

Our year –
from top to toe



RCVS REVIEW 2010

1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010

Patron: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

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Collaboration and clarity

The veterinary profession is changing rapidly and dramatically, as are public expectations of, and attitudes towards, regulation. All this is happening while we continue to operate under a Veterinary Surgeons Act (VSA) which is 43 years old, and with little prospect of a new Act for several years yet. Against this backdrop, over the last few years the College has been remarkably progressive and imaginative in developing the veterinary nursing profession, the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) and the Professional Development Phase (PDP), to provide improved public assurance, elevated

standards of care for animals and enhanced professional standing. All this has been achieved without legislation, although using the College's Charter powers where we can. It is to the great credit of the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions that so many have entered these voluntary

schemes, which are in the public interest and to the benefit of animal health and welfare.

The year under review has seen 143 more practice premises enrol under the PSS, 918 veterinary nurses join the Register and another 701 new graduates enter the PDP. It is essential that the momentum of these initiatives is maintained. The PSS has further developed with the introduction of a revised and improved set of standards.

“Responsiveness to public and professional concerns has been a major theme of this year”

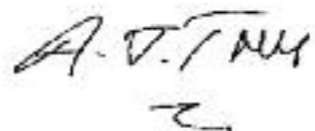
A major revision of veterinary nursing qualifications, enforced by the government's scrapping of NVQs, has been completed in an extremely short time, including extensive consultation. Progress has also been made towards implementing a disciplinary process for registered veterinary nurses in 2011. This has not been easy because of legal issues, but we remain committed to this final stage in establishing full professional status for registered veterinary nurses.

Legislative reform remains a key goal for a number of important reasons, the most pressing of which is to revise the constitution of our two statutory committees involved in investigation and adjudication. To this end, we have made a formal submission to the DEFRA Secretary of State for a Legislative Reform Order (LRO). This mechanism would enable crucial amendments to the existing VSA to allow us to create a Disciplinary Committee with a membership independent from RCVS Council.

Responsiveness to public and professional concerns has been a major theme of this year, exemplified by consultations about VN education, veterinary legislation, Extra-Mural Studies and the Practice Standards Scheme. Through our Regional Question Time meetings and 'Meet the RCVS' days at Belgravia House, we have sought to both communicate what the College is doing, and to listen to what veterinary surgeons and listed/registered veterinary nurses expect of their regulator. This feedback is important and is heeded, although I am aware that not all recognise this.

But we are also answerable to another constituency, namely, the public. This is an aspect of the College not always appreciated by our members. We are the only Royal College that is also a regulator and we discharge our statutory duties cost-effectively and in an open and fair manner, as external review and lay input have attested this year (see *RCVS News* June 2010).

There is every reason to be proud of the contribution which the veterinary profession makes to animal welfare, the production of wholesome food and to public health. It is incumbent on us all to demonstrate that, by submitting to transparent, fair and effective regulation, we benefit the society which we serve.



Sandy Trees
President

Listening and acting

For much of the past year, we have been in consultation mode. We have canvassed opinion on a wide variety of topics and presented the outcomes at the BSAVA Congress earlier this year, in an attempt to show that your views did not fall on 'deaf ears'.

Extra-Mural Studies was one area under the spotlight and, on page 6, a student member of our working party describes the review. Given that the veterinary degree doubles up as a professional qualification and an academic award, it is vital that the time spent getting work experience is properly defined and structured to meet the needs of students, employers, animals and their owners.

“We have canvassed opinion on a wide variety of topics and presented the outcomes at the BSAVA Congress earlier this year.”

Veterinary nursing is growing apace as a profession, and it is good to feature, on page 8, someone who is not only a registered veterinary nurse but also a diplomat. During the course of the year the development of the new VN qualification has also been the subject of consultation and it has been a challenge to meld a variety of strongly held views into something that fits the government's new qualifications framework, while remaining a practical proposition for the profession. The new awards will be delivered from autumn 2010.

The Practice Standards Scheme has now been in place for five years, thus it was time for its first major review. This is described on page 10 by one of the members of the Group which led

the review. There is always more to be done to raise public awareness of RCVS-accreditation but, at 50% of practice premises, the take-up within the profession is very encouraging for a voluntary scheme.

We only have limited powers to investigate, particularly with respect to the delivery of veterinary services rather than the conduct of individual veterinary surgeons. We therefore work closely with other authorities, such as Trading Standards, to ensure that the law is complied with and consumers are protected, as explained on page 12.

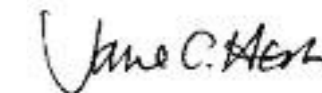
The stress of being a professional is well recognised and we are aware that as a regulator we have some responsibility for the wellbeing of those in the profession, for their own sakes as well as for the benefit of animals under their care. Questions on this important issue were therefore included in the 2010 Surveys of the Professions, to enable us to benchmark the state of wellbeing of both vets and veterinary nurses – find out more on page 14.

