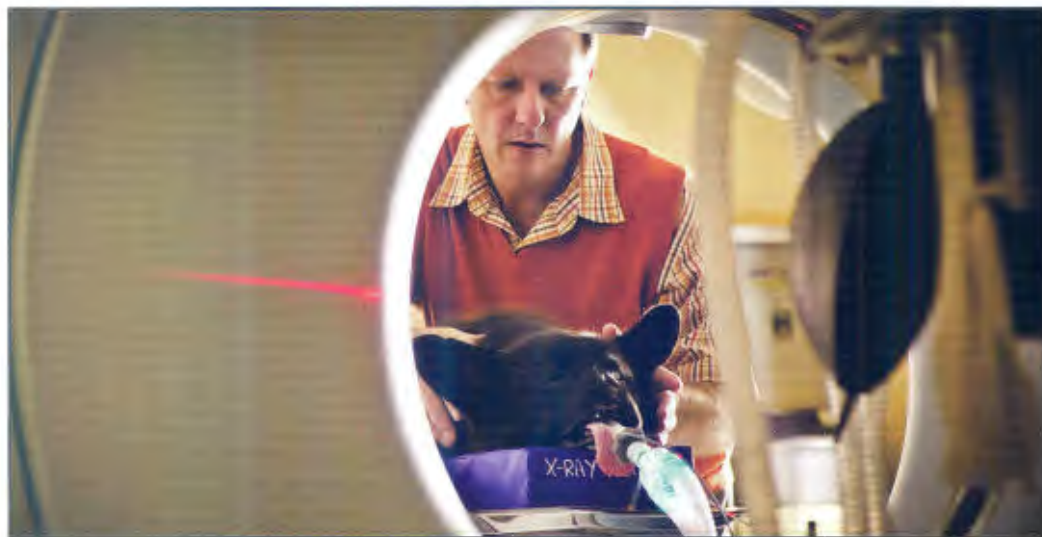


OP News

Volume 11 • No 1 • Winter 2011 • Official newsletter of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Pretoria

Maximus gets a new nose after a unique operation



Maximus lost the front part of his nose and top jaw. The reason for this was unknown and Dr Gerhard Steenkamp is busy performing a CT scan in order to establish if it is a tumour or due to trauma. Since the biopsy revealed no tumour, a surgical reconstruction of the rostral nose was successfully performed by Dr Steenkamp. See p 16 what Maximus looked like before and after the operation.

Picture: Nelius Rademan, Beeld

Prof John Skinner honoured by Wits

The University of the Witwatersrand has bestowed its highest academic honour – DSc *honoris causa* – on Prof John Skinner in recognition of his huge contribution to South African and international science in the fields of zoology and mammalogy. The citation noted that “no one has done more to bring zoology to the attention of the South African community, whether it be

game farmers, agricultural extension officers or the visitor to a national park; or to bring South African mammalogy to the attention of the international research community”.

Prof Skinner has been, and still is, a famous name in the world of mammalogy. He has worked tirelessly to promote not just the discipline of zoology but all of professional science in South Africa, with audiences ranging from science councils to game farmers.

He took his first degree, in animal science, at the former University of Natal. On graduating, he accepted a job as assistant professional officer to the acting officer in charge of the Mara Research Station, where he was intimately involved with the development of the highly successful Bonsmara cattle breed. It was at Mara that his skills at turning scientific knowledge into practical use were developed. Over the years, his growing interest in the physiology of animals grew into studies ranging from the effect of

continued on p 5 and 6



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Faculty of Veterinary Science

From the Desk of the Dean

The year has already reached its halfway mark. The Soccer World Cup of 2010 is but a sweet memory and has brought about a galvanising surge with regard to our South African identity and pride about this achievement and the way the country staged this thrilling event. Truly extraordinary soccer was experienced during this period and visitors from across the globe provided impetus to the South African economy.



They went back home to eagerly share a wonderful experience of traditional South African goodwill and hospitality. This country has shown that it indeed has the ability and skills to host events of this nature.

In a similar way, the year 2011 is an important year in the global history of veterinary science. World Veterinary Year represents the 250th anniversary of both veterinary education and the veterinary profession. It is thus important that the profession takes advantage of every opportunity to promote and showcase itself. Not only will the World Veterinary Congress take place in Cape Town in October this year, but – appropriately – the Second World Conference on Veterinary Education took place at the world's first veterinary school in Lyon, France, from 13 to 15 May 2011.

