge this winter. With a limited number of different flukicides available and reports of resistance to triclabendazole increasing every year, treatment choice – in conjunction with the use of diagnostic tests – is extremely important to successful and sustainable control.

The Sustainable Control of Parasites in Sheep (SCOPS) and Control of Worms Sustainably (COWS) groups are concerned some confusion exists regarding two veterinary medicines that are not authorised in the UK, but have been imported from the Republic of Ireland – under a Special Import Certificate from the VMD – for use on some UK farms.

These veterinary medicines both contain the active substance rafoxanide. We are aware of some confusion, especially around the use of rafoxanide as an alternative to closantel on farms where triclabendazole resistance has been proven. We would like to provide clarity on the facts regarding rafoxanide.

Firstly, we wish to make it clear rafoxanide is not a new flukicide. It has been available in some countries – for example, Australia and the Republic of Ireland – since the 1980s.

Secondly, rafoxanide is not a different class of flukicide to closantel. It is a salicylanilide anthelmintic – and similar in chemical mode and structure to closantel and oxcylozanide – and evidence exists of cross-resistance between rafoxanide and closantel from both field and laboratory studies (Boray and De Bono, 1989).

Finally, no evidence exists to suggest using closantel and rafoxanide interchangeably, or on a rotational basis, will successfully reduce the selection pressure for resistance to closantel. Indeed,

a serious risk exists that such use of rafoxanide will hasten the development of resistance to closantel. Therefore, rafoxanide is not considered an appropriate alternative to closantel.

SCOPS and COWS would like to emphasise that veterinary medicines should target the predominant age of fluke likely to be present in a group of animals at a particular time (for example, immature fluke in autumn; adult fluke in spring and summer).

Where triclabendazole resistance has been confirmed, not merely suspected, closantel is an alternative for the control of immature fluke in autumn. Nitroxylin can also be used as an alternative to closantel, and/or closantel can be followed by an adulticide (albendazole, oxcylozanide or clorsulon) in the spring/summer when adult fluke predominate.

Sustainable control of liver fluke in our grazing livestock depends on us using flukicides responsibly. This means employing assessments and management strategies to reduce risk, determining the need to treat through monitoring and diagnostic tests, and, where a treatment is necessary, choosing the most appropriate active.

Yours faithfully,
DIANA WILLIAMS, BSc, PhD,
University of Liverpool (on behalf of COWS),
LESLEY STUBBINGS, OBE, BSc(Hons), FRAGS,
LCCS, Northamptonshire (on behalf of SCOPS),
NICK HART, BVetMed, CertSHP, MRCVS,
President, Sheep Veterinary Society.

Reference
 Boray JC and De Bono D (1989). Drug resistance in *Fasciola hepatica*. In Outteridge PM and Richards RB (eds), *Australian Advances in Veterinary Science*, The Australian Veterinary Association, Sydney: 166-169.

Puppy smuggling: border control not 'on the ball'

Dear editor,
 It wasn't clear from the article on puppy smuggling ("MPs demand answers to puppy smuggling issue"; 18 November issue) whether the right and left hands of the powers that be are, in fact, communicating.

In July 2018, Defra undertook a consultation on imposing a ban on commercial third-party sales of puppies and kittens in England, and, in February 2018, called for evidence to which it received a 70 per cent response in favour of a ban. This would tackle the smuggling issue for trade purposes swiftly.

In addition, of course, the importation of puppies and kittens into the UK for sale should not be done using a pet passport, but should be done via the Balai Directive; this also applies to the importation of dogs and cats by charities for rehoming.

Many imports destined for sale or rehoming actually come into the UK on pet passports, and it is for border control to be aware of this and return them to their country of origin for not meeting the entry requirements.

By far, the most important entry route for illegal entrants to the UK is Northern Ireland, since puppies and kittens can

travel into Eire under European laws without hindrance and make their way via Northern Ireland into the UK free of restriction. I have a client who travels that route often and testifies to the fact she regularly hears puppies inside vans travelling on the ferries. That loophole certainly needs to be closed.

