

# Community Engagement Newsletter



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

## Faculty of Veterinary Science

Autumn: May 2016



## Putting theory into practice: a three-days hands-on at Makapanstad

Dr Khoboso Lehloenya

A group of 125 veterinary science students had first-hand experience of handling farm animals without the aid of standard animal handling facilities at Makapanstad village over three days (3 to 5 February 2016). The group was led by Dr Khoboso C. Lehloenya (their lecturer from the University of Pretoria), along with Mmatjie Maime (Chief Animal Health Technician) and Masethe Maime (Extension Advisors) from the Department of Rural, Environment and Agricultural Development in Makapanstad. Makapanstad falls under Moretele Local Municipality in the eastern part of North West.

Most small-scale/emerging livestock farmers experience low production, mainly as a result of poor animal health and husbandry practices. This has encouraged the University of Pretoria's veterinary science students to join a campaign aimed at raising awareness among small-scale livestock farmers about the importance of utilising primary animal health care and routine husbandry practices for improved animal production.

The Department of Rural, Environment and Agricultural Development (READ) in Makapanstad in collaboration with the University of Pretoria encourage farmers in this area to take preventative measures to ensure acceptable animal health and production. This is achieved through regular visits to the village and neighbouring small-scale farms by a qualified animal technician from READ who executes regulated animal health



*A group of veterinary science students lend small-scale livestock farmers a hand in Makapanstad*



*Veterinary science students gain practical experience with livestock*

activities and renders support services to the State Veterinarian. The farmers are also advised to dip and dose their animals to control external and internal parasites. In addition, the technician from READ helps the farmers to vaccinate their livestock against diseases and collects blood for brucellosis tests.

During the most recent session, the students visited four farms in three villages (Norokie, Mmatlhwaela and Lekgolo) where they handled 679 cattle and 175 goats. They vaccinated the cattle against lumpy skin disease, black quarter, anthrax and botulism. The goats were vaccinated against pulpy kidney disease and treated for external and internal

parasites. The students also dehorned, branded and ear tagged 135 calves and bled 96 breeding cows to test them for brucellosis.

Besides gaining practical experience in vaccinating, bleeding, branding and ear tagging animals, the students also had the opportunity to hear about the challenges emerging farmers face and could render advice where possible. Of the four farms visited, only one seemed to have animals with health problems such as lumpy skin disease. All the farmers were appreciative of the assistance and work performed by the University of Pretoria veterinary science students.

## MEETING

Community Engagement Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, 5 May 2016 @ 13h30.

# A great learning experience at the Mamelodi Animal Health Clinic (MAHC)

Trishantha Govender (BVSc IV)

MAHC is an ongoing community engagement initiative based on the Mamelodi Campus of the University of Pretoria. It was a great privilege for me to be able to spend some time at MAHC recently under the guidance of veterinarian Dr Jeanne Rudman. MAHC focuses on primary animal health care and relies on 'word of mouth' advertising to ensure a steady stream of new and existing clients and patients.

The busiest time at MAHC is the beginning of each month when pet owners are able to afford treatment for their pets. Animals are brought in mainly for vaccinations, deworming and free dipping, as well as for the treatment of diseases such as Parvo virus and Babesia. Parvo virus in dogs is extremely prevalent in the area especially in the summer months, and many of the pet owners who regularly visit the clinic now vaccinate their pups and dogs very conscientiously, having had first-hand experience of this devastating and often lethal disease.

Babesia (tick fever) is also very prevalent among dogs in Mamelodi. This tick-borne disease is potentially fatal if left untreated as the dogs' red blood cells are destroyed by the babesia parasite. Fortunately, the free dipping offered at the clinic goes a long way to ensure that many potential victims remain tick (and flea) free and healthy. It was wonderful to see so many people come in everyday – some walking very far to dip their dogs. While clients visit the clinic, they are also educated about the advantages of sterilising their pets, and sterilisations are performed regularly as a result of this.



*MAHC brings primary animal health care to Mamelodi*



*Trishantha lends her time to MAHC and learns some useful skills.*

I have learnt so much from Dr Rudman in the weeks that I spent at MAHC. My confidence in my knowledge and the ability to communicate effectively with pet owners regarding the need for preventative medicine, as well as prompt disease treatment has improved dramatically. Dr Rudman's willingness to teach and her passion for her job is very inspiring. Having worked at MAHC for a couple of years now, Dr Rudman has developed a strong relationship with the

clients who visit the clinic on a regular basis. Trust is very important in this community, and the people who keep coming back do so because they trust Dr Rudman and know that the money that they spend on treatment isn't wasted but keeps their pets healthy.

I thoroughly enjoyed chatting to the owners and seeing how proud they were of their animals. Many of the people who visited the clinic clearly wanted advice on

how to further improve their pet care. There were even a few incidents where dogs were brought in by people who had rescued them from ill-treatment or had found them in rubbish bins. The compassion shown towards these animals reminded me of one of the reasons I wanted to become a vet.

My time spent at MAHC was a very humbling and rewarding experience indeed.



