

## **VETERINARY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT Ltd**

**IPSO Annual Report – Period covered: 1 January 2015- 31 December 2015.**

### **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.

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 2015 were:

**Veterinary Times:** Market-leading, news-led weekly journal. Published 50 times a year. Features news and clinical and other articles for veterinary surgeons. Controlled, free, ABC-audited circulation for January to December 2015: **19,796**. (January to December 2014: 19,495).

**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. Controlled, free, ABC-audited circulation for January to December 2015: **14,224**.

**VBJ (aka The Veterinary Business Journal):** Covers management and financial aspects of running a veterinary practice. 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 five times a year. Sent out to full Veterinary Times circulation and available at shows.

**vettimes.co.uk (formerly Vetsonline):** Online resource for veterinary profession, featuring daily news updates, articles from our journals, blogs, additional articles, CPD diary. Supplemented by Facebook and Twitter accounts. Some publications also have their own social media presence. Monthly users (December 2015): **64,345**.

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

### **Our editorial standards**

The editorial team consists of 10-12 people, including editors for each of the above publications/website. We have adopted a regional newspaper structure. A team of

two reporters, managed by a news editor. A team of four subs, including a chief sub responsible for style guides, standards and subbing tasks. Each publication has its own editor, including the website. Some people have more than one role (i.e. VBJ editor is also news editor). We also have an editorial coordinator, responsible for commissioning external content across the publications. This is largely 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. A legal refresher is arranged annually with Cleland Thom, and we have also engaged him on an annual retainer to provide us with media law advice when we require it. The legal refresher did not happen between September-December.

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 <http://www.vbd.co.uk/complaints>)

We are also members of the PPA, and receive advice and guidance from them.

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

- The 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. Additional to these, reporters are given guidance as necessary. An example on news for our new website is included.

We strive to ensure all news items are fair and balanced, with parties given full right to reply. Although a tabloid, we are not sensationalist in our presentation.

The **news editor** had twice-weekly meetings with both reporters to discuss story ideas, suggest angles and discuss people to contact. If necessary, wider discussions were held with sub-editors, the chief-sub and editors on story angles and legal issues. Clel is also contacted if needed.

We will go to multiple sources if necessary for verification or quotes for lead stories, and are always keen to get as "expert" an opinion as possible. Examples of two such researched stories are included.

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 September 2015. It was resupplied to all editorial staff. Copy enclosed.

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

All feature content is from independent veterinary professionals working in practice

or academia. In recent years, we have sought to commission the majority of articles on our features lists from specialist vets. All commissioned authors are sent author guidelines about how to write and submit features (copy enclosed). They are also required to sign an author agreement.

We do not shy away from covering difficult topics that may affect 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.

### **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.

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 cover minor factual errors in print. Wherever something has appeared incorrectly, we always try to correct this error by the next available issue. In many instances, a company has made a claim about a product that has been attributed to them from a press release in a News in Brief, and a rival company points out an inaccuracy in what they submitted.

A record/database (updated weekly by the editorial coordinator) is held of every article or story we publish in Veterinary Times, including news stories. It listed corrections/clarifications were made four times in the review period (2015) in the following issues of Veterinary Times:

- 45.08
- 45.18
- 45.29
- 45.42

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 of the policy and our IPSO membership are included in the journal information panels. Our guidance is hosted online, and also features links to the IPSO website and the Editors' Code. An example of the information panel from Veterinary Times is included here. 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 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 included.

### **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. A legal refresher with Cleland Thom, our media legal expert, took place in June 2015 and was attended by all editorial staff.

### **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.

There were no other serious breaches of the editors' code handled by me or my staff, although I did receive a complaint from a vet who had a case heard at the High Court. He objected our coverage did not go into enough detail, and contained inaccuracies. We had taken copy from the Strand news agency in London, and they were contacted as part of my investigations into his complaint. Cleland Thom was also consulted. I found we had not acted in breach of the code, there were no inaccuracies in the court copy and the court article was a fair, accurate and contemporaneous account. I enclose transcripts of some of the email discussions that ensued for flavour. They include my references to the Defamation Act 1996 and the Contempt of Court Act 1981, as well as IPSO's Code of Practice.

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

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# veterinary Times

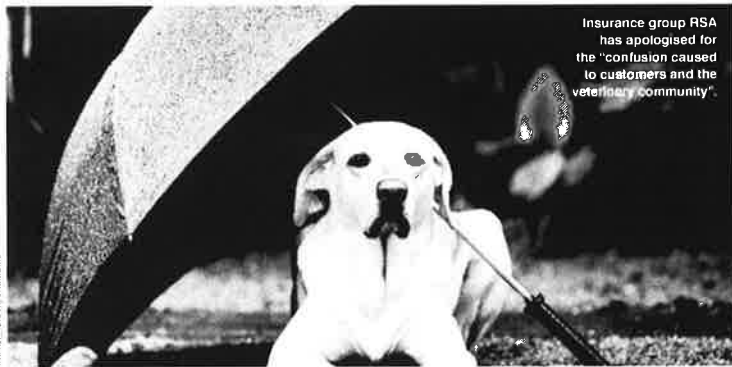
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June 22 2015

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Volume 45 No 25

## INSURER DEFENDS REFERRAL LIST AS CLIENT SAFEGUARD



Insurance group RSA has apologised for the "confusion caused to customers and the veterinary community".

ONE of the country's largest pet insurance companies has apologised to vets for any confusion regarding new procedures for referrals.

RSA Insurance Group refuted allegations it was trying to force policyholders to use its own "preferred" specialist or referral vets, rather than those recommended by primary care vets.

The group, which underwrites more than a million UK pet insurance policies through high street brands including More Than, Tesco Bank, Marks and Spencer, John Lewis, Argos and Homebase, had written to practices in the midlands and the north-west of England saying policyholders had to contact it before any referral appointment was made.

The letter, from RSA's pet claims division in Peterborough, said: "We will then agree which of our preferred specialist or referral practices our customer should go to dependent on the individual circumstance relating to the claim."

"If our customer does not get in touch with us or we have not agreed to the visit, this could result in our customer suffering a financial impact. This amount will be in addition to the policy excess."

Vets took to social media claiming the move would effectively rob them of their ability to make independent referrals in the best interest of the pet. Ian Wolstenholme, practice manager

report by  
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at the Ian McConnell Veterinary Practice in Mossley, Lancashire received one of the letters and was one of a number of concerned individuals to contact *Veterinary Times*.

He described the move as "another bureaucratic obstacle" that flew in the face of an existing referral system that had worked extremely well for years, and served only to make pet insurance more complicated.

"You can't help but think this has been motivated by a desire to save money," he commented. "My main concern is the information contained in the letter appears to smack of what's happened in motor insurance - a pure cost-saving exercise that removes people's choice of who they go to, but clearly there is a huge difference between a car and an animal."

Clive Curry of Willow Veterinary Clinic, Stoke-on-Trent, described the move as "the thin end of the wedge".

He added: "How long before they pull the rug and insist on euthanasia for certain conditions?"

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## Meat report gives 'renewed vigour' to BVA campaign

ALMOST three out of four people in a study of 13,500 meat consumers are interested in information regarding the stunning of animals at slaughter when buying their meat, according to a report.

The results of the study, carried out across 27 EU member states, have prompted the BVA to call on the European Commission to back non-stun meat labelling. The BVA has campaigned to end non-stun slaughter.

When respondents were asked if they would be interested in information on the stunning of animals, 72 per cent showed varying degrees of interest with 18 per cent "very interested", 27 per cent "quite interested" and 27 per cent "a little interested".

John Blackwell, BVA president, said: "This EU-wide report confirms consumers are interested in the provenance of their meat and meat products with a clear majority saying they are interested in receiving information about the stunning of animals."

"The long-awaited release of this report gives renewed vigour to the BVA's campaign for better consumer information on animal welfare at slaughter and the need for meat from non-stun slaughter to be clearly labelled."

However, the study also maintained that, for most consumers, information on pre-slaughter stunning is "not an important issue unless brought to their attention".

## 'Millions' unprepared for new microchipping legislation

A SURVEY suggests millions of dog owners are not ready for the 2016 compulsory microchipping legislation.