The feature on page 16 highlights the complementary activities of the RCVS Trust, which raises funds for a variety of projects ranging from 'blue sky' research to travel scholarships, so that members of the profession can develop their knowledge and skills.

We are grateful to the individuals featured in this *Review* for feeding back their experiences of our activities – and for being willing to be photographed in a t-shirt! Our washing-line of t-shirts on the previous page may strike you as curious, but the aim is not to wash our dirty linen in public – or yet suggest we are 'whiter

than white'. Instead, we hope to catch your attention and emphasise the link between animals and people that is inherent in all that we do.

Finally, thanks are due to all my colleagues in the College. I am particularly grateful to those who have contributed to the development of our new database, which will underpin a new website and enable us to develop a more modern and user-friendly medium for communication.



Jane C. Hern
Registrar



Seeing practice, made perfect

Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) is widely accepted as the jewel in the veterinary educational crown. But mounting student debts, changes in curricula and new approaches to delivering undergraduate education meant that, last year, the time was ripe for a review to ensure EMS remained effective and relevant. Students had a voice, and Karmen Watson, final-year student at the University of Cambridge, explains her role in the process.

At first I found it a bit daunting to attend a meeting at the RCVS – although I have had some experience of veterinary politics from my time as Secretary for the Association of Veterinary Students (AVS) and attending British Veterinary Association council meetings. However, I soon got to grips with things and realised that, as AVS rep on the Working Party, I had something to contribute. The theory of what happens during EMS and the actuality are sometimes different: we were able to offer a reality check.

“I soon got to grips with things and realised that, as AVS rep on the Working Party, I had something to contribute.”

When I heard there was going to be a review of EMS, I was really keen for there to be a student voice, and was pleased that this was achieved. The RCVS and the vet schools are interested in the academic aspects of EMS, but one of the main issues for the AVS is the financial pressure that compulsory EMS places on students. Not only can we not work during the holidays, but travel and accommodation costs soon mount up – I reckon my clinical

EMS has cost me about £1,000 a year. So I am pleased that vet schools are now being urged to seek designation of aspects of the degree as ‘long course’, to allow us to access additional student loans.

We were also keen that it was made easier for students to find and rate good quality EMS, search for practices in locations that work for them, and be aware of which practices offer accommodation. The online Find-a-Vet tool helps, but it only goes so far and I think much more could be done. However, as I got more into the review, I realised that each of the vet schools is keen to protect their database of EMS practices - it would be good if the RCVS could encourage greater co-operation. I also recognise that all practices offering EMS are committing time and resources, so this needs to be appreciated.

What advice would I give to practices taking students? Simple things like students being introduced to clients during consultations, so we feel part of things, would be good. It would also be helpful if practices were less coy about discussing money with students, as we really need to understand how practice finances work! The recommendation from the review that practices should have a named EMS co-ordinator should help a lot.

Meanwhile, we students need to strike a balance between being proactive about which calls we would like to attend and asking plenty of questions, while being mindful that we are in a busy practice environment. EMS should be seen as an opportunity to learn, rather than a sentence to be served!

While sitting on the Working Party, together with fellow student Emma Sinclair (at that time AVS President), I gained a better appreciation of how decisions are made at the College. The AVS is keen to remain involved. I also gained a much greater understanding of the broader benefits of EMS. Having just completed my finals, I can definitely say that those cases I saw in the operating theatre stayed with me longer than those I just learned about in the lecture theatre.

Want to know more about the new guidelines?
Visit www.rcvs.org.uk/ems



Other education-related activities include:

- Appointing two RCVS external examiners to oversee the University of Nottingham's School of Veterinary Medicine and Science final-year assessments so that 2011 graduates will be eligible to register as MsRCVS
- Undertaking a revisit to the University of Bristol, resulting in conditional approval being extended for two years
- Undertaking a full RCVS/European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education visitation to the Royal Veterinary College, using new joint evaluation criteria
- Updating guidance on the teaching of Veterinary Public Health
- Signing up 701 new graduates to the Professional Development Phase; 636 graduates have now completed (www.rcvs.org.uk/pdp)
- Adding 27 new Specialists to the List of RCVS Recognised Specialists, plus the first ever Emeritus Specialist
- Awarding five Diplomas of Fellowship (FRCVS), seven Diplomas and 111 Certificates
- Enrolling 629 candidates for the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice, across 78 different modules.



