



# OP News

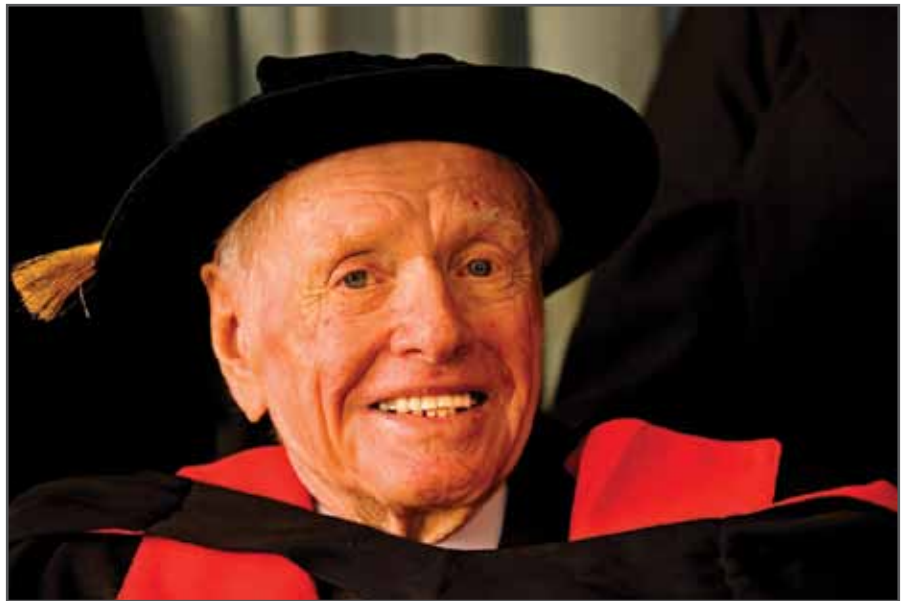
Volume 11 • No 2 • Summer 2011 • Official newsletter of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Pretoria

In memoriam:

## Prof John Skinner

Charles Skinner

Prof John Skinner, who was the Director of the Mammal Research Institute at the University of Pretoria for 26 years, sadly passed away on 28 August 2011, days before his 79<sup>th</sup> birthday. Prof Skinner published more than 350 scientific papers and co-authored one of the most esteemed books in mammology, *Mammals of the Southern African subregion*. He was recently honoured for his life's work with an honorary doctorate from the University of the Witwatersrand.



Prof John Skinner.

John Dawson Skinner was born in Johannesburg on 17 September 1932 to Samuel (Sam) Skinner and Irene Taylor. His grandfather, William Skinner, came to South Africa as part of a contingent of Royal Canadian Mounted Rifles during the South African War of the late 1890s, and then stayed on in Johannesburg. John's middle name, Dawson, was his maternal grandmother's maiden name (Alice Dawson).

Sam Skinner was a dentist and, as might well have been the paternal order of the era,

John attempted dentistry in his first year, but fortuitously failed. Anthony, his younger brother who lives in Australia, took up the dentistry baton. John then went on to study agriculture and animal husbandry. The early years of his career took shape under the mentorship of Jan Bonsma, Danie Joubert, Gideon Louw, and – of course – his father-in-law, Don Craib, who was a graduate of Cambridge University.

John's life was dedicated to teaching and pursuing scientific excellence. His greatest pride was seeing the progress in the professional careers of the people that had been under his tutorship. These he held in the highest esteem and he was eternally proud of their achievements. His greatest passion was in the teaching of his students and contributing to scientific research – a noble legacy indeed.

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## World Veterinary Year

Vet for health,

Vet for food,

Vet for the planet !



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA  
Faculty of Veterinary Science



# From the Desk of the Dean

Although 2011 is nearing its end, it still remains an important year in the global history of veterinary science. World Veterinary Year represents the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of veterinary education as well as the veterinary profession. It is thus important that the profession takes advantage of every opportunity to promote and showcase the work of veterinarians. The World Veterinary Congress in Cape Town in October provides an excellent opportunity to do just that.



The faculty will utilise the event to strengthen existing international and local partnerships and share scientific knowledge and research findings with peers and colleagues from around the world. We are looking forward to a most memorable and exciting congress.

Against the background of this year's celebration, it is imperative that we recommit ourselves to the objectives, values and vision of our own faculty within the broad perspective of the veterinary profession. A faculty such as ours – with our local and global responsibility in mind – would have to be clear about where it wants to go and what its future priorities and long-term objectives would entail. Therefore, the new Faculty Plan for 2012 to 2017, the product of intensive discussions at the annual Bosberaad and continuous wider consultation, stipulates clear-cut objectives and provides definite markers to take us into the next five years and beyond. The Faculty Plan is fully aligned with the strategic plan and objectives of the University.

The faculty aspires to be widely recognised for the quality of its staff and graduates, unique postgraduate opportunities, and groundbreaking research, and wants to strengthen its partnerships and collaboration. The emergence of new diseases and the increase in new pathogens, the effects of global warming, immunodeficiency, drug resistance, the threat to food security, population growth, poverty and hunger, and the speed of global travel and disease transmission are only some of the factors that will have a definite influence on the future provision of veterinary services. It is thus important to be aware of the changing landscape and to adapt to it.

A leading and successful faculty is one that recognises change, adapts to it and plans its strategic direction accordingly. One such new strategic, comprehensive and holistic perspective is the One Health initiative. The One Health approach necessitates multifaceted and interdisciplinary networking and collaboration between professionals and experts in the professions of veterinary, human health, environmental, ecological, agricultural and conservation sciences. However, in a scientific world largely functioning according to the traditional and familiar, focused disciplinary silos, this approach is not always met with enthusiasm, nor applied correctly. A new generation of scientists should be trained to embrace and drive this holistic mindset. The faculty can play a pioneering role in this regard. The newly formed institutional research themes (IRTs) and research programmes, such as the Mnisi Community Programme, could serve as ideal mechanisms for training and developing students and researchers locally and internationally in the One Health concept, while resolving complex challenges and developing sustainable solutions at the livestock/wildlife/human/environmental interface.

The University of Pretoria is also perfectly positioned in its global recognition as a leading scientific institution, especially in Africa, to show the way. The One Health approach will increasingly become a focus point in all the faculty's activities. The possibility of the establishment of a One Health institute or centre of excellence may be investigated, and could only complement the faculty's overarching role with regard to the health and wellbeing of all species. One way in which this approach can be entrenched into the faculty's broader mission and activities is the enhancement of high-quality research and relevant

## Publication information

**OP News is issued by:**  
Faculty of Veterinary Science  
University of Pretoria

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BusinessPrint

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**Layout:**  
Janine Smit Editorial Services  
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**Contributions to OP News are welcomed. Please submit any material electronically to the editor in MS Word.**





Visit <http://www.onehealthinitiative.com/> for more information on the One Health initiative.

postgraduate training, especially in collaboration with national and international partners. This is prioritised in the institutional research themes (IRTs) identified in the University of Pretoria's Academic Plan for 2012 to 2025, which involves multidisciplinary teams across faculties and from other institutions.

The faculty will actively pursue the development and implementation of three of those IRTs, namely biotechnology and the management of animal and zoonotic diseases, food, nutrition and wellbeing, and genomics, and will play a leading role in the development and implementation of the first IRT.