Online retailer MedicAnimal has taken a straw poll of animal rescues and believes more than 3.5 million dogs still have to be microchipped before the deadline - or around 360,000 each month. A further 2.7 million dog owners could be prosecuted for failing

to keep their contact details up to date.

The new law comes into force on April 6 next year in England, and spring 2016 in Scotland and Wales. The animal shelters and rescue organisations MedicAnimal spoke to claimed about half of the animals that could be identified by their microchip could not be quickly reunited with their owners as contact details had not been updated.

## CertAVP Survival Tips and Clinic



On Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July we will be holding a CertAVP Survival Tips and Clinic day at the RVC.

The Survival Tips day will start with an introduction to the CertAVP at the RVC and how to get started, followed by a detailed look at the A-FWP:1 module. There will be Q&A discussion forums for all B and C modules and a talk by CertAVP 'survivors'.

The Clinic is designed for those veterinarians already enrolled on the CertAVP at the RVC. Workshops will include face to face time with module assessors, informal chats with CertAVP 'survivors' and additional advice on reflective writing for the B and C modules.

Course fee: £19 (VAT exempt)  
 All participants will receive a CPD certificate for 6 CPD hours

RVC Royal Veterinary College University of London

To register or for further information contact the RVC CPD Unit  
 Tel: +44(0) 1707 660165 ext  
 Email: cpd@rvc.ac.uk

Check our current list of CPD courses  
 1 Hawkshead Campus, Hawkshead Lane,  
 North Mymms Herts. AL9 9TA

Sharing veterinary knowledge



October 12 2015

# veterinary Times

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Volume 45 No 41

## VETS 'PROBABLE' SOURCE OF GERMANY BVD SPREAD

A STUDY that found farm vets in Germany probably helped spread bovine viral diarrhoea (BVD) has been described as a "wake-up call" for UK vets.

John Blackwell, BVA senior vice-president, and a practising farm animal and equine vet, told *Veterinary Times*: "I think it is a real wake-up call and stark reminder we, as part of the team that delivers health care on farms, need to make sure we're beyond reproach and are absolutely clean."

Mr Blackwell said there was no evidence to suggest "sloppy" biosecurity within the UK profession, or evidence to suggest UK vets were implicated in the spread of disease, but he said the continual maintenance of good biosecurity protocols, both within the farm, and between farms, was paramount.

The study authors<sup>1</sup>, from the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institute (FLI) examined the transmission pathways of an outbreak of a highly virulent BVD type 2c strain originating on a dairy farm in Kleve, North Rhine-Westphalia in November 2012.

Over following months, a further 20 farms were subsequently infected, with 5,325 cows affected and more than 500 deaths.

report by



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The epidemiological task force from the FLI virus research institute investigated the course of the epidemic with the local veterinary authorities and concluded that for 12 of the 20 secondary outbreaks "the most probable source of infection was the farm veterinarian".

Six other outbreaks were attributed to trade contacts, one to personal contact between two farmer friends and one to a contaminated slurry vehicle shared between farms.

### Biosecurity

The research, published in the open access journal *Heliyon*<sup>1</sup>, concluded biosecurity was poor among farmers and vets, who often used the same protective clothing on several farms, which may have contributed significantly to the spread of BVD type 2c.

To avoid the dispersion of the virus, they advised all participants should increase biosecurity measures and

that hygiene standards in cattle farms needed to be improved at all levels in the cattle industry to minimise the spread of highly contagious diseases.

Vets and other visitors were encouraged to use farm-owned clothing that didn't leave the site, or protective clothing that could be safely disposed of after each use.

John Gethmann, lead author of the study from Friedrich-Loeffler-Institute, said he hoped the results of the study might help revise BVD control regulations and increase biosecurity on cattle farms, especially in terms of human contact.

Mr Blackwell added: "We know disease can spread by various routes, not just by direct contact between infected and naive animals. These include spread by contact with contaminated faeces, discharge and blood on inanimate objects. This paper demonstrates vividly the consequences of not embracing adequate cleanliness and biosecurity between premises and, indeed, with different groups of animals within a unit.

"All personnel with access to the farm should maintain adequate PPE and observe strict disinfection protocols with approved disinfectant applied for the correct contact time when

travelling between farms. This also applies to vehicles or any equipment used between different sites. However, biosecurity is much more than observing strict levels of cleanliness and restricted access. These should be part of an overall biosecurity plan that includes reference to a risk-based sourcing policy and, ideally, the testing of individual or groups of animals prior to their introduction on the unit."

BVD type 2 has been detected in the UK, but not for a number of years, and not currently<sup>2</sup>. The subtype represents a very small fraction of all BVD typed strains and is rarely isolated in the UK. The main risk for introduction of this sub-type into this country is thought to be via import of infected cattle.

<sup>1</sup> Gethmann J et al (2015) BVD 2c outbreak leads to high losses in cattle farms in Western Germany. *Heliyon*. DOI: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2015.e00119  
<sup>2</sup> Cranwell AP et al (2005) BVD virus type 2 in British cattle. *Vet Rec* 156(8): 257-258

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## RVC team nose no bounds

VETS from ZSL London Zoo and the RVC have solved the mystery of a giant anteater that was suffering from recurring infections in its nose.

When antibiotics failed to solve Sauna the giant anteater's infections, ZSL London Zoo look her to the RVC to access the specialist teams and equipment needed to examine her.

At the RVC's Queen Mother Hospital for Animals in Hertfordshire, an extra long endoscopy tube equipped with a camera was used to examine her nose and throat.

On discovering an abnormal, dark-coloured area, the veterinary team thought it could be a tumour. However, further examination showed it was a piece of bark lodged in Sauna's throat.

After a 90-minute endoscopy, it was successfully removed and Sauna has fully recovered.

RVC senior lecturer and co-head of internal medicine Stijn Niessen led the clinical team and said they were delighted to have been able to assist.

"Although we had to brush up on our anteater anatomy, we were delighted our expertise and facilities could help a different sort of patient to the ones we're used to," he added.



Head of veterinary services at ZSL, Nick Masters, said it was crucial institutions such as the RVC, with specialist expertise and equipment, were on hand to assist.

"ZSL and the RVC have collaborated over clinical cases on many occasions over the years with excellent results, and this is a really good example of how beneficial that relationship is to the animals in our care," he said.

Inspiring CPD from the RVC

31<sup>st</sup> October 2015  
This hands-on very practical course is designed to familiarise vets with quick, life-saving procedures needed in emergency practice.

2<sup>nd</sup> November to 29<sup>th</sup> November 2015  
This four week course provides a solid foundation for surgeons who wish to review, consolidate and update their knowledge of surgical principles and techniques, including neutering, exploratory laparotomy and commonly performed abdominal surgeries. Also suitable for those preparing for the RCVS CertAVP B module in Small Animal Practice (SAPAT).

4<sup>th</sup> November 2015  
This one day course will consist of a combination of lectures and practical sessions aimed to make you feel more confident about what you can see down your scope and what it means.

RVC Royal Veterinary College University of London

For more information on the RVC CPD courses contact the RVC CPD on 01753 460400 or visit [www.rvc.ac.uk](http://www.rvc.ac.uk)

On campus at the RVC, Hawkshead Campus, Hawkshead Lane, North Mymms, Herts AL9 9TA

In brief

**CORRECTION:** A news article (V745.04) on key rule changes from the Fédération Equestre Internationale contained inaccuracies. Under new regulations, vets could face fines decided on a case-by-case basis by the veterinary committee and not a sanction of 2,500 Swiss francs (£1,880) as was reported. For the corrected article, visit [www.vetsonline.com](http://www.vetsonline.com) or for the 2015 regulations in full, visit <http://fei.org/fei/regulations/veterinary>

**SLAUGHTER TRAINING:** The Humane Slaughter Association has funded a six-month project in Liberia to promote humane methods of slaughter and handling of animals in markets and during transportation. As part of the project, five-day training sessions were delivered to 350 people including slaughtermen, drivers, marketers, farmers and the local authorities at the Liberian Ministry of Agriculture.

**CONGRESS DATE:** The 13th European Congress of Toxicologic Pathology will be held jointly with the 30th annual meeting of the British Society of Toxicologic Pathology in Guildford, Surrey from September 22 to 25. The theme will be "From gene to drugs: an Insider's view on cell pathology". For details, visit <http://bit.ly/1AqgKVO>

**A NORTHERN white rhino that was just one of six left in the world has died, bringing the species closer to the brink of extinction.**

Angailu, who was about 44, apparently died of old age at the San Diego Zoo safari park.