DipAVN – the advanced guard

In 2007, we introduced the new modular Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing (DipAVN), and 2009 saw the first cohort of diplomates under the new system. Completing the Diploma takes commitment, but brings rewards, according to Kath Richardson RVN DipAVN, Head Nurse at Bishops Veterinary Surgery in Hatfield.

I qualified in 2001 and, after six years as a fully paid up veterinary nurse, I decided I needed a fresh challenge. This coincided with the new Diploma coming on stream, which was, in retrospect, a brilliant thing: under the old system, I probably would have opted for the medical route and been stuck with that, whereas under the flexible modular system, I actually found the surgery and anaesthesia options more interesting.

“It would be good to see a greater range of universities taking up the challenge of offering modules for the Diploma.”

I enrolled at Myerscough College in Lancashire, which offers a blended learning approach. There was a mix of online coursework and residential sessions every two to three months, which were excellent for maintaining motivation and keeping in touch with other students, who came from right across the UK - Scotland to Southampton. Online notice-boards also meant we could stay in touch, although I sometimes found everyone just stressed each other out!

The course changed my nursing practice even before I was accepted, as the application

called for an essay about changes in the profession. I was so convinced by my own arguments for professional accountability that I switched from the List to the Register there and then.

Some of the students were based in Colleges and large referral practices and had a greater case-load to work with than I did. On the other hand, completing a Diploma while working in an average-sized RCVS-accredited Small Animal General Practice is entirely achievable. In fact, I had a greater breadth of experience in areas such as radiography and anaesthesia. My practice principal was very supportive too.

Accessing the right journals and text books was sometimes tricky. I was lucky in that one of my friends at the Royal Veterinary College helped me out – but I wish I had known then that RCVS Trust Library membership was free for VNs.

My final dissertation was a good example of practice-based research, as I focused on the benefits of EMLA™ (Eutectic mixture of Local Anesthetic) cream, for example, when setting up drips or taking blood. This was something I introduced into the practice as a student and I could see it worked, but it was good to gather an evidence base to understand how and why.

I have been at Bishops Veterinary Surgery for 11 years – I trained here – and I am starting to see some dogs for geriatric care that were here as puppies a decade ago! Although I am leaving shortly to go on maternity leave, I fully expect to come back in due course and continue to use my Diploma skills to help benefit the practice and my own development.

I would wholeheartedly recommend the Diploma experience to other VNs. It is time-consuming and can be challenging at times, especially when working full time, but the satisfaction in being one of a handful of veterinary nurses to complete the DipAVN is immense. It would be good to see a greater range of universities taking up the challenge of offering modules for the Diploma, giving VNs a wider range of locations and subject areas to choose from – I think the demand is certainly there.

Sadly, I won't be able to collect my Diploma at RCVS Day this year, as I will be a week away from giving birth... but I know that the staff at Myerscough are very proud of what we 'guinea pigs' have achieved.

Ready for your next challenge?
Visit www.rcvs.org.uk/DipAVN



Other VN-related activities include:

- Registering 918 new nurses
- Monitoring the uptake of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) by registered veterinary nurses for the first time. The RVNs surveyed completed an average of 28 hours' CPD in 2008: the requirement is for 45 hours over three years
- Making progress towards the full non-statutory regulation of registered veterinary nurses by laying plans for the introduction of a disciplinary system in early 2011.

And, via the RCVS Veterinary Nursing Awarding Body:

- Undertaking a major review of veterinary nurse training, including several phases of consultation, with the aim of introducing a new qualification in line with government's Qualifications and Credit Framework
- Achieving accreditation from Ofqual to deliver the new qualification
- Enrolling over 1,000 student veterinary nurses – slightly up on the previous year's figure
- Examining 2,000-plus candidates, and issuing around 900 Level 3 NVQ certificates
- Conducting more than 200 centre and veterinary nurse Training Practice visits
- Publishing three issues of *VN Standard*.



Raising the standards

The Practice Standards Scheme celebrated its fifth birthday this year, and nearly 2,500 practice premises have now joined up. To ensure the Scheme remains relevant and effective, the standards have been thoroughly overhauled by the Practice Standards Group, which includes representatives from all of the key veterinary organisations, as the British Cattle Veterinary Association's Graham Hibbert BVetMed CertBR MRCVS explains.

The relationship between practice and client is different in the farming world, compared to that with pet owners. It's more about communication, long-term relationships and input at a herd or flock level, rather than the facilities available to treat an individual animal. Economics play a big part too. But that's not to say that meeting high standards, that are rigorously assessed, is not important – particularly in areas such as medicines. In fact, farmers are used to this from farm assurance schemes. So I was delighted that, when the previous small animal-only accreditation schemes – that of the British Small Animal Veterinary Association and the British Veterinary Hospitals Association – came together to form the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS), the new Scheme embraced farm animal and equine practice.