It is of crucial importance that the faculty continues to increase its research outputs and ensures that these are locally relevant and keep pace with research worldwide. The faculty has to continuously focus on attracting more postgraduate students locally and from other countries, and on creating an empowering research environment. The appointment of Prof Koos Coetzer, former head of our Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases, as Deputy Dean: Research, Postgraduate Studies and Internationalisation will provide the impetus to strengthen the faculty's research and postgraduate capacity.

The faculty views its staff as its most valuable resource. At the same time, transformation constitutes certain changes and the realisation that changes are indeed necessary. This is an important aspect that deserves our attention for the

next five years and beyond. A further step in this process was the completion of the culture survey report. This survey has indeed brought forward certain important issues that will require further debate. As a next step, discussion groups will be set up to create a platform for further dialogue in this regard. To further stimulate debate with regard to cultural and other issues, a blog – Culture: What we want @ OP – has been set up on the faculty's website, where you can have your say about the culture survey and other important and relevant issues. Where applicable, answers to questions will be provided. The blog can be found on the faculty's home page at [www.veterinary.up.ac.za](http://www.veterinary.up.ac.za). Suggestion boxes will also be placed in every main building at Onderstepoort. An implementation plan is being finalised that will involve the formation of workgroups to attend to all the recommendations mentioned in the report.

In conclusion and against the background of the important role the faculty has to play, three slogans of well-known brands come to mind that can easily be made applicable to it:

**A world awaits:** There is a whole new world waiting to be discovered and new mindsets that will have to be integrated into our thought processes in order to remain a leading veterinary institution.

**Driven by precision:** The pursuit of excellence and distinction must be our main driving force.

**Moving forward:** We will have to be progressive, innovative and creative.

I thank each and everyone for your hard work and dedication during the year to make this faculty work. It attests to your commitment, loyalty and passion for what we do. My wife, Lina, and I also wish you and your families a blessed and safe festive season.

Prof Gerry Swan  
Dean

## Saving the rhino

The Veterinary Genetics Laboratory of the Faculty of Veterinary Science is at the forefront of the fight against rhino poaching.

The poaching of rhino reached alarming levels in 2011. With the specific aim of providing a tool to support the forensic investigation of poaching cases, the Veterinary Genetics Laboratory of the Faculty of Veterinary Science at Onderstepoort established a method to successfully extract nuclear DNA from rhinoceros horn and genotype it using a set of DNA markers. The development and validation of this method started in 2007, following a DNA forensics course held at the faculty in collaboration with the Trace Wildlife Network that is now based at the Royal Zoological Gardens of Scotland. The work on the African rhinoceros is continuing through this ongoing collaboration.

This method provides a means of individual identification of a rhinoceros from its horn, in essence an individual DNA fingerprint that can link the horn to a poached animal or can link a horn to a DNA profile on a database from a sample collected previously. A further application of

this technique is that it finally provides a viable platform for the potential establishment of a managed and controlled method of legal trade in rhino horn and perhaps the only avenue left to save the rhino from its imminent devastation at the hands of ruthless poachers.

According to Dr Cindy Harper, Head of the Veterinary Genetics Laboratory (VGL), this test is simple, cost-effective and currently available. The VGL is currently in the process of establishing a comprehensive DNA database of rhino in the country in order to make this data available for forensic interrogation.



# Prof Coetzer appointed as Deputy Dean: Research, Postgraduate Studies and Internationalisation

Prof Koos Coetzer, who has been Head of the Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases since its inception in 1993, was recently appointed as Deputy Dean: Research, Postgraduate Studies and Internationalisation. His appointment will provide much-needed impetus to strengthening the faculty's research and postgraduate capacity.

The vision of the newly established position is to develop and implement a vibrant and productive research and postgraduate culture that is output-orientated and is acknowledged both nationally and internationally.

In his new position as Deputy Dean: Research, Postgraduate Studies and Internationalisation, Prof Coetzer will strive to do the following:

- Strengthen the position of the faculty as a national and regional asset.
- Promote internationalisation and the establishment of healthy and productive networks and partnerships.
- Support the growth of a new generation of talent with an international profile in the faculty.
- Hold open debates on issues pertaining to research, postgraduate training and internationalisation, such as the application of modern educational technology, research priorities, obtaining grants, and research networks.
- Strengthen the research themes or programmes in collaboration with national and international partners by promoting interdisciplinary and intersectorial research (One Health initiative).
- Review the postgraduate degree programmes (MSc, PhD and MMedVet degrees) with the aim of improving quality.
- Review and strengthen the function and management of the faculty's centres (Equine Research Centre, Centre for Veterinary Wildlife Studies and the Hans Hoheisen Wildlife Research Station).
- Review and strengthen the data and document management systems in the faculty to support research, postgraduate training and national and international agreements.
- Strengthen the Collaborating Centre for Training in Integrated Livestock and Wildlife Health and Management (OIE) and the Collaborating Centre on Emergency Preparedness for Transboundary Animal Diseases and Helminth-Antihelmintic



Prof Koos Coetzer, the new Deputy Dean: Research, Postgraduate Studies and Internationalisation.

Resistance and Biological Control for Africa (FAO) collaboration centres and expand their partnerships.

- Promote online continuing professional development (CPD) programmes, such as VetHUB.

Prof Coetzer's broad strategy will be to align strategic and action plans of the faculty (departments and centres) with the new Strategic Plan and Academic Plan 2025 of the University.

The following drivers or indicators will be considered in all aspects of research, postgraduate training and internationalisation:

- Quality
- Relevance and/or competitiveness (local and international)
- Diversity
- Sustainability

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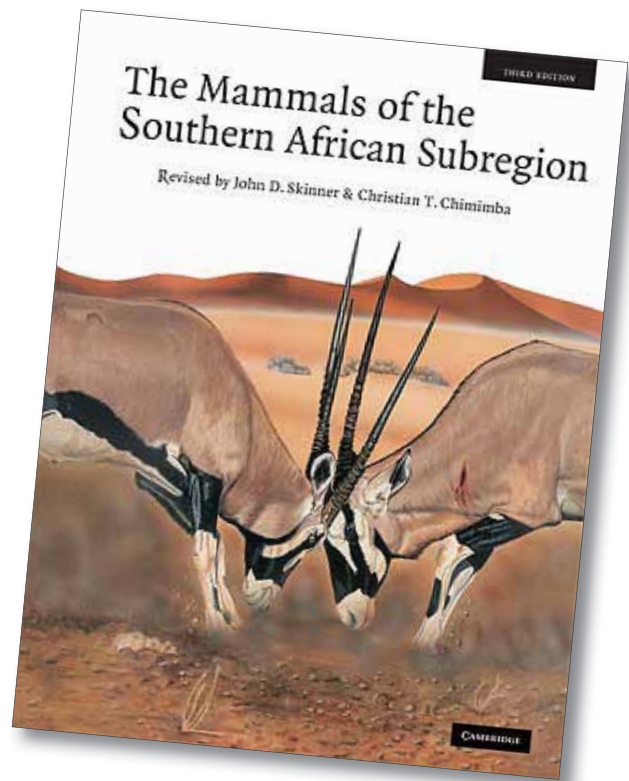
He held a great loyalty to and was deeply proud of his association with the University of Pretoria and St Johns College Johannesburg, where he was schooled. He worked at the University of Pretoria from 1972. He felt a strong sense of gratitude to those esteemed mentors of his own career, and being able to contribute to the sustainable development of science and research in South Africa.