His death leaves just one northern white rhino at the zoo, a female named Nola. Of the remaining four, one lives at a zoo in the Czech Republic and three in a reserve in Kenya.

Safari park curator Handy Hieches said in a statement: "Angailu's death is a tremendous loss to all of us. Not only because he was well beloved

here at the park, but also because his death brings this wonderful species one step closer to extinction."

The species has been a victim of poaching as rhino horns are believed to be an aphrodisiac and are valued dagger handles.

While in captivity, attempts to mate Angailu with Nola were unsuccessful.

Preservationists at the Ol Pejeta animal sanctuary in Kenya recently conceded their one male and two female northern white rhinos will not reproduce naturally.



PHOTO: MICHAEL GARDNER/STIM

# Cattle testing 'more effective than culling' in bTB battle

**THE BVA has welcomed research arguing cattle testing is more effective than culling in the battle to rid the UK of bovine TB (bTB).**

Scientists at the Queen Mary University of London used a computer simulation to show vigilant cattle testing can eventually eradicate bTB.

The simulation involved the first large-scale computer model of TB in cattle and badgers, and mimicked altered patterns of the disease in the UK, including changes after controls were reduced during 2002's foot-and-mouth epidemic.

report by  
**Paul Gibson**  
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01733 383561

The model suggested badger culling alone did not lead to eradication of the disease and research suggested housing cattle in large sheds over winter potentially doubled the number of infected animals in a herd.

Scientists claim the model provides evidence investment in increasing cattle testing is more effective than culling.

BVA president John Blackwell welcomed the findings, but reiterated his backing for a comprehensive plan.

He said: "This study reinforces our long-held opinion culling of badgers alone will not combat the disease, but we need to use all available tools in the box as part of a comprehensive strategy for control."

"Care is needed with computer modelling no matter how sophisticated. Such studies need to be considered alongside robust data, which indicates a benefit accrues from addressing the wildlife reservoir and that aids success in other areas of control, such as cattle-based measures, including biosecurity."

"We also need to be aware any control strategies have to be deliverable. For example, the study's scenario of not housing cattle over winter to mitigate against amplification of any infection between cattle in closer confinement is not a realistic option with our climate."

The Government's controversial pilot cull was dubbed "ineffective" and "inhumane" by an independent expert panel following the first pilot culls in bTB hotspots Somerset and Gloucestershire in 2013. The scheme has faced repeated criticism, with marksmen failing to meet minimum targets.

Last year, 45 per cent (274 badgers) were removed in Gloucestershire, against a target of between 615 and 1,091. Meanwhile, Somerset exceeded its minimum target with 341 badgers removed against the recom-

mended range of 316 and 785.

Anti-cull campaigners argue cattle-based measures and vaccination would be a more effective and humane method.

Matthew Evans of Queen Mary University of London said he believed cattle testing would have the most significant effect on controlling bTB. Prof Evans said: "Of the available bTB control strategies, we believe how frequently cattle are tested and whether farms utilise winter housing have the most significant effect on the number of infected cattle."

### 'Compelling evidence'

"bTB is a complex disease and modelling it is difficult, but we've successfully used our model to replicate real world situations and are confident it can be used to predict the effects of various changes in the way we tackle the disease."

"Our modelling provides compelling evidence, for those charged with controlling bTB, that investment in increasing the frequency of cattle testing is a far more effective strategy than badger culling."

The simulation revealed that in a region containing around 1.5 million cows, including 3,000 to 15,000 that may have bTB, badger culling prevented a dozen cases.

Research suggested reducing the time between cattle tests by one month cut the number of animals infected by 193.

Findings from the study, published in the journal *Stochastic Environmental Research and Risk Assessment*, have been welcomed by anti-cull cam-

pagners, including Dominic Dyer of Badger Trust and Care for the Wild.

He said: "This research is large scale, objective and takes into full account the possibility of badgers being responsible for bTB infections in cattle – yet still it concludes the answer to beating this disease is to focus on the cattle. This is the message we at Care for the Wild and Badger Trust, and many others, have been hammering home over the past couple of years, so maybe now the Government will feel the need to listen."

However, the NFU rebuffed the findings and argued the computer simulation did not reflect farmers' experience.

A spokesman said: "Its conclusions fly in the face of the experiences of most farmers who say the biggest risk to their cattle isn't being housed in winter, but when they are turned out in the spring."

"Anecdotally, we've been told by farmers in the Somerset cull zone there has been a huge reduction in the number of herds under TB restriction since culling started in 2013, from 34 per cent to 11 per cent."

A Defra spokesman did not comment directly on the study, but repeated the Government's strategy: "It's clear no single measure will on its own achieve control of TB. That is why we are pursuing a comprehensive strategy to tackle bTB, which includes regular cattle testing, tighter cattle movement controls, vaccinations and culling in areas where the disease is widespread."

## Virulent pig disease found in Europe

**A STRAIN of a highly virulent disease that has wiped out more than a tenth of the pig population in the US over the past two years has spread to Europe.**

Asian-American porcine epidemic diarrhoea virus (PEDv) is extremely infectious, with experts saying a thimbleful of manure from an infected pig unit is sufficient to infect the entire British pig population.

The National Pig Association says it is impossible to guarantee Asian-American PEDv will not arrive in Britain on a traveller's shoes or clothes, or on the wheels of a lorry.

It says producers should pay special attention to vehicle biosecurity. No pig lorry should be allowed on to any pig farm unless it has previously been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

The strain of PEDv was discovered in mid-Ukraine by internationally known British vet John Carr, who had it sequenced in Britain to confirm it was the virulent Asian-American strain, and not the European strain.

Dr Carr said 30,000 piglets died over a matter of weeks at a well-run commercial 5,000-sow unit in Ukraine, equivalent to the loss of six weaned pigs per sow per year.

## Places available to start May 2015

BSAVA Postgraduate Certificate in:

Emergency & Critical Care

Ophthalmology



The BSAVA Postgraduate Certificates aim to provide participants with the knowledge and expertise they need to deal with the conditions which they encounter regularly. Furthermore participants will enhance their understanding of more complex techniques and new advances so they are able to discuss treatment options and potential outcomes fully with clients, and to refer appropriately.

The certificates are relevant to small animal practice, with a combination of face-to-face courses and online learning enabling flexible study, yet providing a feeling of academic community and support.

Successful completion will lead to the award of the BSAVA Postgraduate Certificate in Small Animal Ophthalmology (BSAVA PGCert(SAO)Ophth), or the BSAVA Postgraduate Certificate in Small Animal Emergency and Critical Care (BSAVA PGCert(SA)ECC), and will be validated by Nottingham Trent University.

If you would like further information or to enrol, please visit our website [www.bsava.com/postgradcert](http://www.bsava.com/postgradcert) or email [certificate@bsava.com](mailto:certificate@bsava.com)



In brief

**POLICY AMNESTY:** Agria Pet Insurance has extended its age amnesty offer for a further month. This means cats and dogs of any age will be eligible for a lifetime insurance policy taken out up to and including May 31. For more information, email vet.team@agriapet.co.uk

**PROFITS FOCUS:** SPVS and VPMA are running a course on how to maximise practice profitability. The one-day course, in Milton Keynes on May 20, is suited to practice owners, partners and managers with an active role in managing practice turnover and driving profitability. It costs £190 plus VAT for SPVS and VPMA members, or £265 plus VAT for non-members. CPD certificates, lunch and refreshments will be included. Visit [www.spvs-vpma-events.co.uk](http://www.spvs-vpma-events.co.uk)

**WALL TREN:** A team from CVS UK is training to take on the Hadrian's Wall Challenge to raise £2,000 for Support Dogs, CVS' charity of the year. They will trek 25 miles from Lanercost Priory in Cumbria to Brocolitia, an ancient Roman fort in Northumbria, on September 26. To sponsor the CVS team, visit [www.justgiving.com/Barry-Bradner](http://www.justgiving.com/Barry-Bradner)

**GI WEBINAR:** Microenteral feeding specialist Jam Animal Health is hosting a free webinar to educate vets in the correct feeding of pets with acute gastrointestinal (GI) disease. The webinar, entitled "Feed don't fast: early microenteral nutrition and management of acute GI disease", will be delivered by emergency and critical care specialist Ava Firth at 8pm on April 30. Registration is at [www.feeddontfast.co.uk](http://www.feeddontfast.co.uk) and is open to all vets, VNs and animal care assistants. CPD certificates will be available afterwards.