Since laws already exist making it illegal for puppies and kittens to enter the UK on a pet passport when they are destined for sale, it is the border controls that are not being implemented correctly. Judging from the number of times I see incorrect paperwork relating to pet imports getting through border control, it is obvious those charged with implementing our laws are not sufficiently "on the ball".

A van load of puppies coming into the UK on pet passports are illegal entries and need to be turned back from whence they came. It doesn't help, of course, that some of our European colleagues are willing to sign passports certifying they have wormed a pet when they haven't, and that a rabies vaccination was given 21 days earlier than it actually was.

Having said that, I would be the first to support a total ban on commercial trading of puppies and kittens, in the interests of animal welfare.

Yours faithfully,
PETER A CULPIN, BSc, MA, VetMB, OV, MRCVS,
Clinical director, Pets Naturally,
26 Chepstow Corner, Chepstow Place, London W2 4XE.



There's a big difference in *knowing* you will one day have to make life-dependent decisions and *actually* having to make them.



Jordan Sinclair talks about how this realisation builds towards a reality not expected – and how looking out for one another can help.

Read "Disillusionment" at vettimes.co.uk

Reaction at vettimes.co.uk

Louisa Slingsby

Great article. In much of life, the theory and the reality can be two different things. Until you have lived the experience, you can never know what something is like – whether that is work, or having a dog/cat/horse/chickens for the first time.

I completely agree with the comment about people working long hours with no break, as it is so hard to maintain a sense of perspective or enjoyment for what, ultimately, is the great privilege of being the only people in the UK who can diagnose and treat animals. There are no simple fixes for this – we need

to educate ourselves in how to run better businesses so the long hours, no breaks culture becomes a thing of the past.

Even then, we will still need to be vigilant about the mental health of everyone we come into contact with – ourselves, co-workers, clients, family and friends – to reduce the stigma around mental ill health, be able to pick up the signs of someone who may need help and know how to intervene, promote healthy attitudes and behaviours, and generally be a kinder society.

VETTrust CPD awards open for applications

Dear editor,
 I wish to notify your readers of the Vettrust CPD awards scheme.

Each year, VETTrust offers financial awards to those undertaking CPD in the field of veterinary medicine and surgery.

The application for award is particularly pertinent for those in remote areas of the country and those returning to practice following career breaks.

An award may take the form of supporting the costs of a place at our Stirling 2020 CPD Conference, which will be held on 9 and 10 June, or as funding to assist attendance at other suitable CPD.

Application forms are available by writing to the address below or emailing admin@vettrust.co.uk

Forms can also be downloaded from the VETTrust website, www.vettrust.co.uk

Completed forms for consideration by the directors should be received by 31 January 2020.

Yours faithfully,
KATHLEEN ROBERTSON, BVMS, MRCVS,
Secretary, VETTrust,
Kedah, 28 St Leonard's Road, Forbes,
Moray IV36 2RE.

GET IN TOUCH

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VBD is committed to the highest standards of accuracy and fairness, but mistakes can occasionally occur. For full details of our formal editorial complaints procedure, visit www.vettimes.co.uk/?p=558

VBD is a member of the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). For details, visit www.ipso.co.uk/IPSO

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In brief

DAVIES GREEN CREDENTIALS: Ellie West, European specialist in veterinary anaesthesia and analgesia at Davies Veterinary Specialists (Davies), achieved Best Green Champion (East region, medium business) at the Investors in the Environment (iE) Awards. The practice also picked up its Silver Accreditation, in recognition of the Davies team's commitment and hard work to continually enhance its green credentials. Dr West has co-authored a sustainability focused paper, "Environmental sustainability in veterinary anaesthesia", with fellow veterinary anaesthetist Ron Jones, which is available as an article in *Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia* (<https://bit.ly/2lUk6up>). For those interested in introducing sustainability into their own practice, Davies has put together some easy-access online information. Find out more at <https://bit.ly/2LeMv07>