**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  
Small Animal Section Head & Referrals Co-ordinator  
Community Engagement Coordinator

rebone.moerane@up.ac.za  
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## Vet books for Africa: a drive for change

Jessica Borrageiro (IVSA Media Representative)

When eight diverse veterinary students, two Isuzu double-cabs and eight countries are combined, magic transpires. This magic has drawn students to this venture for over 20 years and now it falls to us to keep the flame alight.

It is this very flame that has changed a group of indecisive, young, naïve students into the determined, ambitious and compassionate team we now are.

Initially, we thought the Vet Books for Africa (VB4A) cause, although of great importance, was of little reach. However, we have been massively humbled since by the enormity of the project that we have stepped into.

It is truly an honour to continue a legacy that has held it is own for over 23 dynamic years.

Without our asking, organisations as far away as Britain have offered their support,

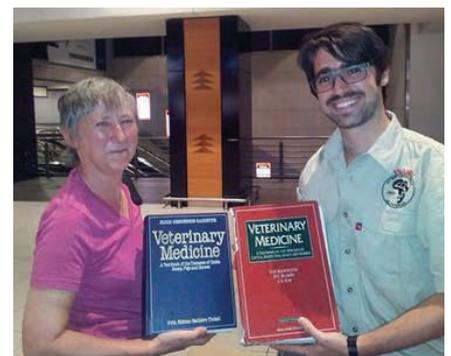
both material and financial, while over and over companies and organisations we have contacted have recognised the name and the cause that is associated with it. To be part of the VB4A team is to be part of something bigger than ourselves, bigger than our campus and bigger than the South African veterinarian fraternity. It is essentially to be part of the veterinary science network that permeates through our continent and beyond it.

VB4A is a drive for change. The organisation was established 23 years ago when the students of the Onderstepoort campus saw the need to uplift veterinary education and animal healthcare in Africa and establish relationships with other faculties similar to the Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Pretoria, allowing the advancement of research.

This need has, to a great extent, been amended by the sourcing and donating of veterinary-related academic text books, which have been delivered to the veterinary universities in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi and Uganda biennially since the project's establishment in 1993.

developed, and as such their needs have changed. It is only appropriate that we do the same to ensure that the demands of the new world can be addressed. This year's journey will include the sourcing and delivering of donated medical equipment, laptops and non-prescription medicines to the universities, as well as manual support in the form of labour and required donations to six charities en-route.

As we enter our second year of preparation for this cross-continent journey, our hearts are alight for the things to come. We will continue knocking on donors' doors,



*VB4A collects veterinary-related academic text books for countries in Africa*



*Veterinary science students raise funds and awareness for the VB4A project*

Over the last two decades, African countries and their universities have grown and

organising events, planning routes and raising the required funds that a journey extending through eight countries and totalling a distance of over 14 000 km costs.

VB4A is an altogether costly project that requires a lot of time to organise and fundraise, but the enriching experience it provides and the opportunity to uplift the veterinary field and contribute to charities along the way remains uncontested. In the meantime, I stand content at how we have changed, hopeful for the change we will make and expectant for the change it will bring about in us.

*“There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged to find the ways in which you yourself have altered”*

*– Nelson Mandela.*

## What it all comes down to

Andrea Klingelhoefter and Andrea Grunewald (BVSc IV)

In the two weeks that we worked at Hluvukani Animal Health Clinic (HAHC), we saw an astounding 95 clinical cases. This rotation provided us with an exceptional opportunity to gain hands-on experience that we could not find anywhere else.

Our clinician, Dr Louise Biggs, runs HAHC like a well-oiled machine. Everything, from the record keeping to the treatment of patients, is perfect. There is no doubt that without her fierce dedication to HAHC and her wonderful manner of teaching students, we would not have gained half as much from the experience as we did.

During our stay, we soon realised that this clinical rotation is about more than just student training. Before HAHC was established, the people of Hluvukani had no access to animal care other than the basic primary animal health services provided by the government. If one of their animals became really sick, they would have to travel to Hoedspruit or Casteel to obtain veterinary care. That was not a feasible option to most people in this rural community.

An incredible thing that we came to understand is how valuable individual animals are in a rural community such as Hluvukani, as opposed to large commercial farms. If given the means, livestock owners would do almost anything to save their animals. The cultural importance of cattle in this community is immense, and the losses that diseases bring about are greater than can be imagined.

Through the remarkable HAHC, people have access to veterinary care and products such as milk replacers, supplementary feeds and dips. Furthermore, talks delivered to the farmers and school learners



*HAHC has become an integral part of animal health care in the Hluvukani community*

solicits incredible feedback from the community.

As everything can be offered at cost-price to the local farmers, they feel empowered to take care of their animals. Even when someone is not able to pay immediately, the agreement is always honoured.

On several occasions, we even received phone calls from farmers simply to inform us that their cow or dog was doing better. It is clear that people are grateful for the services offered to them here.

We hope that HAHC will continue to be supported. It truly is of great value not only to our veterinary education, but also to a community filled with amazing people that have grown to depend on this clinic.



*Veterinary science students contribute to the HAHC initiative*

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Event	Venue	Date
Production Animal Outreach Clinic	Makapanstad & 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 Newsletter (Winter 2016). The Community Engagement article should not be more than 1 page long. Contact person Eugene Machimana Tel: (012) 529 8100 (w) Email: [eugene.machimana@up.ac.za](mailto:eugene.machimana@up.ac.za)

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