

# Community Engagement Newsletter



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Veterinary Science

Autumn: May 2015



## Community engagement = fun in the sun

Dr Adél de Haast (veterinarian)



An OP student attending to a sick animal

We collaborate with the South African Veterinary Association Community Veterinary Clinics (SAVA-CVC) on these community engagement activities, as they provide the small animal vaccinations and deworming material. Every second week, the SAVA-CVC staff join us at our two venues to serve the pet owners and treat patients. They also offer the owners sterilisation at a minimal price.

Once our vehicle is packed with all the equipment and enthusiasm we need, we are off to our first stop at Ratjiepan

Being a veterinarian means also taking responsibility for community engagement. A typical community engagement day starts at 07:00. There is no time to waste once you arrive at Onderstepoort, because pet owners are waiting anxiously for our weekly visit to Makapanstad and Ratjiepan in North West.

Clinic, which is about 40 minutes' drive from Onderstepoort. Before we arrive at our first stop, pet owners stop us along the road. We stop for all of them, as long as it is on the way. Jerry is a regular on our route and he usually rewards us with some pomegranates from his tree. After helping all the patients along the road, we continue to the first stop where many patients have been waiting for us from as early as 06:00 in the morning. We treat all sick animals at the stop and follow farmers to their smallholdings to treat sick cattle. This is where it really gets

interesting. When we struggle to catch a cow, veterinary science students and cattle owners have to chase and rope her like cowboys until she falls. When she falls, I shout, "Jump on her!" and the students sit on her until the examination is complete.

Common problems that we see include foot problems, abscesses, pneumonia, protein energy malnutrition (PEM) and rumen problems. The rumen is an organ that ferments ingested plant material before the stomach digests it. Sometimes,

a rumenotomy is required in the veld, which is always very exciting. The problem with most of these cases is that treatment cannot be followed up. You sometimes feel like a syringe ambulance, because time and money only allow injections.

This makes the job a bit frustrating, but the best reward is the immense appreciation we always get from clients who wait patiently for our arrival every week. Community engagement is not for the faint hearted!



*During the project, veterinary science students also treat cattle and educate cattle farmers about good cattle health*

## I want be a vet weekend

Informing learners about the study programmes at the Faculty of Veterinary Science is a crucial part of recruiting new students. With the help of Faculty staff members, the 2015 Onderstepoort Veterinary and Para-Veterinary Student Committee (OPVSC) successfully presented the fifth annual "I want to be a vet" weekend from 13 to 15 March 2015.

Some 40 learners from nine provinces participated in this initiative. The purpose of this initiative is to stimulate the prospective students' interest in the veterinary science profession and to increase the number of students of colour to ensure that the student body will ultimately reflect national demographics.

The top learners from previously disadvantaged schools across the country arrived on campus on Friday 13 March 2015. They were warmly welcomed by Prof Darrell Abernethy, the Dean of the Faculty. Prof Linda van Ryneveld, the Faculty's Director: Teaching and Learning, also addressed the learners and clearly explained what the National Benchmark Test (NBT) entails and emphasised the advantage of applying on time.

Lesego Teffu (Public Relations Officer)



*The beagles that are housed at Onderstepoort helped learners learn valuable animal training and handling skills*



**Dr Quixi Sonntag leads a dog behaviour session**

On Saturday, the learners donned overalls and gumboots and were introduced to basic skills of handling different animals, which included grooming horses, effectively identifying sheep, as well as approaching cattle without injuring themselves or the animals. The learners had lots of fun during the puppy training and dog behaviour



**During the weekend, learners had fun learning more about what it means to become a veterinarian**

sessions, which were led by Dr Quixi Sonntag, a specialist in behavioural studies from the Onderstepoort Veterinary Animal Hospital (OVAH).

The support of the weekend's sponsors, Hills Pet South Africa and Hollard Life, made a positive contribution to the success

of this event. The learners thoroughly enjoyed this experience, which was something they have never experienced before. The Faculty hopes that these learners would become tomorrow's young vets. The following story shows how much the learners enjoyed their visit to the Faculty.

## Thato sets his sights on veterinary science

Thato Maile is a Grade 6 learner from Soshanguve and is a pupil at the Fred Margarde Primary School. He attended the Faculty's Open Day because he loves animals, particularly dogs.

The 10-year-old Thato's name means "love" in Setswana. He enjoys observing and handling pet dogs in order to see their behavioural patterns.

According to his parents, Cynthia and Samuel Maile, he already has an extensive knowledge of various animals and has been avidly learning about them since the age of two.

He is an aspiring veterinarian and was thrilled to experience an inspiring environment with such advanced facilities. He particularly loved the beagle area and was ecstatic when he was greeted by so many beagles. If his enthusiasm is any indication, he will definitely be seen on this campus one day.



**Thato Maile (middle), with his mother, Cynthia (right), and Rirhandzu Golele (left), has set his sights on becoming a veterinarian**

## MEETING

A Community Engagement Committee meeting will be held on Monday 27 July 2015 at 13:30.