CLARIFICATION: In V749.17, a Spotlight article about bovine fasciolosis on pages 14 to 16 contained a table of flukicides for cattle and sheep in the UK. The table incorrectly identified closantel pour-on (in combination with ivermectin) as indicated for both cattle and sheep. Norbrook has pointed out two closantel-based pour-on products exist that are licensed and available for sale in the UK. Closamectin Pour-on Solution for Cattle and Norofas Pour-on Solution for Cattle both contain 5mg/ml ivermectin and 200mg/ml closantel. Neither of these products are licensed for use in sheep. We apologise for the error.

MARATHON UPDATE: Vet receptionist Amy Barnes, who attempted to get into the Guinness World Records by running the London Marathon wearing ice skates, managed eight miles of the course before suffering an asthma attack. The amateur figure skater, who works at CVS' Nine Mile Veterinary Hospital in Finchampstead, said: "I managed to get to eight miles before being advised by a doctor to stop due to an asthma attack. Skates felt fine, but I couldn't breath."

CPD PARTNERSHIP: Medivet has announced a partnership with the RVC to enable its veterinary nurses to access CPD courses on a range of topics, including emergency and critical care, diagnostic imaging, and anaesthesia and analgesia. Each topic is covered in a six-week module, delivered online by RVC lecturers using a blended learning approach to encourage learners to think critically. On successful completion of a module, the learner will gain up to 18 hours' CPD and receive a certificate from the RVC.

SAVSNET survey to establish ADR under-reporting extent

UK researchers are attempting to identify the extent of under-reporting of veterinary adverse drug reactions (ADRs) in the UK and make it easier for vets to report cases.

Recent work by regulators suggested many veterinary ADRs are not reported, though relatively little work has been done on the subject.

Though the problem is not well-quantified in the veterinary sector, similar studies in human medicine in this country indicate around 90 per cent of ADRs are not reported.

A study, funded by the VMD – with support from the Small Animal Veterinary Surveillance Network (SAVSNET), which will rely heavily on the participation of "front line" vets and nurses through electronic survey – has been launched.

Pharmacist and PhD student Heather Davies, who has a background in pharmacovigilance, is leading the work at the University of Liverpool.

Miss Davies said: "We think this is an important piece of research to carry out as there is evidence to suggest

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adverse reactions quite often go unreported. ADRs that are not reported lead to delays in identifying safety issues with drugs, which may lead to harm to patients.

"It's not something that's been massively explored within the veterinary world, but certainly, within human medicine, there are some studies that suggest perhaps only 10 per cent of all serious reactions are reported."

UK respondents

Miss Davies explained further a survey on reporting ADRs had been conducted among veterinary professionals across Europe in 2017 that indicated there may be "some levels" of under-reporting. However, she said, there weren't many respondents from the UK, which made it hard to interpret the figures accurately.

Miss Davies continued: "We

are planning on putting out a survey to look at the understanding and experience veterinary professionals in the UK have of reporting ADRs. We want to find out what reactions they might be reporting, and how they report them, but, most importantly, we want to look at any potential barriers to reporting and how we can make it easier to report ADRs using information technologies."

The online survey will be available imminently, and Miss Davies appealed to vets and vet nurses to assist by taking a few minutes to complete the survey, which is anonymised; however, the research team is keen to engage with veterinary professionals, so there is an option to leave details if vets or vet nurses are open to participate in further research on the topic.

Miss Davies said: "We need the help of vets and nurses to improve drugs safety for veterinary patients. We want to hear from them as to how we can help make the process of reporting drug reactions easier, and we want to hear about their

experiences on the front line of reporting ADRs so we can help make the process of reporting drug reactions easier for them."