**HERD HELP:** EBLEX will be launching its herd management calendar, an online tool for producers, at the National Beef Association Beef Expo in York on May 21. The tool will remind producers to carry out key tasks at specific times related to calving or service date. Management task reminders are emailed weekly and producers can also add their own tasks to the calendar. For details about Beef Expo 2015, visit [www.nationalbeefassociation.com/Beef-Expo-2015](http://www.nationalbeefassociation.com/Beef-Expo-2015)

**CORRECTION:** In V745.16 on page 6, a photo of the Direct Mail award at the VMA awards in correctly named winners as White Cross Vets. It should have read Boehring-Ingelheim. We apologise for the error.

**WRITE FOR US:** Veterinary Times is looking for new authors and new articles for publication in your weekly journal. Subject matter can be on clinical, surgical, research or medicine topics and an author fee is payable on publication. If you are interested, please email [jackiemorrison@vbd.co.uk](mailto:jackiemorrison@vbd.co.uk)

# DNA breakthrough to detect disease in border collies

SCIENTISTS are closer to eradicating sensory neuropathy, a rare disease in border collies, after identifying the genetic mutation responsible.

Experts from The Kennel Club (KC) Genetics Centre at the Animal Health Trust (AHT) are "absolutely delighted" with their breakthrough and with the DNA test they have developed to help breeders determine if their dog carries the gene.

Sensory neuropathy (SN), which is incurable, is found in young border collies. It causes progressive loss of sensation in the limbs through degeneration of sensory and motor nerve cells. Sufferers tend not to live beyond two years of age and are generally euthanised.

## 'Particularly nasty'

AHT genetic researcher Oliver Forman said: "While the disease is quite rare, it is a particularly nasty condition, so we are absolutely delighted to have developed a DNA test that will benefit the breed. It is impossible to predict which lines contain carriers, so DNA testing is the only way to ensure carrier-to-carrier matings are avoided. Our hope is we will

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eventually eradicate SN, which would be fantastic. It is such a horrible condition, which is so distressing for dogs and owners. If we can avoid seeing dogs like this in the future, it can only be a good thing."

Dr Forman was particularly pleased at having made the breakthrough using only three cases. Scientists at the AHT have been researching the disease since neurologists diagnosed two affected dogs in 2013. The University of Glasgow provided a third sample and funding to enable a genetic investigation to begin.

At the same time as working on SN, the team was studying epilepsy in border collies. This involved looking at DNA samples from 170 dogs, which had been submitted by owners. They compared the two data sets, which was crucial in identifying the chromosome containing the genetic mutation. The chromosome was then



Four-month-old male puppy that presented with a three-week history of uncoordinated gait, self-mutilating wounds and loss of sensation in its feet.

confirmed to have two copies of the mutation identified by scientists at the AHT.

Dr Forman said: "Running these two projects in parallel was vitally important in advancing our study into SN. Idiopathic epilepsy is a genetically complex condition and we are still collecting cases and controls for the study, but we are still very hopeful of making progress on this condition. We invite vets to get in touch with us if suspected cases of epilepsy are seen in the clinics."

"Another pleasing aspect is our collaboration with other scientific groups and clinicians to collect additional samples to help validate the mutation. We are thankful to Gary Johnson and Dennis O'Brien at the University of Missouri, and Diane Shelton from the University of California for contributing additional cases to the study.

"Collaborative work is very important to us. We are very proud of our track record of finding mutations of inherited diseases and being able to develop DNA tests, and we are more than happy for clinicians to get in touch to discuss potential projects with us, even

if only single cases of a particular disorder have been seen."

The onset of SN is usually between two and seven months of age and clinical signs include knuckling of the feet, self-mutilating wounds (caused by excessive chewing or licking due to the lack of feeling in the limbs) and progressive ataxia. Cases have been seen in the UK, US, Belgium, Japan and Italy.

## 'Great strides'

The KC secretary Caroline Kisko said: "Scientists at the KC Genetics Centre are making great strides in their work, which goes a long way in improving dog health across the board, and we would encourage border collie breeders to utilise the new DNA test to help cement the next stage in their breed's health - eradicating this horrible disease."

The DNA test can be bought from the AHT online shop for £48. A border collie combination test - testing for SN, trapped neutrophil syndrome and vitamin B<sub>12</sub> deficiency - is also available.

For more information, visit [www.aht.org.uk/caninegeneticsuccess](http://www.aht.org.uk/caninegeneticsuccess)

## 24-hour challenge to boost charity

A VET who has celebrated more than 50 years in the profession is preparing to put more miles on the clock by completing an 85-mile walk in 24 hours for charity.

Edmund Shillabeer of Harwell Veterinary Centre in Peverell and Elburton, Plymouth, will take part in the Isle of Man Parish Walk on June 20. Competitors attempt to complete a hilly route covering 17 parishes in just 24 hours.

At 75, Mr Shillabeer hopes to become the oldest person to finish the non-stop walking challenge, while raising as much money as possible for his chosen charity, Canine Partners.

Mr Shillabeer, who qualified as a vet in 1964, takes on a different physical challenge every year to raise funds for charity. In 2009 he finished the Isle of Man course in 17 hours, 51 minutes and eight seconds - the fastest debut time by a visitor - which saw him finish in 17th place. Out of 1,276 competitors, only 187 finished.

Canine Partners helps people with disabilities to enjoy greater independence and quality of life by providing them with assistance dogs to help with

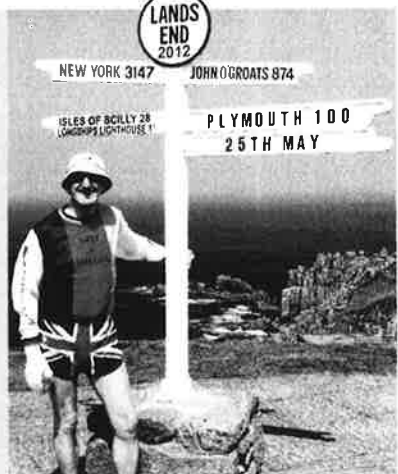
daily activities, such as opening doors or emptying the washing machine, which their owner may find too painful, difficult or impossible to do.

The charity works with Hasler Company, a rehabilitation centre for injured service personnel at HMS Drake, Plymouth. Mr Shillabeer found out about the canine charity while fund-raising for Hasler. He said: "I walked from Land's End to Plymouth in 22 hours to raise funds for Hasler, which works closely with Canine Partners. When I found out how many dogs Canine Partners trains every year, I wanted to raise money to help increase that number and help more service personnel."

Mr Shillabeer celebrated 50 years as a qualified vet in 2014 by walking from his practice to the RCVS headquarters in London, a distance of 260 miles, raising £2,600 for International Cat Care.

To donate, visit [www.justgiving.com/edmund-shillabeer3](http://www.justgiving.com/edmund-shillabeer3)

Edmund Shillabeer before setting off on his walk for Hasler's rehabilitation centre.



## Time to pay

THE RCVS is reminding vets to pay their annual renewal fee now or pay a higher fee.

Vets have until April 30 to pay or the amount due will increase by £35 - this applies across all registration categories. Those who fail to pay by May 31 will have their names removed from the register, making it illegal for them to practise veterinary surgery. Reminder letters have been sent to 4,318 vets who have not yet paid. The registration department can be contacted on 020 7202 0707.

## Spay procedure 'safe and effective'

A NEW "pedicle tie" procedure to spay female cats has been shown to be safe, effective, and faster than traditional pedicle double ligation methods.

The procedure has been published in the *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery*, by Kirk Miller, a clinical instructor with the College of Veterinary Medicine at Oregon State University, and vet with the Oregon Humane Society.

The procedure effectively stops blood flow through the vessels that go to a cat's ovary, a preliminary step to removing the ovaries and uterus.

It's essentially tying the vessels in a knot - and is said to work just as

well, and is about 30 per cent faster.

A survey of 2,136 kittens and adult cats neutered using the technique, found no significant increase in haemorrhagic complications, and that it slightly reduced the time the animal needed to be under anaesthesia.