The congress, which was hosted in partnership with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Veterinary Association (WVA), was a follow-up of the first world conference held in Paris in October 2009, which focused on the training of veterinarians. The second conference elaborated on a plan for harmonised and adaptable veterinary education, which should allow the veterinary profession globally to accept and answer the challenges of the future. It focused in particular on the proposed OIE day 1 competencies for veterinary science training.

After attending the conference in Lyon, Prof Morkel Terblanche, the deputy dean of the faculty, and I went to Utrecht in the Netherlands to reinforce and substantiate our highly successful memorandum of understanding (MoU)

with the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Utrecht. This unique MoU was first concluded in January 2000 and is now in its eleventh year. The MoU is an excellent example of how internationalisation can take place to the mutual benefit of tertiary institutions.

Among other things, the agreement provides a platform for scientific cooperation between the faculties, which is aimed at the exchange of scientists, staff for research and clinical training and postgraduate students engaged in research towards MSc and PhD degrees. It furthermore entails cooperation in education, including consultations on the veterinary curriculum and teaching methodologies, the joint supervision of postgraduate students and joint research projects, preferably involving other partner institutes in the European Union (EU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). It also includes the exchange of undergraduate students with recognition of study programmes.

The success of this MoU has proved that the faculty can add value to its existing postgraduate training and research programmes in a very dynamic way. It is essential that a programme such as this be maintained and extended, and that similar agreements be further developed and put in motion in future to provide impetus, especially, to the faculty's postgraduate training objectives.

The enhancement of high-quality research and relevant postgraduate training is not only a priority for the faculty, but is part of its mission and

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strategic faculty plan. It is of crucial importance that the faculty continues to increase its research outputs and ensure that these are locally relevant and keep up with research worldwide. It is similarly important for the faculty to focus on attracting more postgraduate students locally and from other countries.

The importance of recruiting postgraduate research students is one of the key objectives of the University of Pretoria and the faculty subscribes to the University's notion of attracting, selecting and retaining talented students. The faculty, therefore, also supports the recently launched postgraduate project of the University that is overseen by the Registrar and managed by Dr Karen Lazenby, Director of the University's Client Service Centre (CSC). The anticipated project outcome is to recommend a solution that will improve the capacity of the University in terms of postgraduate students (excluding academic supervision). The scope of the project includes a strategy for support services and the functions required (for example, corporate marketing, publications, recruitment, accommodation, bursaries and administrative services in the faculty). A first meeting in this regard was recently held between Dr Lazenby and representatives of the faculty, including Prof Terblanche.

In my previous message I mentioned another crucial aspect deserving the faculty's continued attention, namely to increase the number of African veterinary science and veterinary nursing students. I stated that existing awareness and recruitment initiatives have been revisited and that additional measures will be implemented to strengthen the faculty's current initiative. I also referred to a proposal that was formulated for creating a specialised recruitment post at the CSC that is specifically earmarked to cater for the needs of our faculty by effectively assisting in increasing the number of students from designated groups. I am glad to confirm that this post was approved and a process of appointing a suitable candidate will soon commence.

The faculty is currently leading an important initiative to review the training of candidates in all forms of veterinary training, namely veterinarians, veterinary nurses, veterinary technologists and animal health technicians. This involves Unisa, the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) and the Northwest University (Mafikeng Campus). It was initiated by the Department of Higher Education and Training with the objective of streamlining the utilisation of existing facilities and resources for veterinary training. Prof Anthony Melck and Prof Pete Irons joined me at a recent meeting in Mafikeng to inspect facilities there and to discuss areas of collaboration, such as identifying facilities that could be utilised jointly by the partners.

A first report, entitled "Report on veterinary science programmes in South Africa: Collaboration between training institutions", has been completed and a second meeting in this regard took place on 25 May. This not only represents a new approach to the holistic training of all members of the veterinary team, but is also the first time that institutions involved in veterinary and paraveterinary training are jointly discussing this issue. We believe that this initiative could be to the benefit of the associated veterinary fields, as well as the veterinary profession as a whole.