David Killick, senior lecturer at the University of Liverpool and Miss Davies' PhD supervisor, explained: "By harnessing the unique abilities of SAVSNET at the University of Liverpool, it is hoped an informatics approach can make it easier for vets and vet nurses to report possible ADRs. For example, we're looking at having a 'reporting button' directly in the practice management software. It will make it easier for vets and nurses in the consult to immediately report a reaction.

"We would love to hear suggestions from practitioners about other ways we can help make reporting ADRs easier using information technologies, and improve identification of signals in ADR reporting."

Big data approaches

The SAVSNET team is also looking at using big data approaches to help identify ADRs. Dr Killick said: "We think this is a first. Our approach is not something, that

we're aware, other people are using. The approach that seems to be being taken by regulators worldwide at the moment is around voluntary reporting of ADRs."

Dr Killick added: "In terms of under-reporting, one example of the difficulties in identifying ADRs we're interested in is, if there's a long time period between prescribing a drug and when the adverse reaction is seen, it can be very hard for a clinician to know from that one case whether there is a relationship between the two events.

"Whereas, if you have a large data set, like SAVSNET – which has more than a million canine patients, as well as cats and other small companion animals – there's the potential to follow many cases receiving the same drug over a long time frame and see whether they are developing similar problems that might be ADRs.

"That way, you can start to use the data to look at things that would be really hard to evaluate as an individual clinician on the ground treating an individual patient."

Residential OA clinic package launched

THE Veterinary Osteoarthritis Alliance (VOA) is introducing a complete residential OA package designed "to give vets the knowledge, clinical skills, tools, support and confidence to implement an OA clinic in their own practice".

Included in the offering is:

- a two-day residential course for two vets, or a vet and nurse (theory and practical)
- an extensive range of OA tools for the practice
- regular follow-up visits by the VOA team
- ongoing tailored support for 12 months
- a network of colleagues and consultants

Taking place on 24 and 25 June in South Yorkshire, the residential course is hosted by experts within the OA field, including Stuart Carmichael, Marge Chandler, David Prydie and Hannah Capon.

Extensive opportunities are given for both theoretical learning in lectures and hands-on experience in practical sessions, ranging from harvesting bone marrow to intra-articular injections and then to physiotherapy for the OA patient.

Lectures include a broad range of topics – from the initial OA clinical examination, to surgical and non-surgical treatment options, pharmaceuticals and nutraceuticals, and the importance of physiotherapy and nutrition in the management of OA.

The OA clinic package also includes a large array of tools designed to aid vets in the management of OA in practice, a goniometer and chart of values for correct measuring within clinical examinations, and access to Smart Mobility Survey to assist with client identification of OA patients, as well as licences for Aim-OA.

Prices

The total cost for the OA clinic package for 12 months (all inclusive) is £2,990 plus VAT per practice.

This includes two delegates for the residential CPD course and is broken down into an initial payment of £790 plus VAT, followed by £200 plus VAT per month for the remaining 11 months.

The residential course on its own is £990 plus VAT per person (£1,790 plus VAT for two veterinary surgeons/veterinary nurses from the same practice).

For further information or to book a place, email info@vet-oa.com or telephone 01865 922227.

The VOA also hosts a number of veterinary CPD events throughout the year. For more details, visit www.vet-oa.com

Neutering bitches trebles risk of UI

NEUTERING female dogs makes them three times more likely to develop urinary incontinence (UI), a study has revealed.

The research, carried out by the RVC's VetCompass programme, also indicated females of certain breeds are more prone to UI than others.

Hungarian vizslas, Dobermanns, Weimaraners (pictured) and boxers are the breeds most at risk, according to the findings.

UI affects around three per cent of bitches in primary veterinary care in England. A connection between neutering and UI in bitches has long been suspected, but this study provides stronger evidence on the extent of the relationship.

The results will aid owners and vets in making evidence-based decisions when it comes to neutering female dogs.