Mr Miller said: "Saving two minutes may not sound like much, but when you do thousands of these procedures every year, like we do, it can add up. Over the course of a year, this may free up about two weeks of time for both the surgeon and anaesthetist. We can serve more animals, provide the care they need and make them eligible to find new homes."

## Practice helps client

STAFF at a South Yorkshire practice are raising money to help a mother-of-two, who was injured when she fell from her horse after it was pelted with stones.

About 15 members of staff from Churchfield Veterinary Centre in Barnsley, are taking part in a five-mile walk or ride on May 4.

They want to help Lindsey Broomhead, a client of the practice, who suffered severe head injuries in the fall and had a stroke three days later.

RVN Helen Wood said: "This is such a tragic case and we want to do all we can to support Lindsey. The money we raise will help pay for alterations to make her home accessible for her and her family. "We have made and sold rubber bracelet bands and have raised about £200 from them so far."



## In brief

**DAIRY LEVY:** The Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers (RABDF) has called for the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) dairy levy to be diverted to product protection and health professional education. At the Livestock Event, RABDF chairman Ian Macalpine said: "Diverting up to 15 per cent of AHDB Dairy's £7.68m budget to The Dairy Council will enable the organisation to provide sound scientific evidence on the benefits of dairy as a high-quality, high-value nutritional product to UK health professionals and the Department of Health, at a time when Government has no coherent policy on promoting milk and dairy products."

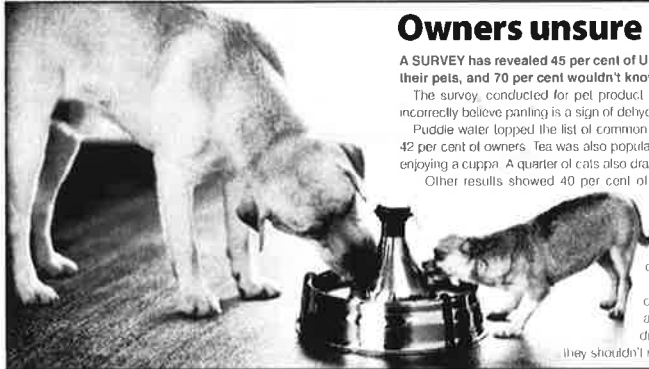
**PDSA PHOTO COMPETITION:** PDSA has launched its 2015 photo competition. Running with the theme "amazing animals", the competition is free to enter and there are three categories: under 10s, 10 to 13s or 14 to 16-year-olds. Each child's best photo should be emailed to [petprotectors@pdsa.org.uk](mailto:petprotectors@pdsa.org.uk) with "Pet Photo Competition 2015" in the subject, along with full name and date of birth in the email. The closing date is September 11.

**BATTERSEA DOG AWARDS:** An elderly Rottweiler from Windsor has been crowned "Best Battersea Dog" at the Battersea Dogs and Cats Homes' Old Windsor fun day. Eleven-year-old Gibson was rehomed from the Old Windsor centre three months ago by Elaine Wishart after being found as a stray. Other winners included three-year-old Staffordshire bull terrier Daffy, which took the prize for "Handsome Dog", while Oakley the Jack Russell terrier took "Best Trick" title.

**VET FUTURES BLOG:** Can vets work better together by playing to their strengths? That is the question being asked by guest Vet Futures bloggers this month. Senior partners at Medivet Erwin Hohn and Adi Nell argue the way for veterinary practices to work better together is by following 19th century economist Daniel Ricardo's stricture – stick to what you do best. To read their blog in full, visit [www.vetfutures.org.uk](http://www.vetfutures.org.uk)

**CANINE MANUAL:** The *BSAVA Manual of Canine Practice* is now available at £49 for members and £79 for non-members. It aims to be the first port of call for busy practitioners faced with uncertainty over a new case. To order a copy, visit <http://bit.ly/1UJ130f>

**CORRECTION:** In a report in the July 13 edition of *Veterinary Times* we incorrectly referred to the Vets Now Brighton two-day Small Animal CPD meeting as a congress. We also stated Wendy Busby was the company's training manager, when she is head of clinical development. We apologise for any confusion.



## Owners unsure over pet hydration

A SURVEY has revealed 45 per cent of UK pet owners are unclear about how much water to give their pets, and 70 per cent wouldn't know how to tell if an animal was dehydrated.

The survey, conducted for pet product company PetSafe, also found 50 per cent of dog owners incorrectly believe panting is a sign of dehydration.

Puddle water topped the list of common things dogs like to drink other than tap water, according to 42 per cent of owners. Tea was also popular with 23 per cent of dogs and 15 per cent of cats regularly enjoying a cuppa. A quarter of cats also drank milk with owners wrongly believing it was good for them.

Other results showed 40 per cent of owners don't take water for their pets on long walks or car journeys.

David Chamberlain, veterinary consultant for PetSafe said: "The results show pet owners need to become more savvy when it comes to hydrating their pets and the types of liquids they allow their pets to drink."

He added: "Simple measures such as taking water on long car journeys and ensuring the pets have access to water after activity can make a big difference. It isn't advisable to let pets drink puddle water or even tea, and if they get enough water they shouldn't need to go looking for drinks such as these."

## Scotland to consult on shock collars

PEOPLE living in Scotland are to be asked for their views on whether the use of canine shock collars should be restricted or banned.

Rural affairs secretary Richard Lochhead has confirmed a consultation will be published within the next few months following a number of requests for electric shock and vibration collars for animals to be banned. It will seek views on the potential for tighter controls and an outright ban.

Mr Lochhead said the use of electronic training collars was an issue many people felt strongly about, with advocates on both sides citing animal welfare as their main concern.

"The options on the table will include a ban or controls on the type of collars that may be used and how they may be used – which we have seen work in other parts of the world, for example in New Zealand and in Victoria, Australia," he said.

"This consultation will give people across Scotland the chance to have an informed say on a range of options to ensure we protect the welfare of dogs."

The previous Scottish executive ran a public consultation in 2007 seeking views on whether the use or sale of electronic training devices should be prohibited or restricted.

This received 164 responses, with respondents split equally on whether electronic collars should be banned. At that time there was limited support for regulating the use or sale of such devices.

The Welsh Government banned the use of electronic training collars in March 2010, while they are also banned in Sweden, Denmark and Germany.

In 2011, Defra-funded research into the effect of remote electronic training collars found no evidence of long-term or significant harm to dog welfare, when the collars investigated were used following manufacturer's instructions.

## COWS worming guidance

**CONTROL of Worms Sustainably (COWS) has advised farmers to implement a management plan that includes monitoring cattle growth rates for weaned calves and growing cattle to reduce worm burdens.**

Andy Forbes, COWS technical representative, said: "Weaned calves and cattle under two years of age are at the greatest risk of succumbing to worm challenges.

"Daily liveweight gain for

growing cattle should average at least 0.8kg/day over the grazing season. When an animal falls below the target, or there is a loss of body condition, this may indicate worm control measures are needed to reduce the risk of the disease taking hold and growth rates being affected.

"Regular monitoring and, where possible, weighing cattle during the grazing season will help identify when animals may be in need of worming."

## Independents can 'gain the edge' by collaborating

THE future is bright for independents, according to a group of practices that has produced a five-year blueprint.

The blueprint, drawn up by a group of 30 independent practices at a think tank event, will offer Vetsure-accredited practices guidance on topics from HR to finance.

Trends in the animal health care market and opportunities for collaboration were explored during workshops delivered by Zoetis at the event. However, it is marketing, pricing and digital technologies, such as apps that monitor pet health, that are likely to give independent practices the edge over the next five years, according to Vetsure managing director Ashley Gray.

Speaking to *Veterinary Times* after the event, Mr Gray said: "Most independent practices are too small and too busy to be able to harness that kind of opportunity and so need to work more collectively as a group to develop those kinds of initiatives.

"I think most veterinary practices that have got a good business plan in place are going to probably do well, despite the intense competition out there. But to really thrive, I think you need to work more collaboratively with each other and with suppliers."

### report by

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SPVS president Nick Stuart agreed good independent practices had a great future. He also spoke about the defining characteristics of those practices.