The process of the development of new residences (for both undergraduate and postgraduate students) is an exciting project of great importance to the



Delegates at the Second World Conference on Veterinary Education in Lyon, France. On the left is the dean, Prof Gerry Swan, and on the right, Prof Koos Coetzer, head of the Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases.

faculty. The new residences will be integrated into the existing ones and will provide accommodation for approximately 620 students. Construction on the new residences is scheduled to be completed towards the end of August, after which the new rooms will be equipped and prepared for use.

Part of the project is the construction of a new postgraduate centre. At this facility, postgraduate students will be able to study, do group work, arrange seminars and network with other postgraduate students at the University of Pretoria and other tertiary institutions. Provision for social activities is also made. The final phase, which will entail the official handing over and opening of the new residences, is scheduled for January 2012.

The faculty can be proud of what has been achieved over the last two years, and especially during the course of this year. However, the fact that certain important challenges remain and should be part of its focus beyond 2011 has to be acknowledged. As they say in Afrikaans, "hef aan lê nog voor", meaning the worst of the hard work is still to come.

The faculty's vision is to be an international centre of veterinary excellence. This can only be achieved if everyone in the faculty works together to reach its goals and objectives. Among other things, this has to include an increase in research outputs, outstanding service delivery and expanding the processes of internationalisation and local collaboration with relevant role-players.

Let us channel our energy for the remainder of this year into committing ourselves to the continued promotion of this faculty's vision, mission and strategic goals at all levels. There is no substitute for passion and commitment when one wants something to happen. As Booker T Washington once said: "Nothing ever comes to one that is worth having, except as a result of hard work." I wish you all the best for the rest of 2011.

Prof Gerry Swan
Dean

Second World Conference on **veterinary education**

by Prof M van Vuuren

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) has, in recent years, completed visitations to 100 member countries to evaluate the veterinary education available to students in those countries.

It was found that 80% of countries do not adequately address the current needs in terms of the performance of veterinary services. Veterinary services are at the front-line of the human-animal-ecosystem interface and must ideally be available and effective in all countries. The latter requires good governance, which in turn implies good veterinary training.

The results of the evaluation underpinned the OIE's recent implementation of the performance of veterinary services (PVS) programme for countries and its first involvement in veterinary education. To this end, the OIE hosted the First World Conference on Veterinary Education in 2009 in Paris, France.



Left to right: Prof Moritz van Vuuren, Dr Anne de Vos, Prof Morkel Terblanche and Prof Gerry Swan in front of a statue of Claude Bourgelat in the foyer of the auditorium of the lecturing complex of the Lyon Veterinary School.

Although several recommendations were made at the 2009 meeting, the main aim was to set minimum standards of veterinary training so that veterinarians in all countries would be able to execute their public mission (referred to as day 1 competencies). To drive this process, the OIE established an ad hoc group in 2009. The final report of this group was tabled at the 79th General Assembly of the OIE in Paris from 23 to 27 May 2011. These minimum competencies must then be ratified by the OIE Code Commission and adopted by the OIE General Assembly in 2012.

The day 1 competencies document establishes minimum standards globally, because such standards had not previously existed and anyone could potentially start a veterinary school without reference standards. This does not imply that the high standards of established veterinary schools must be lowered, but that schools operating below such minimum standards should strive to achieve those standards. The day 1 competencies of the OIE focus primarily on livestock species.

Established schools can also benefit by adapting their courses to current needs, for example, by reviewing the ground lost in recent years in terms of production animals in comparison with companion animals.

The day one competencies of the OIE focus on national veterinary services, which include all veterinary activities that are practised by state/provincial and private veterinarians. This relates to the competencies a person must have to fulfil the needs of society, and includes skills, knowledge, aptitude and attitude.

The OIE stated that it does not want to be prescriptive or cover all aspects of veterinary activities. Each country must consider its own constraints as there will not be a model, but options for member countries.

Issues such as the number of hours per module and different courses in which the competencies will be taught, for example, were not the mandate of the ad hoc committee of the OIE. The day 1 competencies are the first step in the OIE's involvement with veterinary education. The intention is not to focus on them alone, but later to also look at continuing professional development and postgraduate training, for example.

In addition to the evaluation of veterinary services, the second world conference also examined the role and importance of statutory bodies in veterinary education, the development of curricula, the improvement of well-established curricula and educational programmes that support a one-health approach. The conference ended with a round-table discussion under the chairmanship of the general director of the OIE, Dr Bernard Vallat, to draw up recommendations for a minimum veterinary curriculum at the global level.