The study was conducted by analysing data from 333,910 bitches that presented at veterinary practices participating in the VetCompass programme between 2014 and 2017.

The study has been published in the *Journal of Small Animal Practice*¹.

Reference

1. Pegram C, O'Neill DG, Church DB et al (2019). Spaying and urinary incontinence in bitches under UK primary veterinary care: a case-control study, *Journal of Small Animal Practice*, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jsap.13014>



MDV PhD studentship applications

APPLICATIONS are being invited for two PhD studentships that could enhance understanding of Marek's disease virus (MDV), which is blighting the nation's poultry.

Marek's disease virus infection will be put under the microscope during a three-and-a-half-year PhD studentship via The University of Edinburgh, entitled "Comprehensive analysis of transcriptome during Marek's disease virus infection".

New vaccines

It is anticipated the results of the research will increase knowledge of the molecular basis of MDV infection, enabling researchers to prioritise variants for MDV resistance in chickens and design new vaccines and intervention strategies for MDV control.

Mick Watson of The Roslin Institute will

supervise the project alongside Yongxiu Yao and Venugopal Nair of The Pirbright Institute.

Information and application details are available via <https://bit.ly/2WjUB91>

The second opportunity comes courtesy of The Pirbright Institute and will examine "Host factors determining latency and reactivation of MDV-1 virus".

Over the course of three-and-a-half years, the PhD candidate will seek to understand the factors that maintain the latency of the virus and how the virus is reactivated from the latent state.

The project will be supervised by Yongxiu Yao of The Pirbright Institute and Finn Grey of The Roslin Institute, with Venugopal Nair of The Pirbright Institute.

Information and application details are available via <https://bit.ly/2usmDmv>



In brief

PETS AS PRIZES BAN:

RSPCA Cymru has expressed delight after Caerphilly Council's Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee gave unanimous support to a motion that would ban the giving of pets as prizes on land owned by the local authority. No legal restriction on the giving of pets as prizes in Wales if the recipient is older than 16 years of age exists. However, the RSPCA is concerned this creates a situation where the welfare of animals won as prizes is readily compromised by owners who are not prepared or able to meet the needs of their new pet.

VETERINARY ROOTS:

A collaborative doctoral award between RCVS Knowledge and the University of Kent will delve into the professional roots of veterinary medicine by examining archives relating to the first Veterinary Surgeons Act of 1881. Analysing how and why the medical treatment of animals came to be professionalised, the project seeks to understand the reasons for and effects of the 1881 act, which formally established the RCVS' authority to distinguish between qualified and unqualified practitioners.

BEVA EXHIBITOR WINNERS:

BEVA Congress delegates selected three exhibitors to receive special awards for their creative use of stand space. Boehringer Ingelheim won the Veterinary Practice Best Large Stand Award for its interactive derby activity, The Donkey Sanctuary scooped the Veterinary Practice Best Shell Scheme Stand Award with its educational resources display, while Swissvet was awarded the Veterinary Practice Best New Exhibitor Award for its patriotic display of power dentistry equipment.

AHT CELEBRATION:

The AHT has joined BEVA for a 15th birthday party to celebrate the longevity and success of its collaboration with Defra to produce the equine quarterly disease surveillance reports. In addition, BEVA has presented the AHT with a certificate of appreciation for all its hard work to keep the equine veterinary profession fully informed about disease status. To view the reports, visit bit.ly/2IUUG9X

DOG SHOW SUCCESS:

Staff at Village Vets in Formby, Liverpool, have raised more than £1,100 for Samaritans with their 8th Annual Charity Dog Show. Kate Higgins, owner and vet at the independent practice, said: "We raise money throughout the year through various activities, but our dog show has become a regular fixture on the local calendar."

CLARIFICATION:

In our September 16 (V749.37) story about David Charles presenting at the first National Association for Black Veterinarians Conference, we stated that Oakwood Veterinary Group, where Dr Charles works, is owned by the Linnaeus Group. To clarify, Oakwood is not part of the Linnaeus Group.