After his retirement at the age of 65, he was also deeply grateful to be afforded the opportunity by the University to continue making a meaningful contribution at the Faculty of Veterinary Science at Onderstepoort. This was until a fall a year ago, which landed him in hospital on the eve of his 78<sup>th</sup> birthday. He would have turned 79 on 17 September 2011.

My own relationship with my father was a very special one. As far back as I can remember I started accompanying him on his excursions and expeditions across Africa. From an early age he encouraged me in my interests and to record my findings. I remember that we co-authored a note in the *South African Journal of Science*, Volume 70 of May 1974, entitled "Predation on the cattle egret and masked weaver by the vervet monkey" – events that we had witnessed unfold while birdwatching in a plantation on my grandfather's farm in Somerset East. I was 10 years old, and how proud that had made me.

This last year of his life was particularly difficult, and he was very distraught and depressed at times. Although there had been periods of respite, these were short, and overall his health declined markedly in the past year.

During one of these interludes, on 19 April, we had the good fortune to attend the ceremony in which he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of the Witwatersrand. The university had offered to hold the ceremony in Pretoria, but he insisted on being present in the Senate Hall on the day. He was deeply proud of the occasion, as we were of him.



*Mammals of the Southern African subregion*, one of the most esteemed books in mammalogy, which was co-authored by Prof John Skinner.

The past 20 years were not easy for my father, being on his own and without the guidance and support of his wife – my mother Patsy – and his family, who were dispersed around the world. But he would always say that he was very fortunate to have so many friends, be they personal or in his work. He would often say to me at the end of a visit, "Thank you so much for coming – your support gives me new hope."

## Italian scientists visit the Department of Paraclinical Sciences

Two virologists from the University of Bologna in Italy, the oldest university in the world, recently visited the Department of Paraclinical Sciences of the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Veterinary Science as part of plans to increase their collaboration with Prof Cheryl McCrindle and Prof Kobus Eloff, who have previously hosted students from Bologna. During her visit, Prof Alessandra Scagliarini, research coordinator at the Faculty of Veterinary Science of the University of Bologna, delivered a presentation entitled "From ethnoveterinary to scientific evidence: the antiviral activity of natural products". She was accompanied by Dr Mara Battilani. The two scientists' visit was funded by Prof McCrindle's grant that was obtained under an Italy-South Africa agreement. The host's provision of financial support for visiting scientists is stipulated under the existing memorandum of agreement between the two institutions.



From left to right; Prof Christo Botha, Dr Mara Battilani, Prof Alessandra Scagliarini and Prof Kobus Eloff.

# Veterinary Public Health Section

represents South Africa at the inaugural ICOPHAI conference in Ethiopia

Five postgraduate students in Veterinary Public Health at the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Veterinary Science attended the first International Congress on Pathogens at the Human-Animal Interface (ICOPHAI), held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa from 15 to 17 September 2011. These students together had one paper and seven posters accepted for the conference. Prof Cheryl McCrindle, who was the research leader for the students, was co-author on nine abstracts published in the programme.



Prof Cheryl McCrindle and postgraduate Veterinary Public Health students flying the flag for South Africa at the ICOPHAI Conference. Back row (left to right): James Oguttu, Cheryl McCrindle and Margaret Molefe. Front row : Shashi Ramrajh and Alex Heeb.

The ICOPHAI Conference is the brainchild of the Veterinary Public Health Biotech Global Consortium, which includes institutions from four continents. It aims to address capacity needs by stimulating scientific and policy interactions through fostering networking between scientists and policy-makers.

Zoonotic diseases globally impose a huge burden on communities and are closely related to food safety and security, particularly in emerging economies. Regions where people's livelihoods depend mainly on livestock farming, and food of animal origin as a primary source of protein, are most at risk. The burden of illness is amplified by co-morbidity factors such as HIV infection, the lack of hygiene and the limitations in scientific capacity for prevention and control.

The impact of zoonotic diseases is not only significant for small-scale producers and vendors who rely on informal markets for livelihoods, but also have macro-economic impacts on the global food trade.

In sub-Saharan Africa, 85 to 90% of livestock products are distributed through informal markets that are not effectively monitored.

**Zoonotic diseases globally impose a huge burden on communities and are closely related to food safety and security, particularly in emerging economies.**

The research presented by the Veterinary Public Health postgraduate students at the conference is based on participatory risk analysis, with a focus on food value chains in informal markets in southern Africa. Two students, Ana Bela Cambaza and James Oguttu, studied poultry meat, Shashi Ramrajh and Alex Heeb studied venison, and Erika van Zyl studied biltong. Margaret Molefe presented research regarding

a situational appraisal of stakeholders and regulatory aspects of food safety in South Africa, aligned to consumption data and residues.

This research was done as part of the International Livestock Research Institute's Safe Food, Fair Food Project, which aims to improve the safety of animal-source foods and to ensure continued market access for poor farmers in sub-Saharan Africa. The project, based on participatory risk analysis studies in eight African countries, started in 2009 and

has now been successfully completed. The Veterinary Public Health Section in the Department of Paraclinical Sciences at the University of Pretoria has been recognised as a main contributor to the success of this project.

UP lecturers present

# continuing education courses

Prof Moritz van Vuuren

to Eastern Cape veterinary staff

Over the past decade, academic personnel from the University of Pretoria's Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases have been travelling to the Eastern Cape to present continuing professional development courses to staff of the province's veterinary services.



Prof Moritz van Vuuren (far left, back row), Dr Darryn Knobel (second from left, back row) and Prof Banie Penzhorn (far right, back row) in the company of Eastern Cape state veterinarians who attended the CPD course in Stutterheim from 12 to 14 September.

This province has the largest number of livestock of all nine provinces in South Africa, and consequently employs a large number of animal health technicians and veterinarians.

At the most recent course that was presented from 12 to 14 September 2011, the aim of the faculty's personnel was to ensure that Eastern Cape state veterinarians, of which many are foreign veterinarians from neighbouring African countries, are up to date with all the regulatory aspects applicable to controlled, notifiable and transboundary diseases that may impact on the province and the country as a whole.

The province's veterinary services have been very proactive in providing additional training for personnel with regard to high-impact infectious and parasitic diseases. To achieve that objective, it was decided that it would

be more practical and cost-effective for lecturers to travel to the Eastern Cape to reach as many employees as possible.

As a result, more than 100 people often attend the three-day event that is arranged through Continuing Education at University of Pretoria (CE at UP). Courses are presented on the campus of the Döhne Agricultural Research Station outside Stutterheim, which is situated at the foot of the Amatole mountain range.

In addition to a series of lectures, all course candidates receive a set of lecture notes and a collection of professionally produced DVDs on high-impact diseases. The course is concluded with a written test that entitles participants to obtain CPD points and an official certificate from CE at UP.



This year is not only the anniversary of the establishment of the first veterinary school, but also serves to celebrate the veterinary profession, which has been working to improve both animal and human health for the past 250 years.