At first, due to the heritage of the PSS, it remained quite small animal-focused. In the five-year review, we took the sensible approach of excluding standards that were only relevant for small animal practices from the list of those to be met in the farm sector – particularly in the area of facilities. We also ramped up some of the standards that are critical to practices where clients do not physically come into the building – for example, ensuring client training meetings

take place and regular newsletters are issued. Evidence of veterinary involvement in farm health planning has also been included for the first time.

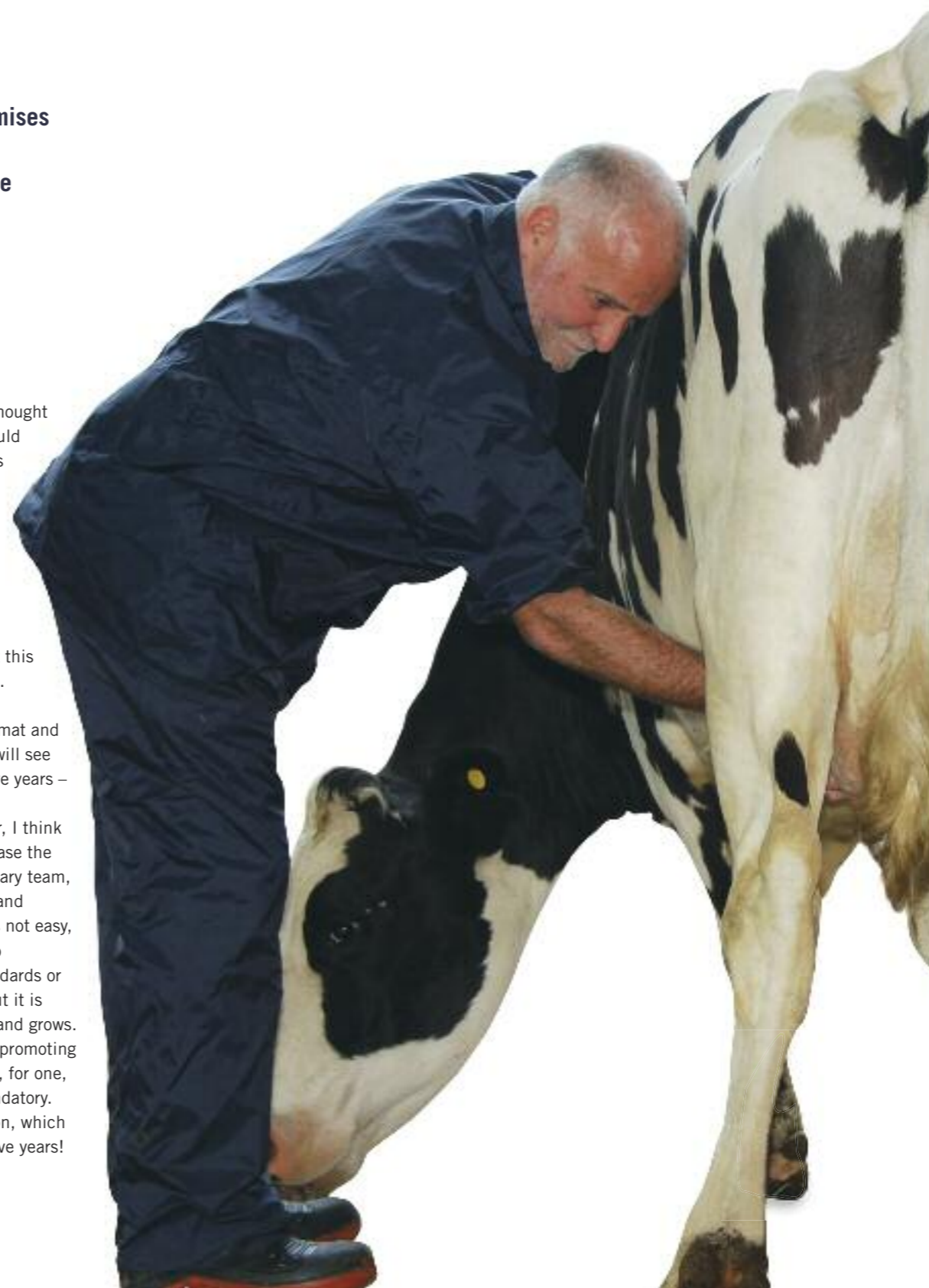
“I am confident that both the format and the content of the new Manual will see the Scheme through the next five years.”

Reviewing the standards was hard work – we literally had to go through line by line ensuring better practice was represented, as well as meeting the changing expectations of the public. I consulted with the membership of the British Cattle Veterinary Association Council who, in turn, consulted onwards with our members. Representatives from the other arms of practice did likewise with their members – so although the Scheme has the RCVS badge on it, it really belongs to all of us.