# Reality and wonder meet

Dr Louise Biggs (Veterinarian)

Dawn. A word many only associate with a warm bed. For our final-year Onderstepoort students (and the clinician at the Hluvukani Animal Health Clinic) it is associated with arrival at the clinic.

The day actually starts at 4:00. It is still dark but the air is already balmy; the only sounds being that of the crickets and our lion brothers who regularly have an early morning chat. At 5:00 we are already on our way to the clinic from the Hans Hoheisen Wildlife Research Station situated in the Kruger National Park. The first 7 km through the park are a slow, beautiful and often very exciting drive. Some mornings the wildlife we are privileged enough to share our world with are nowhere to be seen on that short stretch of tar road, but on other mornings the lion brothers can be seen escorting their lionesses and cubs across the road or simply snoozing.

The next 15 km are a little faster, but we do have a bumpy ride going past the Welverdiend village to get to the clinic which is situated in the Hluvukani village. By that time, the sky is lightening; streaked with pink. Upon arrival at the clinic at 5:30 we, are first greeted enthusiastically by Lady, our clinic dog, and then there is a hustle and bustle – changing into greens and putting stock into the ambulance (the trusty 4X4 Toyota). Our valued Environmental Monitors (EMs) arrive and then it is time to head to the diptanks. We hear cow bells in the still morning air, the crack of whips as they break the sound barrier and cattle calling to one another. The diptanks is a system put in place for Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) surveillance and is our first port of call every morning. We visit 20 in a month and attend to any cases we are asked to look at. We then head off to do large animal call-outs and finally stop off at the clinic to take care of our small animal cases.

By the time we are done with our ambulance calls, the air is hot and stifling. Vast quantities of water are consumed by all. Yet each time I have a long drink of cool, refreshing water, I am reminded how blessed we are to be able to do just that.

The final-year veterinary science students also present talks at schools, spend time with farmers and interact with medical students during the project. We mainly focus on One Health and interaction with the local community. These are both essential parts of the veterinary science students' experience at Hluvukani.

We are also faced with many daily challenges including punctures, language barriers, the heat, water and electricity problems,



*Dawn at the Hluvukani Animal Health Clinic*



*The students talk to farmers about animal health*

and limited resources, but these are met with enthusiasm and determination and there is always a back-up plan!

Hluvukani translated into English means “to develop”, which is very appropriate and fitting. Everyone who comes here leaves a little different, a little wiser, a little more developed and shares a part of themselves with the community in return... so inkomu (thank you) and sala kahle (stay well).

## DONATIONS:

All donations received will be used for community engagement purposes, specifically in less-fortunate communities. Please contact one of the following people if you would like to donate money, dog food, collars, leashes, blankets or your time:

Dr Rebone Moerane

012 529 8464

Sr Sarah Johnson

012 529 8387

Mr Eugene Machimana

012 529 8100

Chairperson: Community Engagement Committee

Liaison and Communication

Community Engagement Coordinator

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# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS: 2015

DEPARTMENT	REPRESENTATIVE	SECUNDUS
Dean	Prof Darrell Abernethy	Prof Linda van Ryneveld
Director: Clinical Services (ex officio)	Dr Henry Annandale	***
Community Engagement Chairperson	Dr Rebone Moerane	***
Community Engagement Coordinator	Mr Eugene Machimana	***
Veterinary Anatomy and Physiology	Prof Roy Meintjes	Prof Herman Groenewald
Companion Animal Clinical Studies (CACS)	Dr Quixi Sonntag	Prof Brighton Dzikiti
Paraclinical Sciences	Dr Nenene Qekwana	***
Production Animal Studies (PAS)	Dr Adel de Haast	Dr Dawie Blignaut
Veterinary Tropical Diseases	Mr Jacques Van Rooyen	Dr Hein Stoltz
Veterinary Wildlife Studies	Dr Louise Biggs	***
Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital (OVAH)	Sr Sarah Johnson	Sr Amanda Hamman
Veterinary nursing	Sr Leske Venter	Sr Ester Botha
Community Veterinary Clinics (CVC)	Mr Vhonani Manenzhe	***
Postgraduate students (PGSA)	Mr Albert Maputle	***
Undergraduate students (OPVSC)	Mr Mosison Mbethe	Ms Rudel Zowitsky

\*\*\* No secundus

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Event	Venue	Date
Production Animal Outreach Clinic	Makapanstad and Ratjiepan Project	Wednesdays
Mamelodi Animal Health Care (MAHC)	Mamelodi Campus	Mondays to Fridays
Loate Community Veterinary Clinic	Winterveldt	Twice a month on Wednesdays



### DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO PUBLISH?

The Community Engagement Committee invites you to submit short articles to be published in the next Community Engagement Newsletter (Winter 2015). The article should not be more than one page long. Contact person:

Eugene Machimana  
Tel: 012 529 8100 (w)  
Email: eugene.machimana@up.ac.za

Visit the UP Community Engagement website regularly for updates about projects and funding opportunities.