# Phytomedicine Programme

creates networking opportunities

In an effort to promote the sharing of knowledge and future research collaborations in the field of the biological activity investigations of indigenous plants, the Phytomedicine Programme in the Department of Paraclinical Sciences hosted a seminar day in May 2011 for research group leaders from various institutions based in Gauteng and surrounding areas.



The Phytomedicine Programme investigates therapeutically useful compounds present in plants growing in South Africa.

The aim of this seminar day was to provide a forum for researchers to initiate or strengthen collaborations and maximise resources by enhancing knowledge of current research activities and capabilities for mutual benefit. One of the delegates summarised the purpose of the seminar day perfectly: "Good research does not come from isolation – researchers need to work together without duplicating." Close to 30 representatives from the University of Pretoria's faculties of Veterinary Science, Natural and Agricultural Sciences, and Health Sciences, the universities of Limpopo, Venda, the Witwatersrand and South Africa, the Tshwane and Vaal universities of technology, as well as the Animal Research Council (ARC) - Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the National Research Foundation (NRF), attended the seminar.

Apart from serving as an excellent networking opportunity for researchers and role-players in the field of medicinal plant research, important subject matters were debated, including funding, incentives to researchers, and keeping talent in the country.

Dr Lyndy McGaw of the University's Phytomedicine Programme started the seminar with an overview presentation of this research programme. Prof Vinny Naidoo from the University of Pretoria Biomedical Research Centre (UPBRC) delivered a presentation on the capabilities of the UPBRC and the services rendered by this world-class unit.

The presentation delivered by the Phytomedicine Programme Leader, Prof Kobus Eloff, entitled "Obtaining funding in the new research

climate", sparked a debate on the issue of research funding. Prof Eloff said that funding from the NRF's Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme (THRIP) is an aspect to be reinvestigated, and companies with potential interests in current research should be approached for funding. He also said that the proposed levies on funding generated should be challenged.

Other issues that were debated included the matter of incentives that are provided to researchers, and the way in which various institutions administer government publication subsidies. To improve outputs and research capacity, publication incentives are important for researchers, but these vary considerably between institutions. The point was raised that incentives given to researchers following the publication of research articles should naturally depend on the quality or impact factor of the journal in which the paper is published.

A number of delegates gave brief presentations to introduce themselves, their research capacities and their research interests. Prof Alvaro Viljoen of the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), who could not attend the seminar, sent a DVD, which highlighted the achievements of the research group at the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences at TUT. Prof Viljoen is of the opinion that a "regional platform" concept, where scientists form collaborative initiatives, is the future of research in South Africa. He also set a good example of the importance of publicising research in a positive and professional manner, by sending information brochures on research conducted at TUT on natural products in drug development.





Three PhD students and Prof Franz from Austria, collecting tree leaves.



Some of the delegates at the seminar day.

Thomas Kgatle, a former student of the Phytomedicine Programme and now employed by the NRF, shared information on the launch of the NRF's Emerging Researcher Network (ERN) portal. The ERN is primarily an online researcher community platform that provides emerging researchers with online resources about funding opportunities, job opportunities, toolkits and opportunities for collaboration. This portal also points South African researchers to various online resources internationally. Further information on the ERN is available from <http://ern.nrf.ac.za/control/main>.

In his presentation, Dr Martin Myer from Unisa/CSIR raised the point that scientists should be urged to make the training of postgraduate students more real and relevant for industry. He used the Sasol model as an example, where curricula and/or postgraduate programmes at North-West University are formulated to facilitate the grooming of their graduates for subsequent placing at Sasol.

Delegates agreed that, in general, South Africa experienced a serious problem as its graduates were moving abroad to access better opportunities in countries with better established biotechnology or pharmacology infrastructure. The view was put forward that students could be provided with better incentives to stay in South Africa, especially if a long-term partnership between government, academia and the industry could be established to ensure a more coordinated approach around project-driven, collaborative research and/or training programmes to help bridge the so-called "technology chasm".

Following later presentations and discussions on the future of medicinal plant research, delegates had more opportunity to network. The department hopes that this networking session and the seminar in general provided an opportunity for researchers based in Gauteng and the surrounding areas to make connections, discover what other researchers are doing, and discuss matters of mutual interest that could possibly lead to future collaborations.

## External evaluation of the Department of Paraclinical Sciences

As part of external quality assurance at the University, the Department of Paraclinical Sciences received a visit by an evaluation panel from 29 June to 1 July 2011. The performance of the department was assessed in order to evaluate its academic standing and the core academic functions of teaching and learning, and postgraduate training and research. The panel included (from left to right) Prof Amanda Minnaar (Department of Food Science, University of Pretoria), Dr Tertius Gous, (Deputy Director: Veterinary Laboratory Services, Western Cape), Prof Elizabeth Howerth (College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Georgia, USA) and Prof Rudovick Kazwala (Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania).



# More international recognition

for the Department of Companion Animal Clinical Studies

The international stature of the Department of Companion Animal Clinical Studies at Onderstepoort is growing, as it now has five specialist training programmes that have been accepted by an international accreditation body.



Prof Luis Rubio-Martinez has successfully applied for accreditation to the European College of Veterinary Surgery (ECVS) for the MMedVet in Equine Surgery programme at Onderstepoort. This means that students of this programme can now achieve specialist recognition by the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC) and have the opportunity to write the examinations of the European College.

Prof Rubio-Martinez worked exceptionally hard to obtain international recognition for this programme. It will now fall on his shoulders and those of Prof Christophe Celeste, both of whom are diplomates of the American as well as the European College, to promote Onderstepoort through this programme. Prof Rubio-Martinez is also an invited member of the Foundation Advisory Board of the recently created Academy of Veterinary Surgical Technicians (AVST) in North America.

The international recognition of specialist programmes at Onderstepoort attracts interns and residents from Europe, the East and Africa to receive training towards postgraduate research qualifications and specialist degrees.

The young and energetic team at Companion Animal Clinical Studies are proud to deliver an exceptionally high standard of teaching and clinical training to postgraduate students. The following specialities in the department have already been accredited by international specialist bodies:

- **The MMedVet training programme in diagnostic imaging**

This programme of the Section of Diagnostic Imaging has been recognised by the European College of Veterinary Diagnostic Imaging (ECVDI) since 1996. Prof Robert Kirberger is the programme director and is assisted by Prof Ann Carstens (diplomate of ECVDI). Not only has Prof Kirberger been managing the MMedVet (Diagnostic Imaging) in tandem with the ECVDI diploma for all these years, but he also served on the college's examination committee from 2006 to 2008. Under his guidance, six students have qualified as specialist radiologists, five of whom are currently also European diplomates.



• **The MMedVet training programme in small animal medicine**

The European College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ECVIM) has recognised the programme of the Section of Small Animal Medicine since 1997. Prof Johan Schoeman is the programme director and is assisted by Prof Eran Dvir and Prof Andrew Leisewitz. They are all board-certified specialists of the ECVIM. Prof Schoeman also

holds the distinction that he was invited to serve on the college's examination committee from 2005 to 2007 and to chair the same committee from 2008 to 2010. The section has qualified 15 MMedVet students and eight ECVIM diplomates since 2000.