It is envisaged that the Third World Conference on Veterinary Education will take place in 2013 on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the World Veterinary Association, most likely on the Asian continent.

Commemorative postage stamp for veterinary medicine

The first veterinary school was founded in France 250 years ago. A decree issued by King Louis XV's Council of State on 4 August 1761 granted Claude Bourgelat authorisation to open a veterinary school close to the city of Lyon in France. To commemorate this occasion, 2011 was declared World Veterinary Year.

A committee known as the Vet2011 Committee was tasked to organise an International Veterinary Year with several events to promote the veterinary profession in all its diversity. One such event was the Second World Conference on Veterinary Education that took place in Lyon, France, from 13 to 15 May 2011.

During the last day of the conference, a postage stamp was issued to commemorate the founding of the Lyon veterinary school in 1761. The second school was created shortly afterwards when the Maison d'Alfort school opened its doors in 1764. From that time onwards, students from all over Europe came to study and, in turn, open veterinary schools in their respective countries, most of which still exist today.



The commemorative postage stamp for veterinary medicine celebrates the founding of the first veterinary school in France in 1761 and was launched at the Second World Conference on Veterinary Education.

Claude Bourgelat (1712–1779) was a lawyer who became involved in horse management and subsequently became director of the Lyon Riding Academy in 1740. He wrote numerous articles relating to the horse in the French Encyclopédie. He went further by promoting the teaching of veterinary medicine.

A host of authors and historians have studied the life and work of this late 18th-century man. However, he was largely unknown in France outside the veterinary profession. His definitive biography was written by Janine Weber-Godde and Philippe Cottureau. With the support of the World Organisation for Animal Health, it was

translated into English and Spanish. A copy of the book was given to each delegate at the Second World Conference on Veterinary Education, which was made possible by a sponsorship from Merial, France.

The postage stamp was created by Sophie Beaujard from illustrations belonging to the Lyon Veterinary School. It depicts a bovine in the background with the typical appearance of cows of that era to emphasise that the teaching was not limited to horses, but also to other species. Her father, Yves Beaujard, did the engraving used to create the commemorative stamp, which was issued by the French Post Office on 14 May 2011.

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male hormones on growth in piglets to the physiology and anatomy of giraffes, springbok and other mammals. He made a cardinal contribution to the science by examining the successes and the failures of game farming to serve as a source of meat for Africa.

After seven years at Mara, Prof Skinner's potential was recognised by, among others, Prof Jan Bonsma, and he was seconded to the University of Pretoria for postgraduate studies. This was his first encounter with the University where he has spent most of his academic career. After obtaining an MSc, he



Prof John Skinner receives the DSc *honoris causa* degree from the University of the Witwatersrand.

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Mamelodi Animal Health Clinic opens its doors to the public

The new Mamelodi Animal Health Clinic (MAHC) opened its doors to the public on Monday, 7 February 2011. The MAHC project was conceived a few years ago by Prof Gerry Swan, dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, together with Mr Edwin Smith, director of the University's Mamelodi Campus.

The actual clinic premises were identified during a tour of the Mamelodi Campus by Dr Henry Annandale, the dean, Dr Roy Meintjies and Dr Liesel van der Merwe. The conversion from sleeping quarters for security personnel into the clinic it is today did not happen overnight and required much planning and negotiating. This transformation also had input and assistance from contractors based at Mamelodi, as well as the Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital (OVAH). It is now a clinic with two consulting rooms, a small laboratory area, a general procedure room, a theatre, a change area, toilets and a small kitchen. A large room nearby serves as a day ward. The aim of the clinic is to supply Mamelodi residents with basic veterinary health care services such as



The community of Mamelodi benefits from the services provided by the new Mamelodi Animal Health Clinic.

vaccination, deworming, sterilisation, endo- and ectoparasite control, and also to treat common diseases such as biliary (babesia). Mamelodi residents are being encouraged to take their pets there for vaccination and treatment.

Although activity at the hospital was slow to begin with, 30 dogs were recently seen in one day, which confirms the belief that the

MAHC is much needed and will, over time, play an important veterinary and educational role in the lives of local pet owners and the greater community. Apart from the benefit to the animals themselves, this will hopefully lead to a number of children being positively exposed to veterinary science and deciding to enrol in the BVSc or Dip Vet Nur programmes in future years.