Mr Stuart said: "Typically they will be well tuned into the local community, the practice owners are likely to be highly motivated and in a good position to give continuity of service. They are also more flexible than larger organisations and can adapt their marketing and pricing much more quickly."

### Positioning

Mr Gray said smaller practices should have a comprehensive review of their pricing structure, but often don't. Therefore, pricing strategy will form a large part of the blueprint.

Vetsure will also look at how independent practices could work together to achieve group-wide marketing.

Mr Gray said: "Vetsure Pet Insurance encourages policyholders to go selectively to Vetsure-accredited practices. They can go wherever they want to in the country, but they have lower excesses to pay if

they use accredited practices. We are looking to help independent practices by driving traffic specifically to them. That is how we see our role, helping these practices to mass market, while keeping their core brand."

Mr Gray explained pet owners valued the emotional relationship they had with their pets and wanted a similarly warm relationship with practices that were not necessarily of the corporate making.

"Having said that, there's clearly a large part of the market that wants the more corporate experience. It's about segmenting the market sufficiently and supporting our independent practices to do what they do well," he added.

Mr Gray said the independent and corporate offering was very different in nature. He said: "I think the practices we represent are fairly confident in their own positioning and understand their offering is very different to the corporate offering."

"They are perceived by the customer as being more family orientated. They have a more intimate relationship with their customers and are able to be more flexible with their customers and less confined by corporate structure. They want to focus on those potential advantages and really work on the customer experience."

→ continued from page 1

She said: "I think the new scheme has highly more marketing potential for a practice," adding that the group did not expect the Royal College to pay for all marketing costs. Individual practices will be given a tool kit outlining what they can do to publicise their achievements.

However, Kit Sturgess expressed some misgivings about central funds being used to cover the start-up costs.

"We serve all our members and if you are not part of the PSS, but see your sub-

scription money effectively promoting a colleague next door, that could put a lot of strain within the membership," he said. "We need to be careful about how we communicate that expenditure to those people who are not part of the scheme."

But Bob Moore and Dr Stephenson both countered that view, saying PSS would raise the profile of the whole profession and would benefit everyone in raising standards and the esteem in which vets were held.

At present, 2,880 veterinary premises are registered with the PSS.

### PSS modules

- Anaesthesia
- Clinical governance
- Client experience
- Dentistry
- Diagnostic imaging
- Emergency and critical care
- Infection control
- In-patient
- Out-patient care
- Laboratory and postmortem
- Medicines
- Medical records
- Nursing
- Practice team
- Out-of-hours
- Pain management
- Premises
- Surgery

## In brief

**REHOMING PONIES:** Staff at Feme Animal Sanctuary in Somerset are looking for new homes for a pair of ponies that were abandoned. The sanctuary took in Sydney after trading standards seized her and no owner could be found. She later gave birth. Mother and baby are now in excellent health. Ideally, new owners should have experience of training and keeping young horses. Anyone who can help can contact Nikki Haddock on 01460 65214.

**ANIMALS IN WAR:** A service of remembrance for animals will take place at the Animals in War Memorial in Park Lane, London on November 8 at 3pm with Pen Farthing, founder of charity Nowzad Dogs, as a special guest.

**TRANSPORT MEMORIAL:** Animals' Angels charity founder, Christa Blanke has set up an online memorial page for animals that have been transported. The hope is the online memorial, as well as honouring the individuality and dignity of the animals, will help raise awareness of potential welfare issues surrounding live transport. For more information, visit [www.animalmemorial.org](http://www.animalmemorial.org)

**CORRECTION:** The article "Update on CKD treatment" (VT45:39) included an error by the author, which we have been asked to correct. Under the heading "Use of ACEi and angiotensin receptor blockers", the text should have made clear benazepril is partially renally excreted (15 per cent), remainder in bile; and telmisartan is excreted in the faeces.

**FIT FOR PURPOSE:** Language controls for migrant EU veterinarians may have come a step closer with the end of the 10-week consultation period with Defra. The BVA has expressed its broad support for Defra's six main proposals to assist in formulating a final fit-for-purpose policy, to ensure EU vets have the necessary knowledge of English to carry out their work competently.

**WRITE FOR VT:** If you're interested in writing articles for *Veterinary Times*, email [jackiemorrison@vbd.co.uk](mailto:jackiemorrison@vbd.co.uk)



Andrew Biggs (right) with his father Peter.

## Like father like son

A CATTLE vet received BVA's most prestigious scientific award – 42 years after his father received the same accolade.

Andrew Biggs was presented with the Dalrymple Champneys Cup and Medal, which recognises work of outstanding merit that will encourage the advancement of veterinary science.

Mr Biggs was given the award at the BVA Members' Day in Edinburgh in recognition of his exemplary service, in particular, his national and international contribution to clinical practice in cattle health and welfare.

Mr Biggs said: "I have looked at the list of previous winners and that was scary – so many professors and recognisable names. I was even more proud when I saw my father had also received the award in 1973, around the time I was doing my O-levels."

Mr Biggs graduated from the University of Liverpool in 1981 and went on to develop his internationally recognised expertise in mastitis in the Devon mixed practice where he is now a partner.

Mr Biggs' depth of knowledge has led clinical practice and theory in preventing and treating mastitis: from establishing the Devon practice's mastitis laboratory that processes 1,500 samples monthly, to international speaker events and consultancy to farmers and the pharmaceutical industry.

Mr Biggs' experience in bovine TB, both in clinical practice and as a council member and past-president of the BCVA, led to him serving on the TB Eradication Group for England and the TB Programme Board for Wales as an advisor.

A founding member of the European Mastitis Panel, Mr Biggs also teaches internationally and acts as an external examiner for both undergraduates and postgraduates.

Presenting the award, then BVA president John Blackwell said: "I cannot put it better than the member of the selection committee who described Andrew as 'a spectacular practitioner'."

"Andrew is a vet's vet, combining veterinary science with the art of veterinary practice," he added.

# Dogs Trust slams 'unacceptable' stray dog figures

MORE than 47,000 dogs were abandoned by their owners in the UK last year, and more than 5,000 were subsequently euthanised, according to a Dogs Trust survey.

The Stray Dog Survey, conducted on behalf of the charity, established that between 2014 and 2015 a total of 102,363 stray and abandoned dogs were handled by UK local authorities. Of these, 47,596 remained unclaimed by their owners.

From those unclaimed animals, 5,142 had to be euthanised, a figure Dogs Trust says equates to 14 dogs a day.

Dogs Trust said in the past 12 months it has taken more than 43,000 calls across its 20 UK rehoming centres from people trying to give up their dogs.

Dogs Trust officials said it "grossed up the actual numbers reported by the responding authorities to make estimates for each TV region based on the assumption the authorities responding are representative of authorities as a whole."

The figure of 102,363 stray or abandoned dogs represents a slight drop on the previous year's figures (110,675), but still equates to 280 strays being

## report by

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found across the UK each day.

Dogs Trust chief executive Adrian Burder said: "To learn more than 47,000 unclaimed and unwanted dogs are left in council kennels should shock us as a nation of dog lovers. Abandoning a dog is simply unacceptable and, sadly, Dogs Trust's famous slogan 'A dog is for life' is as significant as ever."

He added: "This year's stray dog survey shows local authorities continue to pick up the pieces and have found themselves in the tough position of being forced to euthanise healthy dogs for lack of space and resources."

"Stray dogs that find themselves at Dogs Trust are the lucky ones, as we will care for a dog for its entire life if needed, but not all are so lucky and treating a family pet as a disposable item has to stop. Dogs Trust works tirelessly with the UK's local authorities to reduce instances of straying by offering subsidised neutering and free

microchipping. While this helps ease the pressure on council kennels, the responsibility must lie with dog owners."

Claire Horton, chairman of the Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH), which handles 250,000 rescued pets each year, said: "ADCH welcomes the Dogs Trust report."

"It reveals a striking inconsistency in stray numbers across local authority regions, indicating where the stray dog problem is at its highest."

"ADCH members work tirelessly to help reduce the problem of strays, many offering free microchipping for dogs, vaccinations and neutering, and many work directly with their local authorities to provide kennelling facilities for strays."

"While more people than ever are asking rescue centres for help directly, this report shows there will always be stray and abandoned dogs needing help and, with significant cuts in local authority dog services, it's inevitable rescue centres will be further impacted."

A total of 319 British local authorities responded to the survey, with an additional 26 authorities in Northern Ireland also submitting data.