• **The MMedVet training programme in anaesthesiology**

The programme of the Section of Anaesthesiology has been recognised by the European College for Veterinary Anaesthesiology (ECVA) since 1999. Prof Frik Stegman is the programme director and is assisted by Dr Eva Rioja Garcia, a board-certified specialist of the ECVA and the American College of Veterinary Anaesthetists.

• **The MMedVet training programme in equine medicine and surgery**

The European College of Equine Internal Medicine (ECEIM) has recognised the programme of the Section of Equine Medicine and Surgery since 2009. Prof Montague Saulez (board-certified by both the ACVIM and the ECEIM) is the programme director and is assisted by Dr Patrick Page and, as of 1 October 2011, Dr Catriona Lyle (diplomate of ECEIM). Two students are currently enrolled in the programme.

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- Welfare
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- Veterinary Technologists Programme
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- World Veterinary Dental Congress (WVDC) (Small Animal, Equine, Wildlife & Research Dentistry, Veterinary Nurses programme)
- Equines
- Veterinary History & Closing Ceremony of World Veterinary Year 2011
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- Practice Management
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**News snippet**

Congratulations to Prof Leon Prozesky, who will receive the award for the Gauteng Agriculturist of the Year ("Gauteng se Landboukundige van die Jaar") at a gala event to be held in October. The Northern Agricultural Writers Association of South Africa is organising the gala. The National Agriculturist of the Year will be announced at an event in Paarl on 11 November.

# Veterinary Public Health

## gains valuable insight for curriculum review

The Veterinary Public Health Section in the Department of Paraclinical Sciences recently convened a meeting with the major veterinary public health stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the changing needs and roles of veterinarians in public health, and also to get their feedback on the relevance of the Veterinary Public Health curriculum. These discussions will inform the current review of the existing and proposed new curriculum for final-year students.

All parties agreed that there is a need to get more students interested in veterinary public health, that the curriculum should produce veterinarians with multidisciplinary skills who can fulfil various roles in public health, and that the programme should aim to produce a veterinarian with good leadership and communication skills.

The meeting, held at Roodevallei in Pretoria on 30 August 2011, addressed the following questions:

- What veterinary public health-related roles and functions do veterinarians perform in the course of their duties?
- What proportion of the curriculum should be devoted to various facets of veterinary public health, including meat hygiene, milk hygiene, environmental health, zoonoses, management of disasters/emergencies, veterinary extension and risk communication?
- What innovative methods can be used in teaching to promote problem-based learning and hands-on practical experience?

Speakers from government's Veterinary Public Health and Food Safety directorates all spoke of the need for veterinary students to have some knowledge of food safety management systems. As government veterinarians have the responsibility to audit and certify a number of food products, they need to have a decent knowledge of how these products are made, as well as the food safety management programmes that are in place throughout the value chain.

Dr Rebone Moerane, President of the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC) and Chair of the Primary Health Programme, emphasised the importance of veterinary public health in addressing government priorities. He said Veterinary Public Health should be an important part of the core curriculum to ensure that students graduate with adequate skills to fulfil the government's mandate of ensuring the health of all South Africans. Dr Moerane also believes that it is important to equip students with the ability to use data gathered during their day-to-day operations to inform decisions.

Dr Tertius Bergh, Acting Director: Veterinary Public Health at the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), reiterated Dr Moerane's sentiments and bemoaned the shortage of veterinarians

with an interest in veterinary public health. He encouraged the University to stimulate students' interest in veterinary public health to ensure that more veterinarians enter this important field. According to Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele, Director: Food Safety and Quality Assurance at the DAFF, it is also important that students receive good food safety training.



Delegates at a meeting to discuss the Veterinary Public Health curriculum.

Dr Vincent Turner, Veterinary Specialist: Dairy, Prof Denise Lloyd, veterinarian at International Meat Quality Assurance Services (IMQAS), and Mr Andries Pretorius, Director: Food Control, Department of Health, all highlighted how veterinary public health played an important role in their respective fields. Dr Turner explained how important veterinary public health was in the day-to-day activities of private veterinarians, and he said that a holistic approach to veterinary public health was needed. Prof Lloyd indicated how significant the veterinarian's role was in meat inspection, and Mr Pretorius spoke about the importance of the veterinarian as part of a multidisciplinary team in the auditing and certification of food products.

The Veterinary Public Health Section is now in the process of using the opinions and views expressed at this meeting to plan its teaching and research accordingly.

# Improving academic librarians' skills to support researchers

One of the librarians of Onderstepoort's Jotello F Soga Library, Marguerite Nel, had the privilege to travel to the USA to participate in a 10-week internship programme where she learned about the practices of the USA's major research libraries.

This opportunity formed part of a project of the Research Library Consortium (RLC), funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. This project aims to enhance the research support delivered by academic university libraries to postgraduate students and researchers in South Africa, and to create a physical and virtual environment that is supportive to producing quality research. This project will be completed in July 2012.

The University of Pretoria's Library Services, together with the academic libraries of the universities of Rhodes and Stellenbosch, joined the RLC in 2009. At that stage, only the academic libraries of the universities of Cape Town, KwaZulu-Natal and the Witwatersrand were part of the consortium.

The key objectives of the Research Library Consortium project include the following:

- The creation of a dedicated physical space for postgraduate students and researchers at each of the member libraries
- The implementation of a virtual research portal
- The development of library skills to support research

## Research commons

A dedicated space for postgraduate students and researchers is currently under construction at the Merensky Library on the Hatfield Campus and is nearing completion. The facilities will include computers, audiovisual equipment, scanning, printing and photocopying facilities, individual work stations, conference rooms with video-conferencing facilities, and areas for discussion and relaxation.

## Virtual research portal

PRIMO and other related discovery software were installed to maximise the utilisation of the RLC libraries' electronic resources. This enables simultaneous searching through multiple databases and includes convenient links to full-text content for clients. The link to the UPEXplore Plus Research



Marguerite Nel (far left) with the group of South African university librarians at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Portal appears at the top of the opening page of the University of Pretoria Library's catalogue: <http://explore.up.ac.za/screens/mainmenu.html>.

## Library skills to support research

It is as part of the objective to develop library skills to support research that Nel was afforded the opportunity to travel to the USA. Several two-week residential research library academies were held throughout the country and subject librarians were encouraged to apply to attend these academies. Two librarians from Onderstepoort's library attended an academy (Tertia Coetsee in April 2010 and Nel in October 2010).

Participants of the academies were eligible for selection to participate in a ten-week internship programme in the USA in 2011. Nel was among the nine South African university librarians chosen. The programme included two weeks of orientation and preparation at the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, followed by extended individual placements at selected major research libraries across the USA.

Attendance of the annual conference of the American College and Research Libraries (ACRL) in Philadelphia, as well as a mid-term evaluation meeting in New York, formed part of the 10-week programme. Nel spent her six-week internship at the University of California. She also visited a number of other academic libraries in the USA.

It was indeed an enriching and informative programme and all participants agreed that they returned with new knowledge, fresh ideas and enthusiasm to make a difference in research support in South Africa.

# OP Nooitgedachters

## win top prizes at Annual Spring Show

Onderstepoort can now proudly say that it owns some of the best Nooitgedachters in the country, after its horses won a number of prizes in different categories at the Nooitgedacht Horse Breeders Association's annual National Championship Show. This event was held as part of the Spring Show at the Tshwane Event Centre on 31 August 2011.