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proceeded to the University of Cambridge for a PhD on the reproductive endocrinology of livestock. On his return to South Africa, he was appointed as senior professional officer to the chief professional officer of the Division of Reproductive Physiology at the Irene Animal Production Institute.

In 1972, he was appointed director of the newly established Mammal Research Institute at the University of Pretoria, a post which he held for 26 years. During his tenure there, Prof Skinner made the institute the best-known centre for mammal research in Africa, and one of the best known in the world. For many of his years as director

he was also head of the Department of Zoology. Most of his extraordinary research output was done at the Medical Research Institute (MRI).

Prof Skinner has been president of both the Royal Society of South Africa and the Zoological Society of South Africa, and has played a role in various international bodies.

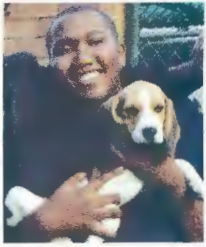
He is a life scientific fellow of the Zoological Society of London, a life fellow of the Institute of Biology, London, a fellow of the Royal Society of South Africa and a life member of the Zoological Society of South Africa and the Wildlife Management Association of South Africa.

His distinction in research has been recognised

by being awarded the 'Gold Medal' of the Zoological Society of South Africa, the Senior Captain Scott Medal of the Biological Society of South Africa and the Merit Award of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science.

He has published more than 350 original scientific papers, and more than 100 PhD and master's students have so far enjoyed his attention and encouragement.

His book, *Mammals of the Southern African subregion*, is the standard text on South African mammals and is unlikely ever to be surpassed. It is found in university libraries all over the world and is a collector's item.



I want to be a veterinarian

In 2010, the Onderstepoort Veterinary and Para-veterinary Student Council (OPVSC) began the "I want to be a vet" initiative to encourage previously disadvantaged school learners to develop an interest in veterinary science and to assist them with their applications to the Onderstepoort veterinary faculty.

The 2011 OPVSC wanted to continue these efforts by presenting the second "I want to be a vet" programme. On the weekend of 15 to 17 April, the OPVSC hosted 32 school learners at Onderstepoort. Learners were selected from schools in disadvantaged communities in all nine provinces. Those studying biological sciences were invited to spend the weekend at the Onderstepoort Campus of the University of Pretoria to learn about veterinary science.

Learners travelled from all over the country to attend the opening evening of the weekend with the OPVSC, members of the Student Representative Council (SRC), faculty staff and the event sponsors. For many, this was their first journey away from home. The learners were addressed by the dean, Prof Gerry Swan, the vice-president of the South African Veterinary Association, Dr Riaan du Preez, and the vice-president of the South African Veterinary Council, Dr Anne de Vos, who gave them an overview of the different aspects of veterinary science and explained why veterinarians play an important role in society.

Sponsors of the event present on the night were Hill's Pet South Africa, represented by Sr Dalene Jansen van Vuuren, and Dr Cliff Meyer of the Honeydew Animal Clinic. Quintin Botha and Helgard Cronje represented

the SRC. Without the generous contributions of these sponsors, this event would not have been possible.

On Saturday morning, the learners donned their 'greens and gumboots' for the first time to embark on a busy Onderstepoort day, starting with a tour of the academic hospital. The students were then introduced to the Anatomy Department, where they watched and participated in a dissection and got to see some interesting comparative specimens, including cheetah, lion, rhino and various animal skeletons.

After tea, the learners had their first animal handling practical, where they got to participate in cattle casting, followed by a sheep-handling practical. Unfortunately, due to rain, the learners were denied their horse-riding adventure, but were still introduced to some of Onderstepoort's Nootgedacht horses and taught how to approach, groom and care for them. The Onderstepoort pigs also made a name for themselves by hunting for food in the learners' gumboots, while the learners were taught more animal husbandry skills and the practical implications of pig farming.

On Saturday afternoon, Dr Quixi Sonntag led the dog handling and behaviour session with the learners and some of Onderstepoort's cutest beagle puppies from the Onderstepoort Teaching Animal Unit. The students had them sitting and leopard-crawling in no time.

The learners thoroughly enjoyed their time at Onderstepoort, learning about and handling animals that some of them had never seen before. Thank you to all the staff, students and sponsors who made this event possible. It is the OPVSC's hope that these learners will become tomorrow's young vets.



Learners meet one of Onderstepoort's beagle puppies.



A demonstration during the "I want to be a vet" weekend.