## 5kg pyometra stuns practice team

VET April Mahoney couldn't believe the "enormous" size of the pyometra she removed from a bitch and took a photograph as proof she wasn't exaggerating.

Dr Mahoney explained Cookie presented at Kinlaun Veterinary Centre, Little Clacton, Essex during evening consultations. She had been inappetent for between two and five days, was polyuric and

polydipsic and had a distended abdomen. She said because Cookie was an unwell entire bitch, pyometra was high on the list of differential diagnoses.

"We expected an enlarged uterus based on the ultrasound and incredibly distended abdomen, however it exceeded everyone's expectations. The pyometra weighed 5kg and, following ovariohysterectomy Cookie was a slender

20kg." Dr Mahoney said. The following day Cookie was feeling her normal self and the team had no concerns at postoperative checks.

Dr Mahoney said: "Most of the vets and nurses ensured they caught a glimpse of the pyometra as no one could quite believe its size and the photograph was taken as proof. We are all very pleased to have been able to save Cookie's life."



Right: the 5kg pyometra. Inset: Dr Mahoney with Cookie at her two-week check-up.

## RCVS suspends two vets for lying over fatal dog castration

TWO veterinary surgeons have been suspended by the RCVS disciplinary committee (DC) for lying to clients and the royal college about the circumstances of a castration procedure, which led to the death of a dog.

Mpho Lesolle and Georgi Cheshmedzhiev were suspended for four and two months respectively in relation to surgery undertaken on Benson, a two-year-old male Labrador.

The committee heard that on 6 August 2013 a couple brought Benson to Swinlen Veterinary Centre in Staffordshire, where Mr Lesolle was practice principal and Mr Cheshmedzhiev his assistant, for the operation undertaken by Mr Cheshmedzhiev.

Mr Lesolle did not directly supervise

the procedure and told the committee he had been confident his colleague could carry out a castration, having permitted him to do so on previous occasions.

After the operation, a nursing assistant noticed blood on the bedding and that Benson had a swollen scrotum. Mr Lesolle performed a scrotal ablation on the dog and it was discharged later that day.

However, on the morning of 8 August, Benson was found dead. An independent postmortem concluded he had probably died of intra-abdominal bleeding, which caused circulatory collapse. His owners raised a concern with the RCVS in September 2013.

The charge against Mr Lesolle related

to his actions after the operations and during the investigation.

## Charges

The four parts of the charge were:

- He failed to be sufficiently open with the owners on the circumstances of Benson's surgery.
- In September 2013, he wrote to the royal college indicating he performed the castration, and failing to state there had been two operations.
- On 23 January 2014 he informed Pam Mosedale, a veterinary investigator employed by the RCVS, that he carried out both procedures.
- On the same day, he encouraged his veterinary nursing assistant to be dishonest with the college's investigators.

Mr Lesolle, who attended the hearing, admitted all parts of the charge.

He told the DC he decided to take responsibility for Mr Cheshmedzhiev's operation to protect his colleague, whom he regarded as vulnerable and lacking in self-confidence. He also accepted he had encouraged the nursing assistant to lie during her interview.

He told the DC he persisted with the deceit until 15 January 2015, when he gave a full account of what had occurred.

The three parts of the charge against Mr Cheshmedzhiev, who was not in attendance or represented at the hearing, were:

- In a letter to the college in Septem-

ber 2013, he indicated he had not undertaken the castration procedure on Benson.

● On 23 January 2014, while being interviewed by Pam Mosedale, he denied carrying out the operation.

● On 19 June 2014, while being interviewed by a solicitor instructed by the college, he said Mr Lesolle carried out both procedures.

The DC found the charge against Mr Lesolle amounted to serious professional misconduct.

It highlighted the protracted nature of his deceit and that he encouraged another member of staff to participate in it.

However, it accepted his motivation was to protect Mr Cheshmedzhiev.

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August 10, 2015

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

## Proposed closure of surveillance centre

**Dear editor,**  
As a group of independent practices, we oppose Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) proposal to close the Inverness Disease Surveillance Centre (DSC).

In his introduction to the Kinnaird Report, Richard Lochhead, cabinet secretary for rural affairs and the environment, stated: "I commissioned John Kinnaird to conduct this review because I felt the surveillance system could be strengthened."

It is our considered opinion closure of the Inverness DSC will have the opposite effect and lead to an almost complete eradication of surveillance for a large part of the Scottish land mass, which is home to some 25 per cent of Scottish registered agricultural holdings.

SRUC's case for closure is based on sheep and cattle postmortem submissions at the Inverness centre, but we believe this does not accurately reflect the amount of diagnostic and surveillance work at the Inverness DSC.

The Inverness DSC region is geographically distinct from areas served by others. Holdings primarily have extensive farming practices with low stock density, thus fewer disease problems are encountered. In our view, the actual number of carcass submissions is not important and leads to an erroneous judgement for closure.

Kinnaird's report introduction states "veterinary surveillance includes diagnosis of farmed and wild animals and birds", but these figures are excluded. In our opinion, surveillance is about the maintenance of vigilance – in this situation, relating to a large proportion of the Scottish mainland rather than number of submissions.

We have decided we are not prepared to carry out on-farm postmortem examinations for the purpose of disease surveillance. This decision is based on concerns regarding accurate diagnosis, lack of competence and experience, cost to the client, inadequate facilities, health and safety issues and professional indemnity.

SRUC proposes we receive two days' training. An SRUC veterinary investigation officer (VIO) receives one year's training with mentoring and is involved in postmortem examinations on an almost daily basis. As busy private vets, we believe our level of competence and experience could never match that of a VIO. Many practices in this region struggle, or are struggling, to recruit and retain veterinary surgeons willing to work in mixed practice.

We are concerned diagnosis and disease surveillance will be severely compromised and not fit for purpose under this proposal.

Section 1.9 of the report states: "An animal disease surveillance programme that is fit for purpose helps to protect the Scottish public from the effects of diseases and infections of animals. These effects can include direct threats to public health or to the economic success of the rural community and the livestock sector in particular."

The proposal to send submissions to either Thurso, Aberdeen or Perth DSCs is unworkable. Compared to other centres, the Inverness DSC has the most registered holdings in a 50km radius and the

quality of material submitted is often compromised. None of us would be confident in sending material to these alternative centres.

The third option, to build a new "PM only" facility, is only viable if VIOs and supporting scientific staff are retained. Surveillance depends on a relationship between VIOs, private veterinary surgeons and their clients. A resident VIO has knowledge and experience of disease within the whole DSC catchment area and can be alerted to changing disease patterns or the emergence of a new disease at the outset. Private veterinary surgeons would only be aware of such developments within their own practice boundary and so early detection would be lost. The benefit of a resident VIO with local knowledge is also important in the support of disease investigation for practices more remote from the DSC through telephone consultation and on-farm investigations.

It is concerning closure of Inverness DSC ignores the content of the report in section 5.34, which states "the delivery of dead or diseased animals by livestock owners to local postmortem facilities must be maintained until such time as new systems and structures can be developed and proven to be effective".

Yours faithfully,  
**GRAEME SWANSON, HAMISH MACGREGOR-ROBERTSON, DOUGLAS SWAFFIELD, CONANVET, CONON BRIDGE, KENNY JOHNSTON, COLM FARRELL, TAIN FRANCISCO MORERA-PALLARES, ABIGAIL WALKER, ANDREW RAFFERTY, JANE HARLEY, ELLIOTH CORR, GABRIELLE BERESFORD, JOANNE PATIENCE, JIM FRASER, ALICE BACON, REBECCA HOLDEN, SABRINA BRUNNER, PAUL MORRISON, JOHN DONALD, JAMIE MCLAREN, CHARLOTTE FRASER, Fraser and Fraser (Vets), Church Street, Dingwall IV15 9SB.**

## Teach and test students on dog behaviour

**Dear editor,**  
I was saddened to read the article about the vet who had sustained a facial injury following a dog bite at work.

Having been bitten myself, and being alarmed at the number of dogs presented for euthanasia after biting people, I started to work with the police, collecting data on serious dog bite incidents. I also collected data from vet students visiting my practice about their knowledge of dog behaviour and aggression, their assessment of risk to themselves, and their perception of their role as an educator.