Onderstepoort entered 12 horses for the show, of which some participated in in-hand classes, some in riding classes and some in both.

The stallions and mares performed well in the in-hand classes. Arop Pluim – the stallion from the Onderstepoort Teaching Animal Unit (OTAU) stud – and his progeny won Onderstepoort a fair number of awards. Arop Pluim himself won second place in the class for pure-bred stallions of three years and older, and was announced the Reserve Champion Purebred Nooitgedachter Stallion for 2011.

Arop Pluim's progeny also made their mark, with Studvet Pinotage winning the class for purebred fillies between one and three years. Studvet Caspian won second place and Studvet Adante fourth place in the similar class for colts. Onderstepoort also took first place in the progeny class for three foals of a stallion.

In the mare classes, Studvet Countess took second and Studvet Laura third place in the class for part-bred mares three years and older. The OTAU also took first place in the progeny class for two foals of a mare.

Onderstepoort's results in the riding classes were even better. Christie Janse van Rensburg, riding Arop Pluim, was placed second in the dressage class, first in the novice rider class and was awarded the trophy for the best newcomer rider. The same combination also finished second in the adult working riding horse class and was crowned champions in the best farm horse class. Best of all, they won Reserve Champion Victor Ludorum – for the first time ever in OTAU's history.



Christie Janse van Rensburg riding Arop Pluim. She was placed second in the dressage class, first in the novice rider class and was awarded the trophy for the best newcomer rider.

In the adult riding horse class, the Onderstepoort Riding Club made a clean sweep, with Nicky Frolich on Studvet Laura finishing first, Jessica Berlyn on Studvet Countess coming second and Stefanie Paul on Wilgerus Heide coming third. Frolich and Studvet Laura won the Reserve Champion Adult Riding Horse title.

In the adult working hunter class, Frolich and Studvet Laura won another first, Berlyn on Studvet Countess earned the faculty another second and Kelly Bartlett on Studvet Larika came in third. Bartlett and Studvet Larika finished sixth in the best farm horse Class. Frolich and Studvet Laura also won the Reserve Champion Showing Horse title.

The faculty is indeed proud of these achievements and thanks everyone for their participation and contribution to the success.

A special thanks goes to Sr Anette van Veenhuyzen, Sam Motaung and Jantjie Motaung, who ensured that the in-hand horses were beautifully prepared and well presented, as well as to Simon Mokoena, who had to transport the horses to and from the show and made sure that they reached their destination safely every time.

Christie Janse van Rensburg also made an important contribution in preparing and showing the horses.

# Paraclinical Sciences

## strengthens aquaculture research bonds with Rhodes

Dr Johan Steyl and Dr Jan Myburgh from the Department of Paraclinical Sciences recently visited the Department of Ichthyology and Fisheries Science (DIFS) at Rhodes University to discuss future collaboration in the increasingly important fields of aquaculture and fish health.

As pollution of southern African rivers and dams is escalating, regular fish die-offs and unhealthy fish are commonly encountered. Nearly 25% of the protein consumed in Africa comes from wild-caught fish. However, most natural sources of fish (rivers and dams) are being fished at levels above their maximum sustainable yield. The expedited establishment of intensive fish farming (aquaculture) is therefore essential.

The DIFS's activities and projects are becoming multidisciplinary and multi-institutional, and their participation is sought after in most major fisheries and aquaculture development initiatives in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.

Unfortunately, with intensive farming, health issues also become important. It is in this important field that the Faculty of Veterinary Science is slowly establishing itself as an essential role-player. During their visit to the DIFS, Dr Steyl and Dr Myburgh discussed the continuing education of veterinarians, specific aquatic research projects and



Dr Johan Steyl and Prof Horst Kaiser discussing problems of recently hatched fingerlings at Rhodes's modern hatchery.

fish health issues with Prof Horst Kaiser and Prof Qurban Rouhani of this highly esteemed department. The Department of Ichthyology and Fisheries Science is a leading African academic institution, which supports the sustainable utilisation and study of fish and fisheries through teaching and training students, conducting research and providing support services. The department was founded in 1981 and it is the only department of its kind in the southern hemisphere.

## PGSA gala dinner inspires postgraduate veterinary students

The 2011 Postgraduate Student Association (PGSA) committee of the Faculty of Veterinary Science hosted a gala dinner just before winter this year, during which the new PGSA committee was inaugurated. A number of honoured guests also addressed the postgraduate students of the faculty at the event, giving the students words of advice for their future and congratulating the new committee members.

Among the honoured guests for the evening were Prof Gerry Swan, Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, Prof Stephanie Burton, Vice-Principal for Research and Postgraduate Studies of the University of Pretoria, Prof Kobus Eloff, Head of the Phytomedicine Programme, and Dr Raksha Bhoora, the 2008 chairperson of the PGSA.

The most recent former chairperson of the PGSA, Dr Victor Bagla, officially announced and inaugurated the new committee. He also thanked the Dean's Office, as well as Prof Koos Coetzer in his capacity as Deputy Dean: Research, Postgraduate Studies and Internationalisation, for their continuous support to the PGSA and postgraduate students in general.

The committee members are as follows:

- Ms Elizabeth Debeila (Chairperson)
- Mr Tshepiso Makhafola (Secretary)
- Mr Thanyani Ramadwa (Treasurer)
- Ms Ayesha Hassim (Web Coordinator)
- Dr Chinazo Dumnego (Public Relations)

The departmental representatives are as follows:

- Ms Petunia Malatji (Veterinary Tropical Diseases)
- Dr Umar Bello (Anatomy)
- Dr Salome Nagel (Companion Animal Clinical Studies)
- Ms Koba Grobler (Production Animal Studies)

Ms Debeila addressed the audience and encouraged her fellow postgraduate students to make a difference in their respective fields of interest. Prof Swan congratulated the new committee members and said that he was looking forward to working with them.

# Bits and pieces

from the OVAH...

Sr Sarah Johnson

Whenever the staff of the Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital (OVAH) take foreign students or dignitaries on a tour of the facility, they are always at pains to point out that wildlife and poultry (except for the patients of the Exotic Clinic) are an uncommon sight in the hospital, and that they see mainly companion animals (dogs, cats and horses) and livestock.

Except recently, when there seemed to be something unusual around every corner...

## It started

when Radiology called to say that there was a chicken at Ultrasound. Well, this was a first, so off they went to observe a very sick Hyline hen (an Exotic Clinic patient) receiving an ultrasound of her egg canal. Egg peritonitis was strongly suspected (a usually fatal septicaemia caused by an egg rupturing inside the canal). The owners of the chicken wanted their pet chicken saved, whatever the cost, so Dr Dorianne Elliott subsequently operated and removed the ruptured egg, drained the pus and flushed the egg canal. The procedure is generally unsuccessful, so the prognosis was very poor, but this chicken wasn't chicken! Much to everyone's surprise, Madame Hen survived, and within a few days was perky, gobbling mealworms, and was sent home to her grateful owners.



Then two four-month-old tiger cubs came in to Radiology for follow-up radiographs to monitor their physical progress, after both siblings had been diagnosed a couple of months previously with pathological fractures caused by incorrect feeding. X-rays confirmed that their bones were healing nicely, although the same couldn't be said for their temperaments, which remained wild and uncooperative (thank goodness for general anaesthesia).