Panellists raise telemedicine concerns at BEVA Congress

DEVELOPMENTS in telemedicine present both threats and opportunities for vets across the UK's equine sector.

Speaking at BEVA Congress' Moral Maze discussion, panellists echoed serious concerns in the profession about remote prescribing and the complex issues around duty of care.

Others pointed to the many benefits the technology can, and is, delivering to both vets and the horses under their care.

Chief executive of World Horse Welfare Roly Owers captured the mood when he spoke of "massive potential" and "huge risks" before describing telemedicine as being at a "critical crossroads in its evolution".

On the day the RCVS announced the launch of a consultation as it attempts to clarify its own position on the subject, Dr Owers called for patience and caution in equal measure.

He added: "The issues it is relating to around remote prescribing, 24/7 care, issues of big data and new technologies [are] suddenly coming thick and fast, and while I think people are relatively comfortable with the vet-to-vet aspect of it, although there are still issues

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with that, the vet-to-client gets a bit more problematic... not withstanding the fact we also heard how telemedicine could have huge potential in remote localities where it is difficult [for vets to get to], be it somewhere in the UK in the Highlands, or in low and middle income countries; but, there, you also have huge risks, so we've got to start to pull that together and not least understand the definitions because that came back time and time again.

"We just need to wait to see what comes out of [the RCVS consultation] because it [the RCVS] will consult with the public and the profession, and that is a critical piece of the jigsaw. It has started now and I don't think it can rush that because it needs to do that job properly."

Fellow panellist Jonathan Pycock, a VDS equine claims consultant, agreed telemedicine had many benefits, but warned there would be a price to pay

without more clarity around the legalities of the practice.

Dr Pycock said: "Telemedicine lacks a precise definition and the minute something lacks a precise definition it becomes very hard to determine how [it] is regulated, and therein lies one of the problems for our regulatory body. The minute a relatively new technology is put in without clear guidance for vets, there is a potential problem."

'Haphazard'

Many practitioners are now being asked by colleagues to assess images via WhatsApp, for example. But a lack of understanding around the lawfulness and legitimacy of this could lay clinicians wide open to criticism and legal action.

Dr Pycock said: "I think it might not be appreciated that, as an ambulatory vet... the minute you pass a professional opinion on that image, you will be accountable. There is a danger [this is] a relatively haphazard way of dealing with veterinary medicine and therein lies the risk."

He also worries the profession is hastening into an unknown future. He said: "I am concerned we are rushing headlong into it,

when we need to make a more considered approach.

"We need to get a framework in place and give everything some regulatory structure; then we can proceed to use telemedicine for the wonderful tool it can be."

Victoria Johnson, co-founder of global telemedicine specialist company VetCT, was on hand to extol the virtues of vet-to-vet telemedicine – which is, she said, "here to stay".

She said: "By putting two brains together, you can reduce error rates and improve clinical outcomes."

"Another benefit we hadn't anticipated was the fact that such online consultations can reduce stress in new graduates. They can often feel alone, so being able to talk to a specialist on the telephone or get advice on radiographs can be really useful."

However, she, too, raised concerns about the vet-to-client element of telemedicine and echoed the importance of clarification.

She said: "Vet-to-client telemedicine is a whole different ball game, and we really need to get some tighter definitions and tighter regulations

around this. It is definitely coming and we need to be ready."

Speaking in his role of BVA president, Simon Doherty said many potential benefits to telemedicine existed, but the profession needed to take a step back to assess the situation – something the BVA and RCVS had been doing in terms of identifying what some of the profession's concerns are, which include what is meant by "under our care" and "remote prescribing".

He said: "Telemedicine offers a real opportunity here to strengthen the client-animal-vet relationship. But firstly, we need to identify what [telemedicine] means and... get some case studies to showcase what it can offer within the confines of existing practice. Then we can start having discussions around regulation."