We also worked to revise the format of the Manual, so that it is easier for practices to use. The new layout brings together information previously held in several places, such as the standards, guidance and documents checklist. It's also easier to see where a standard has come from – for example, if it is a legal requirement.

The Practice Standards Group thought hard about how inspections should develop, now that the Scheme is maturing. Going forward, inspectors will put more emphasis on how protocols and procedures are implemented by those involved day to day – not just checking if the paperwork exists. The inspector team has received new training to support this – including role-playing sessions.

I am confident that both the format and the content of the new Manual will see the Scheme through the next five years – but where does it go from here? Speaking as a cattle practitioner, I think the next step should be to increase the focus on the skills of the veterinary team, and how they are implemented and communicated to clients. That's not easy, though, and somewhat harder to formulate into a neat set of standards or gather the relevant evidence. But it is vital that the Scheme develops and grows. We need to put more effort into promoting the Scheme to the public, and I, for one, would like to see it become mandatory. But that will need new legislation, which may take longer than the next five years!



Other practice-related activities include:

- Maintaining the Register of Veterinary Practice Premises which, as of 31 March, included 4,821 premises (up from 3,991 last year)
- Inviting the Veterinary Medicines Directorate's Animal Medicines Inspectors to attend Practice Standards Scheme Inspectors training days to ensure consistency of approach
- Receiving an average of approximately 25,000 hits per month for the online Find-a-Vet search tool (www.findavet.org.uk)
- Producing, following a period of detailed review and consultation, new standards for the Practice Standards Scheme, launched at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association Congress in April 2010
- Revamping the layout of the Practice Standards Manual to make it more user-friendly and a one-stop shop for guidance relating to the standards
- Promoting and encouraging enrolment to the Practice Standards Scheme, with 96 applications received during the reporting year. As of 31 March 2010, there were 2,436 accredited premises, linked to 1,272 practices (up by approximately 10% on last year).



Shaking up the fakes

Our jurisdiction is restricted to registered members. Yet from time to time people hold themselves out to be vets when they are not registered. We don't just sit back when we hear of this, but work with the relevant authorities to help bring the fakes to book. Stephanie Young, Principal Animal Health Officer for Staffordshire County Council, recounts a recent example.

I was brought up in a farming family and, having obtained formal qualifications in agriculture and worked on the farm for many years, I have always had a passion for animals. When I hear of someone who poses a serious risk to animal welfare, it really incenses me. So, when we became aware that two non-vets were running a veterinary practice, I was delighted to have the full support of the RCVS when investigating the matter.

Both we and the RCVS were initially alerted via a local dog breeder's suspicions about the competence of Olanrewaju Adebowale Oduloju and his partner Lynda Kay Lerwill Carter. They were alleged to be running a 'practice' out of unregistered domestic premises and advertising as a mobile emergency veterinary service. This meant they would meet people in their own homes in stressful situations - possibly leading to vulnerability of some clients. Mr Oduloju had also used the identity of a *bona fide* Kent-based Nigerian veterinary surgeon, in order to purchase prescription-only medicines.

Mike Hepper, RCVS Senior Case Manager, confirmed that Mr Oduloju was not a registered vet and, following a short period of surveillance, entry was gained into the premises. Mike attended, as did Pam Mosedale, who works with the RCVS as a veterinary Investigator for

the Preliminary Investigation Committee. The Police, Veterinary Medicines Directorate and UK Borders Agency were also present – a great example of joined-up working. Pam's support was vital, as from her veterinary knowledge she was able to assist in proving that Mr Oduloju was working as a vet.

Mr Oduloju and Ms Lerwill Carter were arrested and, with the help of the RCVS team, we were able to build a strong case, which is currently going through Stafford Crown Court.

Sadly, the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 is a weak piece of legislation in terms of bringing such criminals to book. Holding out as a veterinary surgeon when not qualified or registered carries only a small penalty under the Act, which is not a serious deterrent. The Act desperately needs to be updated. Meanwhile, we were able to make charges under consumer protection and unfair trading rules and the Fraud Act 2006, which carry much stiffer sentences, including imprisonment.

Every Local Authority has an Animal Health team. The majority of our work is based around farm animals, ensuring that we have traceability of livestock for disease control purposes. Officers regularly make checks that identification, transport and welfare

regulations are being met at farms, livestock markets and abattoirs, and ensure that animal by-products rules are adhered to. We also check that food and feed hygiene controls are being met, and deal with illegal landings (for rabies control). We work closely with veterinary surgeons in the Animal Health agency for invaluable expert opinion.

“Thankfully, fake vet cases are few and far between.”