I believe, with evidence, vet students need to be taught (and examined) in dog behaviour – both for their own well-being and to develop their public health role. Not all bites can be prevented, but helping students see the risks inherent in an ocular exam or the danger of starting a clinical exam by lifting a dog's lip, and a working knowledge of the ladder of aggression will make vets safer and smarter at work.

Such a vet will engage at first vaccination to help establish sound welfare, the importance of basic training and socialisation and, hopefully, help puppies and families start on the best possible path. Of course it makes sense to alert colleagues to a dangerous dog, but by placing a muzzle, doing our job and sending the dog home without any behavioural intervention, that dog might bite someone else and even be presented for euthanasia at some point?

Colleagues may say we don't have time in a 10-minute consult, but it doesn't take any longer than discussing flea and worming treatments – it bonds clients and may save both canine and human fatalities. Referral to a trusted behaviourist is no more time consuming than referral to an orthopaedic surgeon.

I implore vet schools and colleagues to revisit this important issue. Yours faithfully,  
**DANIELLE GREENBERG, BVSC, MRCVS, Alder Veterinary Hospital, Eaton Road, Liverpool L12 3HG.**

## Sheep worrying advice

**Dear editor,**  
We'd like to draw the attention of companion animal practitioners to a growing problem with dogs in the vicinity of sheep farms, and to call on vets to increase the awareness of dog owners.

Sheep worrying by dogs is increasing and can cause direct injuries such as bites and tears, often leading to death. It also causes problems indirectly through stress, abortion and boundary-related problems, such as physical injury from straying or going through fences.

Too few dog owners appear to understand or are able to control this natural instinct, putting sheep welfare at risk, while inducing undesirable behavioural traits in dogs. It also puts the owner at risk of compensation claims or prosecution, and even puts the dog's life in danger through it being legally shot.

Few farmers would choose to shoot someone's dog and the stress placed on the farmer experiencing damage to their sheep or having to kill or injure a dog is significant.

Sheep farmers and abattoirs are also reporting increasing numbers of liver and carcass rejections due to cases of *Cysticercus ovis* or *C. tenuicollis* – both tapeworm whose final host is the dog. These rejections lead to a considerable economic loss to the sheep industry and *Echinococcus*, with a similar life cycle, has zoonotic implications. Each tapeworm can be controlled by effective worming programmes and we would encourage all vets to advise owners of dogs that have access to sheep fields to worm dogs with a product containing praziquantel every six weeks. The dogs should not be fed uncooked meat or allowed to scavenge.

The National Sheep Association and the Sheep Veterinary Society, supported by *Farmers Guardian*, have produced a poster and invite practising vets (and anyone else with direct contact with dog owners) to download it at [www.nationalsheep.org.uk/dog-owners](http://www.nationalsheep.org.uk/dog-owners) and place it prominently in their surgeries and waiting rooms. Furthermore, we would encourage appropriate advice on dog behaviour and parasite control.

Yours faithfully,  
**PHIL STOCKER, National Sheep Association, The Sheep Centre, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6PH, and FIONA LOVATT, Sheep Veterinary Society.**

## Confidence in graduates

**Dear editor,**  
There has been a lot of discussion about new graduates and their abilities. I'd just like to add my experience to reassure and reaffirm confidence in new graduates.

In the past five years, I have taken on three new graduates. They have proved immensely capable and professional from day one. Their communication skills are excellent and their medical and surgical experience is above my expectation (and well above my own level when qualifying). All three still work for me and are moving forward with their careers into certificates and/or partnerships.

However, they do need a supportive environment. We aim to have only one new graduate a year and we try to ensure they are supported for as long as necessary.

Universities cannot possibly be responsible for delivering a programme covering every single facet of practice life – some of that will come with experience and mentoring and, as a profession, I believe we are all responsible for developing and guiding the next generation. We were all there once.

Yours faithfully,  
**CORMAC HIGGINS, MVB, MRCVS, Companion Care, Norman Road, Ashford Kent TN23 7DH.**

veterinary Times

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VBD is a member of press regulator the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). For full details, visit [www.ipso.co.uk/IPSO/](http://www.ipso.co.uk/IPSO/)

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Join the discussion | [@Official\\_VT](https://twitter.com/Official_VT) | [facebook.com/vetsonline](https://www.facebook.com/vetsonline)

Continuing the recent run of excellent letters and articles on mental health, Jo Dyer tackled perfectionist personalities

Veterinary Times – Official VT

"A brilliant & honest article by Jo Dyer on perfectionism and vets, share if you can – you never know who it'll help"

"Create environment to discuss things that went wrong & caused suboptimal outcome in an open, NO-BLAME WAY"



Michelle Duggan – [@Official\\_VT](https://twitter.com/Official_VT)

"Another great article from @Official\_VT on mental health."

"Great article by Kayleigh Barker from @RVCEquine @RoyalVetCollege in @Official\_VT #learning"

For more articles like Kayleigh's, see **Veterinary Times Equine**, which was sent to equine vets, or those with an interest in equines, with issue 29.



# Veterinary Business Development Ltd

HOME – COMPLAINTS

## Editorial 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:

- any person directly affected by the matter complained of; or
- from a representative group affected by an alleged breach of the Editors' Code that is significant and of substantial interest; or
- 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.uk.com](mailto:paulimrie@vbd.uk.com)

*VN Times:* [eileengreen@vbd.uk.com](mailto:eileengreen@vbd.uk.com)

*The Veterinary Business Journal:* [jameswestgate@vbd.uk.com](mailto:jameswestgate@vbd.uk.com)

*Animal Health Advisor:* [rebeccahubbard@vbd.uk.com](mailto:rebeccahubbard@vbd.uk.com)

*Congress Times:* [christinemoss@vbd.uk.com](mailto:christinemoss@vbd.uk.com)

Online content: [editor@vetsonline.com](mailto:editor@vetsonline.com)

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.

*Veterinary Business Development, Olympus House, Werrington Centre, Peterborough PE4 6NA  
T: 01733 325522 F: 01733 325512*

# Contributions to message boards, forums and chat rooms etc

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2. We are not involved in creating, editing or moderating, users' contributions posts to our message boards, forums and chat rooms etc. Our message boards are only a means of storing and passing on information, according to the Electronic Commerce (Directive) Regulations, and we take absolutely no legal responsibility whatsoever for any content posted there.
3. We may remove offensive posts, without the author's consent, if We receive a complaint that We, in our sole discretion, consider to be valid.
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5. With respect to 2 and 3 in this section, See our Acceptable Use Policy, below
6. If you believe you have been defamed by another user of our message boards, forums and chat rooms etc, you should click the Report Abuse button and complete the form.
7. If the Report Abuse button is missing, or does not work, contact support@vetsonline.com as soon as possible.
8. By clicking the Report Abuse button, or emailing Us about an allegedly defamatory statement, you are following our Complaints Procedure, which is set out here.

9. For examples of defamatory comments, click [here](#).
10. You may use a User Name message boards, forums and chat rooms etc. However, you accept that We may divulge Your full details – name, email address and telephone numbers – to the courts, a solicitor or any other appropriate authority, on request, if You post anything offensive, illegal or defamatory anywhere on Our site. We cannot in any way guarantee to protect Your anonymity if legal action is taken against You.
11. Material submitted by You may be published in any publication or Website produced or published by Veterinary Business Development Ltd and/or may be supplied by Us for publication by third parties at Our discretion.
12. You are over 18 years of age and You are the bill payer or have the permission of the bill payer to send Us the material.
13. Your email address and password are personal to You and You must not allow anyone else to use them.
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  6. That is in breach of the rights of any third party; or that is technically harmful (including, without limitation, computer viruses, logic bombs, Trojan horses, worms, harmful components, corrupted data or other malicious software or harmful data).
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  3. Set up any links from the Website to any other Website. Or
  4. Approach any other Users of the site or service to join or become members of any other commercial online or offline service or organisation is expressly prohibited.
  5. Restrict, affect, inhibit or otherwise limit any third party's use of the service or site other than in accordance with normal operation and following these terms of use.



3. You understand and agree that any breach of these warranties may cause Us damage and loss and You agree to indemnify Us and keep Us at all times fully indemnified from and against all claims, costs, loss or damage incurred by Us directly or indirectly as a result of any material posted by You on the Website or any use by You of the Website.
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