Reflecting on the debate, he said: "We had a really interesting discussion, lifting the lid off the definition of telemedicine... and we very much welcome the RCVS consultation that is going to take us forward."

● To read more on the RCVS' review of "under care", turn to **page 2**.

BEVA Awards 2019

THE outstanding accomplishments of equine vets were celebrated at the BEVA Awards 2019.

Presented at a special ceremony at BEVA Congress, the awards acknowledge some of the brightest and best in equine veterinary medicine, and those working in the horse health and welfare sphere.

Outgoing president Renate Weller presented the awards at the ICC Birmingham on Thursday 12 September.

Paying tribute to the winners, Dr Weller said: "These awards reflect BEVA's recognition of and support for significant accomplishments by equine vets, and others involved in horse health and welfare, and it is a privilege to present them."

The winners were:

- BEVA Equine Welfare Award sponsored by Blue Cross – vet Suzanne Green for her "tireless veterinary work to improve equine welfare", including her work for the World Horse Welfare's Penny Farm in Somerset and with the RSPCA's ambulatory services.
- BEVA Richard Hartley Clinical Award – Laura Mason for the paper "Prophylactic therapy with omeprazole for prevention of equine gastric ulcer syndrome (EGUS) in horses in active training: a meta-analysis" (Mason et al, 2019), published in the *Equine Veterinary Journal (EVJ)*.
- The Peter Rosedale *EVJ* Open Award – Sonja Egan for the research paper "Research trends in equine movement analysis, future opportunities and potential barriers in the digital age: a scoping review from 1978-2018" (Egan et al, 2019).
- Voorjaarsdagen and BEVA Award – presented to Glenn Van Steenkiste for his paper "A 12-lead electrocardiogram interpretation algorithm to determine the anatomical site of origin of atrial premature depolarisations in horses: preliminary data" (Van Steenkiste et al, 2019).
- The *EVJ* Literary Award for Video Abstracts – Elaine Norton for her video abstract "Heritability of metabolic traits associated with equine metabolic syndrome in Welsh ponies and Morgan horses" (Norton et al, 2019).

For award photos, visit www.vettimes.co.uk/?p=203490



BEVA'S record-breaking congress

ORGANISERS are celebrating after announcing that the 58th BEVA Congress has proved the biggest in the association's recent history.

Some 1,670 people attended the four-day event staged at the Birmingham ICC.

Newly elected BEVA president Tim Mair (pictured with outgoing president Renate Weller) said: "BEVA Congress is the largest equine veterinary conference outside the US and its reputation means we attract world-class speakers. This, and our legendary socials, make congress the go-to event for equine vets, vet nurses and mixed practitioners."

"Our 58th congress has been a record-breaker. With 1,670 attendees, we have achieved the highest attendance in the past five years, with higher numbers of vets and vet nurses attending across all three days."

Dr Mair, an internal medicine and equine surgery specialist at Bell Equine Veterinary Clinic, took over the role from Renate Weller at the end of BEVA Congress.

He said: "Equine practice is continuing to change and evolve with some rapidity.

An important part of my focus will be on our Equine Veterinary Horizons Project, looking at anticipated advances over the next 10 to 15 years, what they will mean to individual practitioners and practices, and how we can adapt and accommodate them to best advantage."

Lucy Grieve, of Rosdales Veterinary Surgeons, becomes president elect.

The congress also saw the launch of BEVA's coaching scheme, which will provide recent equine graduates with careers and well-being support by pairing them with experienced equine vets to help them during the foundation years of their careers. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/2m12G5j>

Hot on the heels of this year's congress was news that BEVA Trust volunteers have helped make a difference to the lives of thousands of horses both in the UK and abroad via a host of voluntary projects.

Meanwhile, the accomplishments of equine vets, and others involved in horse health and welfare, were celebrated at the BEVA Awards 2019 (see left).