Thankfully, fake vet cases are few and far between, but the sense of achievement when we catch someone is great. As Vice-Chairperson of the LACORS (Local Authority Coordinators for Regulatory Services) National Animal Health and Welfare Panel, I am in touch with Animal Health Officers in other authorities. Most are aware of the role of the RCVS and I would encourage them to contact the College if they come across a potentially bogus vet. Likewise, if someone finds something which makes them suspicious that a purported veterinary surgeon is not properly qualified and registered, they should not hesitate to contact their local animal health team, as well as the College.

For more information about our regulatory role, visit www.rcvs.org.uk/disciplinary



Other complaints- and guidance-related activities include:

- Commissioning an external review of the complaints and disciplinary systems, the results of which endorsed our current procedures
- Handling 739 complaints made about veterinary surgeons and undertaking an increased number of investigatory visits to veterinary practices and interviews with veterinary surgeons (see *RCVS Facts* www.rcvs.org.uk/facts)
- Publishing new guidance for veterinary investigations, and thresholds guidance to give an indication of how complaints have been dealt with in the past
- Putting 12 separate cases before the Disciplinary Committee (DC)
- Revising guidance for DC members
- Publishing Advice Notes on a number of topics, including whistleblowing, the pre-purchase examination of horses, and unregistered overseas veterinary surgeons working in the UK (www.rcvs.org.uk/advicenotes)
- Annual meetings with the Home Office and the Laboratory Animals Veterinary Association, DEFRA and the Veterinary Medicines Directorate
- Updating the *Guides to Professional Conduct* for veterinary surgeons and registered veterinary nurses.



Stressing the need for an evidence base

Sadly, suicide as a cause of death in the veterinary profession is four times more common than in the population at large. But why is this, and what can be done to improve levels of mental health and wellbeing? David Bartram BVetMed FRCVS explains his work in this area and how this year's RCVS Surveys of the Professions have played a part.

I first became interested in the issue of mental health and well-being six months after our ten-year reunion at the Royal Veterinary College, when I discovered that a colleague from our year had killed herself. It has been known for some time that suicide rates are comparatively high among veterinary surgeons, but there was no evidence base to explain why, or to help to understand how the issue might be tackled.

So, I started to juggle working full-time in industry with studying towards an RCVS Fellowship looking into the issue. I carried out a cross-sectional survey of the profession to assess whether poor mental health might be contributing to the profession's elevated suicide rate, alongside the ready access to, and knowledge of, lethal means. I found that symptoms of anxiety and depression and recent suicidal thoughts were more prevalent than in the general population.

On gaining my Fellowship last year, I decided to pursue part-time postgraduate research at the University of Southampton's School of Medicine. There are four elements to this: further analysis of the data from my Fellowship survey; a review of the information in Coroners' reports from several veterinary suicides in a specific region of England; a series of over 80 phone interviews with vets identified in my original survey as having had recent suicidal thoughts; and, the study of data

gathered in January as part of the RCVS Surveys of the Veterinary and Veterinary Nursing Professions, using the set of questions known as the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS).

"I believe it's critical for animal welfare, the public and the profession that we attempt to identify and reduce the causes of stress which have a major impact on vets' professional performance and personal lives."

WEMWBS is a valid and reliable measure of mental wellbeing at the level of populations, not individuals. Among vets, the score correlated with anxiety and depressive symptoms and other scales used in my original survey, so it is a good indicator of overall mental health. All data in the RCVS surveys were gathered anonymously and the results will help to inform the development of initiatives with the potential to improve mental health and wellbeing.

As a Director of the Veterinary Benevolent Fund, I believe it's critical for animal welfare, the public and the profession that we attempt to identify and reduce the causes of stress which have a major impact on vets' professional performance and

personal lives. The College is, through its disciplinary system, a potential cause of stress. So it's good that it recognises its responsibilities – not just through monitoring population-level mental wellbeing in its recent surveys, but by supporting the Veterinary Surgeons' Health Support Programme and Vet Helpline. In addition, the Practice Standards Scheme now draws attention to legal requirements to include attention to potential sources of work-related stress in health and safety risk assessments.

In the future, something likely to have an even greater impact on some vets with poor mental health will be the College's proposed Health Protocol. This will allow veterinary surgeons about whom complaints have been made, and who have mental health problems, to regain their fitness to practise away from the full public glare of the disciplinary system. Mental health-related problems are illnesses that require medical care and empathetic emotional support to facilitate rehabilitation and a return to effective working. It will be interesting to see, via data gathered in subsequent RCVS surveys, whether the widening range of initiatives to support mental health and wellbeing in the profession may be having a positive effect.