**Later** the same morning, staff were told that there was a caracal cub at Small Animal Medicine that had been driven to Onderstepoort from Lephalale (Ellisras), as it had a weepy eye. This turned out to be feline herpes virus. In addition, and this was of much greater concern, a diffuse swelling was noticed under the skin around its throat. The cub was tame and lived on a farm together with a leopard cub of the same age and the two apparently played incessantly. It transpired that the swelling was due to a small tear in the caracal's larynx, caused by the play bites of the bigger, heavier leopard cub. The caracal was treated and sent home with strict instructions to the owner to immediately find the caracal a different, gentler playmate.



**Finally,** staff were asked to take a photograph of a tortoise receiving a CT scan... yes, really! The poor tortoise was certainly dwarfed by the scanner, but was actually a model patient because it didn't move an inch. It just stayed put with its head tucked safely under its shell out of harm's way. The tortoise was suffering from life-threatening pneumonia and was very sick indeed, but it managed to get sweet revenge for the stressful day it was having.



After the CT scan, the tortoise was taken back to the Exotic Clinic where Dr Elliott was waiting to medicate it and give it intra-peritoneal fluids. The canula was duly inserted, when the tortoise suddenly decided that enough was more than enough and promptly flexed its steely legs, trapping Dr Elliott's finger tightly between a muscular hind limb and a very solid shell. Minutes later, the finger was still trapped and Dr Elliott was in pain and less than impressed with her patient (and even less impressed with her unsympathetic staff who were laughing too much to help her!). Several more minutes passed before the tortoise was persuaded to release its "prey", and the offending finger finally emerged, looking rather blue and bruised. At last, the tortoise could be treated, Dr Elliott's finger stopped throbbing and the staff drifted away, replete with a welcome overdose of laughter.

**Nope,**  
life is never boring in the OVAH!

# 2011 Artificial Insemination Challenge

## – blood, sweat and fun

Michelle Beukmann

Onderstepoort's Artificial Insemination Challenge has become one of the highlights of the students' academic year. Just as much as they struggle to handle and herd the cows and to work in the ice-cold winter mornings, the students enjoy the challenge and find it rewarding to be able to successfully apply the theory that they have learned to practice.



In the same academic year, the students also have to compete in the Feedlot Challenge. This challenge was initiated in the Department of Production Animal Studies with the aim of exposing students to the beef industry, while improving student morale. The Artificial Insemination Challenge soon followed and both tasks have proven to be beneficial in stimulating the students' interest in production animal practice.

This year's Artificial Insemination Challenge commenced on 2 May, with five groups each getting six cows that needed to breed in a limited 60-day period. Groups were encouraged to use any of the synchronisation techniques they had learned in the Bovine Health and Production course to get a positive pregnancy diagnosis for their cows at the end of the 60-day period. Each of the groups' breeding strategies differed, thereby providing a great learning experience with regard to the economics, management, labour and conception rates achieved with each different approach.

In contrast to the Feedlot Challenge, where the nutritional focus was on growth and production, specific diets had to be carefully formulated

in the Artificial Insemination Challenge with the intention to provide adequate nutrients, energy and protein concentrations for optimum conception. Heat detection aids, as well as diligent heat observation, also had to be considered in the breeding strategy. Key decisions such as these form the foundation for a successful breeding season and it is in this decision-making where good teamwork and support in the group proved to be the most beneficial.

Systematic planning, meticulous observation, appropriate handling and loading of the semen, and correct sterile artificial insemination techniques are important aspects of the Artificial Insemination Challenge and provide an opportunity for students to gain more knowledge and experience in each of these skills. Some of this year's groups adopted a synchronisation technique that required the precise timing of treatments, while others relied on constant heat observation and record-keeping to predict the dates of consecutive oestrous cycles.

Besides the challenge of the difficult timing and technique of artificial insemination, groups had to struggle with handling and herding the



very nervous and stubborn cows into unfamiliar crushes, with some even jumping fences to escape. Students also had to compete against the early setting sun of the shorter winter days. Winter would bring with it bitterly cold mornings of doing heat observations and performing artificial insemination.

Artificial insemination was very unfamiliar terrain (for both the students and the cows), and was definitely not as simple as the textbook diagrams portrayed it to be. After searching for the cervix for quite some time, you couldn't be blamed for thinking that the cow just didn't have one. After you manage that part, you just have to guide the pistolette through to the uterus and hope for successful fertilisation.

Besides it being a long and sometimes frustrating experience, it is an extremely beneficial one for the students. The challenge includes activities that range from being responsible for the wellbeing of their small herd of six cows to being able to make a positive pregnancy diagnosis at the conclusion of the challenge.

Both the Feedlot and Artificial Insemination challenges integrate the practical aspects and theory of many of the core themes of the syllabus into a competitive, team-building process.

The challenges develop both the students' communication and teamwork skills, which will benefit each student in their future veterinary careers.

## OVAH donates equipment to the Animal Anti-cruelty League

The Radiology section of the Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital (OVAH) recently donated an Agfa Curix 60 processor to the Animal Anti-cruelty League (AACL), Johannesburg, after the AACL enquired about the availability of redundant yet serviceable radiographic equipment for purchase.

The processor is an automatic X-ray film developer that was used in the Outpatients' Clinic from 2006 to 2009 as a table-top processor until it was replaced by a larger unit that was better suited to the clinic's needs.

The processor will be a useful and valued asset to the busy AACL hospital, and they were most thankful for the donation.

Sr Cindy Price of the AACL, Johannesburg (back left) and Sr Bev Olivier of the OVAH (right) behind the processor, which is about to be loaded on the bakkie.



## Italian vet at OP



Hi, I'm Sara Falcone from Italy. I was born near Naples, but studied in Perugia. I completed my veterinary studies last October and started soon afterwards with a master's degree in veterinary public health. I chose this degree because I am interested in veterinary public health and because it would give me the opportunity of getting an internship at Onderstepoort. When I heard I would be able to come to South Africa, I was very happy for many reasons. I found the project at this prestigious university challenging and I wanted to be involved in an international environment. I also wanted to visit this beautiful country.

## Hans Vahrmeijer visits the Department of Paraclinical Sciences

The Department of Paraclinical Sciences was recently honoured to have Mr Hans Vahrmeijer, a well-known figure for most veterinarians in southern Africa, visit the department and discuss some of the community projects in which he is involved in Mozambique.

Vahrmeijer is the author of the book, *Poisonous plants of southern Africa that cause stock losses*, which was printed about 30 years ago but is still used by many veterinarians today as a photographic guide.

His work is important because of the effect that plant poisonings have on the mortality and growth of livestock in the country. Plant poisonings mostly cause losses in the form of mortality, but these poisons can also cause poor growth, diminished production and reproductive failure in livestock. It is estimated that the annual mortality of livestock (from all causes, including drought, infectious diseases, parasites and poisonous plants) in South Africa is 3% for cattle and 5% for sheep. In the case of cattle, 10% of the annual death toll is attributed to plant poisonings. In small stock, this figure is 15%.