Umfundi kwaHluvukani

The clinical rotation at the Hluvukani Animal Health Centre provided a welcome interlude for final-year veterinary students from the routines and challenges of working in the Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital (OVAH). Setting off for the Lowveld, they could not help but notice the splendid natural beauty of the surroundings, despite the obviously inferior socio-economic conditions of some of the rural towns and settlements. The students felt extremely privileged to be staying within the borders of the Kruger National Park, especially after being greeted with the sight of two lions sauntering across the road at 05:00 one morning!

In terms of clinical work, the experience gained during these two weeks has proved invaluable. Working with limited resources, often under suboptimal conditions, taught the final-year students to improvise and make the most of what was at their disposal. They were also given more autonomy than usual, which permitted them to make their own clinical judgment of cases and instilled in them a sense of responsibility and independence. The patient base they worked with was also more varied, and a number of conditions were treated, ranging from maggot-infested wounds in cattle (fairly standard issue) to hepatobiliary disorders and nasal foreign bodies in dogs.

The focus of the clinical rotations extended to the community, where students were required to give a number of talks to schoolchildren and farmers. Topics included basic animal care, zoonoses and carrier options. They also visited the Thulamahashe Medical Clinic, where their medical counterparts enlightened them on the state health care system.



Final-year veterinary students completed a clinical rotation at the Hluvukani Animal Health Centre in the Kruger National Park.

This experience was certainly an eye opener. The aspiring vets were also able to exchange ideas with the medical students on various other occasions, as part of the so-called One Health interface.

The students also had opportunities for relaxation and leisure over the weekend. A visit to the Khamai Reptile Centre gave them the chance to perform a necropsy on a boomslang and handle a live puff adder. They also received very informative lectures on steps to follow if bitten by a snake, went on a game drive in the Kruger National Park and visited the Blyde River Canyon.

A few basic suggestions were made to improve the living quarters, the clinic and the One Health interface, but all in all the experience of the rotation was a positive one.

The two-week period was a useful learning exercise and the students would like to thank all those involved, including the University, for providing transport and accommodation. A special word of thanks is due to Dr Greg Simpson, who was always very helpful and accommodating.

OPJ is officially online

The editorial board of the *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Research* (OPJ) is pleased to announce the launch of its fully online journal. Hard copies will no longer be available on a regular basis, but all publications may be accessed online. These are open access journals and may be used by anybody. Should anyone wish to quote the publications, please clear it with the author(s) of that particular publication, because the copyright vests in the respective authors. For the time being, no fees will be asked for staff members on the Onderstepoort Campus, which includes the Faculty of Veterinary Science, the Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute (OVI) and Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP), to publish articles in the journal. You can access and enjoy our website at <http://www.ojvr.org>.

Quality

at the Faculty of Veterinary Science

Several laboratories in the Faculty of Veterinary Science initiated the development and implementation of a quality management system in terms of ISO/IEC 17025:2005 in their laboratories in 2009. Currently, seven of them have obtained approval from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), which means that they are approved to perform work on controlled animal diseases. The laboratories in the departments of Veterinary Tropical Diseases (bacteriology, serology,

molecular biology and virology), Production Animal Studies (the milk laboratory), Paraclinical Sciences (the veterinary pathology laboratory) and Anatomy and Physiology (the Electron Microscopy Unit) were all congratulated and commended for the involvement of their personnel and for their commitment, hard work and perseverance, which made this achievement possible. These laboratories are wished success on the next step of international accreditation.



Bacteriology (left to right): Janita Greyling, Erick Kapp and Sophia Baloyi.



Virology: Carina Lourens (left) and Karen Ebersohn (right).

Knowledge of toxicology can save the planet

We have only one planet! In a recent publication it was stated that "human society is on a collision course with nature" (Phillis et al. 2011, Ecological Economics). At the rate we are destroying our environment in South Africa, this "collision" with nature is significantly expedited. Anthropogenic changes to the environment could affect the health of animals, humans and even ecosystems.

It was decided several years ago to expand the undergraduate Toxicology module (BVSc I) so that issues related to water quality and ecotoxicology could be addressed. Veterinary students should be informed about the burning environmental issues in southern Africa, seeing that some of them will have to investigate these problems as veterinarians, either directly where animal health is affected or indirectly in the case of veterinary public health issues.