Look out for the full survey results over the summer at www.rcvs.org.uk/surveys



Other communications-related activities include:

- Launching a campaign to encourage animal owners to plan for potential emergencies by being aware of how to access 24-hour cover
- Instigating the development of a new, more interactive website
- Attending BVNA and BSAVA Congresses and, for the first time, the London Vet Show
- Launching a *Guide to Professional Conduct* quiz to test veterinary surgeons' knowledge of professional conduct issues
- Posting 132 items of Latest News, together with press releases, features and regular columns in the media
- Responding to seven consultations
- Hosting three Regional Question Times, five Meet the RCVS days, four parliamentary functions, student meetings at all vet schools, the Share Jones Lecture and RCVS Day
- Publishing three issues of *RCVS News* and two *RCVS News Extras*
- Encouraging votes in the RCVS Council elections with donations made on behalf of voters, a special area on www.vetsurgeon.org and a new text message voting option
- Producing a popular 'z-card' to highlight ten common areas of complaint.



Cool running

What's your idea of a challenge? Running the marathon? Raising £2,500? Completing a Certificate? All of the above? Noelle Lowry BVSc Cert EM(Stud) MRCVS, of Twemlows Hall Stud Farm in Shropshire, managed the hat-trick last year, and benefited the RCVS Trust in the process.

In November 2008, a group of ten of us had just come back from completing the New York marathon for a children's charity set up by a friend. We were all fired up and wanted to have a go at London – but it's notoriously difficult to secure a place. Pretty much the next day, *RCVS News* landed on my doormat and there was an invitation from the Trust for someone to run the London marathon for them. Perfect. I jumped at the chance to run for a charity a bit closer to home, and was lucky enough to be picked.

"I would encourage others to get involved with the Trust, either with raising funds, or putting it to good use – or preferably both!"

That left me with about five months to keep up the training and raise some money – I had to raise a minimum of £1,500 – and both were challenging in different ways. I was working full time in an equine practice then, and it was not always easy to fit my training around practice life, particularly during stud season. I was also working towards my Certificate in Equine Medicine (Stud Medicine) which was pretty time-consuming. Running when on call was the most tricky – I had to plan my route so that I was never

more than five minutes from my car, which is not easy when you need to clock up the miles!

I managed to raise all my money from sponsorship – I got over £2,500 in total. My Mum and her friends dug deep, which was great, and fellow vets were always generous when I explained that I was running for the Trust and how it was committed to supporting veterinary research that benefits animal health and welfare.

Although I have not benefited from a Trust grant, I found the Library – both in London and online – very useful when studying for my Certificate. I was really impressed when I attended the Trust's summer reception last year and met various grant holders: there was such enthusiasm for research from those outside of the traditional academic setting. It would be good for that know-how to be shared with others in the same boat. It was also really satisfying to see where all those hard-won funds were going. I would encourage others to get involved with the Trust, either with raising funds, or putting it to good use – or preferably both!

I believe that it is important for vets in practice to be able to access financial support to carry out research, such as that offered by the Trust. There is fascinating work to be done out in the field. For

example, where I work, we have a base of 80 recipient mares for embryo transfer (ET), and a throughput of over 300 mares for AI and ET, offering a wealth of data to be collected and analysed to help advance the science of equine reproduction. Being able to access funding from a body such as the RCVS Trust would be really useful.

My London marathon time was four hours 26 minutes – knocking nearly half an hour off my time for New York, which I was pleased with. My next challenge is Berlin in September, where I would like to crack the four-hour barrier. I would also like to enrol for the Diploma in Equine Stud Medicine, but that would also be a marathon effort, and might just be a challenge for another year.

Get involved with the Trust, visit:
www.rcvstrust.org.uk



Other Trust-related activities include:

- Awarding 61 new grants to a value of £243,393 for Blue Sky Research, Small Grants, Travel Scholarships and EMS awards
- Receiving over 300 applications to the 2010 grants round, an increase of 54% on 2009 applications
- Enabling two recent graduates to attend the 2009 British Veterinary Association Congress
- Recruiting three new Trustees, including a library expert
- Increasing the number of Library members to 10% of practising veterinary surgeons, welcoming 165 new individual members
- Providing 450 subject alerts, giving subscribers detail of the latest information published in their area of interest
- Supplying over 1,500 photocopies of articles from Library stock and obtaining 385 articles for Library members from the British Library
- Working with veterinary organisations to promote the benefits of Library membership for continuing professional development and research
- Carrying out a review of Trust strategy to inform future developments.



RCVS COUNCIL

3 July 2009 – 2 July 2010

RCVS Council comprises 24 elected members, two appointees from each of the six UK veterinary schools and four persons appointed by the Privy Council, as specified in the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966.