## Faculty's champion horse-rider



Prof Cheryl McCrindle, Head of the Veterinary Public Health Section, was recently awarded Gauteng colours, South African colours and was crowned champion at the first African Continental Reining Championships, under the auspices of the South African National Equestrian Federation (SANEF) and the International Equestrian Federation (FEI), that was held at Parys from 22 to 25 September. Here she is with her horse, Ms Whizzing Jac, a registered quarter horse, and Mr Lyle Jackson from the USA, an international judge for the FEI.



In the photograph (left to right) is Dr Jan Myburgh, Mr Hans Vahrmeijer and Prof Christo Botha.



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# 61<sup>st</sup> IVSA Symposium

## in South Africa

Kivara Luke

At the beginning of January 2013, veterinary students from all over the world will be migrating to Onderstepoort to attend the 61<sup>st</sup> International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA) symposium. This is only the second time in over 60 years that this symposium will be held in South Africa.

The theme of the symposium, "One world – one health", fits in perfectly with the mission statement of IVSA, which aims to benefit the world's animals and people by harnessing the potential and dedication of veterinary students to promote the international application of veterinary skills, education and knowledge. The annual IVSA symposia and congresses held all over the world create an opportunity for veterinary students from all walks of life to meet, talk and form bonds that will hopefully allow them to make a difference.

The aim of the organising committee for the 2013 symposium is to focus on the future role of veterinarians in global and public health through educating and aiding their local communities. More specifically, the theme aims to urge future veterinarians to use their developed skills not only in the private sector, but also in community service.

South Africa is a perfect example of how first-world skills and education can help to solve third-world problems. South Africa is

a young, developing country and, with a united effort from all sectors, we can help our country to grow and set an excellent example to the rest of the world. This is a great opportunity for Onderstepoort students to show the world what the country, but also the faculty and its students, have to offer. Anyone interested in contributing to the symposium can contact the organising committee through the chairperson, Taz Arbi (tazarbi@me.com), or the vice-chairperson, Nicole Frohlich (nicky.frohlich@gmail.com).



The organising committee of the 61<sup>st</sup> IVSA symposium that will take place in South Africa in 2013.

# OPVSC rewarded for reaching out beyond the Jacaranda City



Front row (left to right): Devin Stuart, Melandie Taljaardt, Pascale Cooper, Rushda Khan and Lara Brown. Back row (left to right): Wynand van der Merwe, Drikus Janse van Vuuren, Roche Cronje and Gideon Stemmet. Sean Miller and Dr Quixi Sonntag were absent when the photograph was taken.

The Onderstepoort Veterinary and Paraveterinary Student Council (OPVSC) was recently awarded a Certificate of Achievement for being the faculty house with the best national and international initiatives in 2010/11.

This award was presented to them on 1 September 2011 at the annual certificate ceremony hosted by the University of Pretoria's Department of Student Affairs.

The OPVSC was recognised for its efforts to reach out beyond the borders of Pretoria and even South Africa. One such project is the annual "I want to be a Vet" initiative, where Grade 12s from all over the country are hosted for a weekend at Onderstepoort to encourage them to consider veterinary science as a field of study. This year, 32 matriculants attended the initiative.

The OPVSC also met with the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC) to improve communication, and even held an inaugural symposium for the newly established Southern African Veterinary Students' Association (SAVSA). Other national campaigns that the student council supported included the Cancer Association's Shavathon, National Arbour Day and Earth Hour.

## The newly elected OPVSC Committee for 2011/12

**President:** Sean Miller • 083 634 8667 • [sean@drummondtor.co.za](mailto:sean@drummondtor.co.za)

**Chairperson:** Devin Stuart • 082 771 8559 • [deviducks@gmail.com](mailto:deviducks@gmail.com)

**Vice-Chairperson, Media and Rag:** Drikus Janse van Vuuren • 072 743 1767 • [qzsedct@hotmail.com](mailto:qzsedct@hotmail.com)

**Academics:** Lara Brown • 079 503 9323 • [s27019358@tuks.co.za](mailto:s27019358@tuks.co.za)

**Clubs and societies:** Melandie Taljaardt • 084 567 5678 • [mtaljaardt@yahoo.com](mailto:mtaljaardt@yahoo.com)

**Secretary:** Rushda Khan • 083 367 3102 • [rushda.khan123@gmail.com](mailto:rushda.khan123@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Gideon Stemmet • 082 072 2735 • [gideon.falconer@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gideon.falconer@yahoo.co.uk)

**Social and culture:** Pascale Cooper • 082 879 6089 • [pascalecooper@yahoo.com](mailto:pascalecooper@yahoo.com)

**HK representative:** Wynand van der Merwe • 083 282 6545 • [wynandpvd@gmail.com](mailto:wynandpvd@gmail.com)

**Sports representative:** Roche Cronje • 072 146 3237 • [s28010486@tuks.co.za](mailto:s28010486@tuks.co.za)

# Touch rugby tournament

brings World Cup fever to OP

In anticipation of the 2011 Rugby World Cup, students and staff of the Department of Companion Animal Clinical Studies initiated a touch rugby tournament for the whole faculty – men and women – and encouraged everyone to wear their green and gold jerseys every Friday.

Participating departments entered their teams, made up of three men and one woman, to compete in the tournament.

The teams included the Production Animal Green Bulls, the CACS Kings (winners of the faculty's 2010 Soccer League), the Black Label Students, the OVAH, Veterinary Tropical Diseases, Paraclinical Sciences, Servest Landscape and OTAU (the "one-man" team).

The tournament kicked off on 12 August, and the semi-final and final matches were played on



The Black Label Students team received the OP Touchies Floating Trophy after they defeated the CACS Kings in the final.

16 September. During the semi-final matches, the Black Label Students won 7-0 against Paraclinical Sciences, while the CACS Kings defeated Veterinary Tropical Diseases with a score of 2-0.

The final match between the CACS Kings and the Black Label Students turned out to be

quite a hard game full of "real rugby" tactics. In the end, it was the young and energetic Black Label Students who received the OP Touchies Floating Trophy, with a 3-0 victory.

Prof Johan Schoeman from the CACS Kings was voted Man of the Match and received the Bokkie Ball for his efforts.

## Just in case • emergency numbers

• Security Services (main campus)	6911	012 420 2310
• Flying Squad	6022	10111
• Police Pretoria North	6022	10111
• Ambulance: - Rosslyn	6003	012 541 3421/6
- Pretoria	6002	012 326 0111
• Fire Brigade (Wonderboom)	6024	012 543 0335
• Tygerberg Poison Centre	6179	021 931 6129
• Emergency Medical Help: OP		
- Sr Amanda Hamman (OVAH)	8064	083 269 8874
- Prof Frik Stegman (OVAH)	8279	8148 (operating theatre)
- Mr Chris Neetling (Feed Store)	8004	8004 (roving phone)
- Prof Ken Pettey (Ethology/Physiology)	8449	082 882 7356
- Psychologist at OP (Wednesday), Voula Samouris	8243	083 754 5427
- Psychologist - Main Campus, Rina Buys	6127/6151	082 908 3688
• 24-hour University crisis line		0800 00 64 28
• Head of OP Residence:		
- Dr Jan Myburgh	8350	082 392 2534
- Ms Susan Myburgh		083 235 6778

In case of an emergency, just dial the four-digit number given above.