Elected Members	Attendance	Appointed Members	Attendance
Christopher Chesney MRCVS	3/3	Alistair Barr MRCVS (B)	3/3
Beverley Cottrell MRCVS	3/3	Malcolm Bennett MRCVS (Lv)	3/3
Sheila Crispin FRCVS	3/3	Alison Bruce (G)	3/3
Jerry Davies MRCVS	3/3	Caroline Freedman (E)	3/3
Roger Eddy FRCVS	3/3	Michael Hertage MRCVS (C)	3/3
Mark Elliott MRCVS	2/3	Duncan Maskell (C)	2/3
Bertie Ellis MRCVS	2/2	Stephen May FRCVS (Ln)	3/3
Catherine Goldie MRCVS	3/3	Quintin McKellar MRCVS (Ln)	3/3
Neil Gorman FRCVS	3/3	Joanna Price MRCVS (B)	2/2
Chris Gray MRCVS	2/2	Stuart Reid MRCVS (G)	3/3
Charles Gruchy MRCVS	3/3	Sandy Trees MRCVS (Lv)	3/3
Lynne Hill MRCVS	2/3	Elaine Watson FRCVS (E)	3/3
Peter Jinman MRCVS	3/3		
Barry Johnson MRCVS	3/3	Privy Council Appointed Members	
Jacqui Molyneux MRCVS	3/3	Richard Davis	2/2
Bob Moore MRCVS	3/3	Nigel Gibbens MRCVS	3/3
Jill Nute MRCVS	3/3	Martyn Jones MP	2/3
Bob Partridge MRCVS	3/3	Barbara Saunders	3/3
Christine Shield MRCVS	3/3		
Geoffrey Skerritt FRCVS	2/3		
Richard Stephenson MRCVS	3/3		
Clare Tapsfield-Wright MRCVS	3/3		
Chris Tufnell MRCVS	2/2		
Bradley Viner MRCVS	3/3		

Note: Universities: B = Bristol, C = Cambridge, E = Edinburgh, G = Glasgow, Lv = Liverpool, Ln = London.

3/3 = attendance at Council meetings during the year under review, ie. 01/04/09 – 31/03/10 (denominator indicates total number of possible meetings for each Council Member).

VN COUNCIL

3 July 2009 – 2 July 2010

VN Council comprises eight elected veterinary nurses, six appointed veterinary surgeons (including three from RCVS Council), two lay members and one Lantra representative.

Elected Members	Attendance
Elizabeth Branscombe RVN	3/3
Dot Creighton RVN	3/3
Louise Glysen RVN	2/2
Andrea Jeffery RVN	3/3
Katherine Kissick RVN	3/3
Hilary Orpet RVN	3/3
Sophie Pullen RVN	2/3
Jennifer Thompson RVN	3/3
Josephine Yates RVN	3/3
Appointed Members	Attendance
Anthony Birbeck	2/3
Catherine Goldie MRCVS	3/3
Richard Hooker MRCVS	2/3
Christopher House MRCVS (Lantra)	2/2
Alan Hughes MRCVS	2/3
Jacqui Molyneux MRCVS	3/3
Jill Nute MRCVS	3/3
Penelope Swindlehurst	2/3
Helen Torrington MRCVS	3/3

PERMANENT STAFF

AS AT 31 MARCH 2010

Annette Amato	Libby Earle	Gordon Hockey	Jordan Nicholls
Freda Andrews	Janet Etheridge	Richard Holford	Jenny Orme
Duncan Ash	Lesley Evans	Ian Holloway	Marilyn Pablo
Emma Baxter	Lucy Evans	Judith Hylton	Nicola Page
Clare Boulton	Eleanor Ferguson	Christine James	Vivienne Pankhurst
Gabriella Braun	Christine Fraser	Anne Jermey	Stephanie Platt
Dorothy Brereton	Esther Gent	Lo Kei Kwok	Thelma Rees
Paulette Brown	Jeff Gill	Lizzie Lockett	Alison Rengert
Cherry Bushell	Janet Gordon-Jones	Rupa Makwana	Anthony Roberts
Mike Byrne	Andrew Grainger	Corrie McCann	Liz Troman
John Collins	Pam Greening	Alison McClary	Danielle van den Berg
Helen Cook	Fiona Harcourt*	Laura McClintock	Martyn Webster
Britta Crawford	Jenny Harris	Claire Millington	Sue Whall
Ashley Doorly	Victoria Hedges	Christopher Murdoch	Juliet Whatley
Myai Du	Michael Hepper	Ben Myring	Tom Winters
Julie Dugmore	Jane Hern	Sandra Neary	Amy Woods

*on maternity leave

Special thanks to all those who agreed to be featured in this RCVS Review, for giving up their time and for their patience; thank you also to those who allowed us to take photographs on their premises.

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