In light of the media attention given to acid mine drainage in Gauteng, Mariette Liefferink was invited to present a lecture to students at

Rand. Mariette is the CEO of the non-profit organisation Federation for a Sustainable Environment. Her lecture was enjoyed by a large number of students and faculty members, and most were very concerned about the possible impact acid mine drainage might have on animal and human health in the future.



Cyanotoxin workshop

hosted by Paraclinical Sciences



A grant has been received from FRIMUF, a Norwegian funding organisation, for a collaborative research project to develop and validate diagnostic tools for cyanotoxins in southern Africa. A one-week workshop on this topic was hosted by the Department of Paraclinical Sciences from 4 to 8 April 2011. The workshop focused on the theory behind and development of ELISA methods with the aim of setting up diagnostic capacity at institutions in South Africa, Mozambique and Tanzania.

During the morning sessions, papers on the significance of harmful algal blooms and the ecology, taxonomy, toxicity, toxins and monitoring of harmful algae in limnic waters were presented. The practicals included training and demonstrations in modern and traditional

laboratory methods relevant in harmful algal research, such as light microscopy, cell isolation and quantification, algal culturing, toxicity bio-assays and molecular detection assays. In addition to members of the department, scientists affiliated to the National Veterinary Institute in

Oslo, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique, as well as the CSIR and the Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute of the Agricultural Research Council in South Africa, attended and contributed to the success of the workshop.



Delegates from Norway, Tanzania, Mozambique and South Africa attended the cyanotoxin workshop.

Equine Internship Programme bids doctors farewell

Another year has gone by and the University of Pretoria has had to say goodbye to two dedicated interns who joined the Equine Internship Programme team for a 12-month period. Dr Annie Kullmann and Dr Yolandi du Toit successfully completed their internship after serving in the Equine Hospital of the Onderstepoort Academic Veterinary Hospital (OVAH). Countless days and nights were spent with clinicians, residents and students. Their activities included assisting with diagnostic and therapeutic intervention for horses, caring for critically ill foals and spending numerous evenings with very little sleep! Yolandi has returned to private practice, while Annie has been accepted for a large animal internal medicine residency at Michigan State University, USA.

The Equine Internship Programme commenced in 2007 with Dr Karin Kruger and Dr Robin Moore successfully completing their internship. Since the inaugural year, Dr Anita Voigt, Dr Adrienne Viljoen and Dr Anna Bouwer (2008), Dr Elena Herist and Dr Journee (2009) and Dr Annie Kullmann and Dr Yolandi du Toit have all participated in this programme. Both Dr Kruger and Dr Viljoen have entered into residency programmes. Dr Kruger is currently completing her second year of residency in large animal internal medicine at North Carolina State University, USA. Dr Viljoen, whom many would have seen working in the Equine Hospital at the OVAH, is currently entering the second year of her

equine medicine residency. She is completing a programme that will allow her to obtain a MMedVet (Equine Medicine), as well as board certification from the European College of Equine Internal Medicine.

What was the purpose of the Equine Internship Programme? Five years ago, UP recognised the need to improve the standard of care of hospitalised horses, have better client communication and more importantly, to train new graduates who wanted to be more experienced in equine medicine and surgery. By structuring a 12-month programme with the emphasis on equine medicine and surgery, while also offering rotations in anaesthesiology, theriogenology and

diagnostic imaging, the programme would assist in improving interns' knowledge exponentially so that they could enter into private equine practice or specialise further by applying for an equine residency programme. A residency programme is a three-year programme that allows the incumbent to specialise in the chosen field of study and become a specialist. The successful completion of an internship is a prerequisite for acceptance to participate in many residency programmes throughout the world. This also applies to entrance into the Equine Medicine Residency Programme at the University of Pretoria that allows the participant to become board-certified in equine medicine in both South Africa and Europe.

Everyone in the Equine Hospital would like to extend their best wishes to all the participants in the Equine Internship Programme and to thank them for their dedication and commitment to the programme.

From left to right: Prof Luis M Rubio-Martinez, Prof Montague Saulez, Jurie (a 10-year old Boerperd stallion), Dr Annie Kullmann, Dr Yolandi du Toit, Dr Johan Marais and Dr Patrick Page. Textbooks were presented to Dr Kullmann and Dr Du Toit as gifts of appreciation from the Section of Equine Medicine and Surgery for their dedication and commitment during the internship programme.



Small-scale farmers' project showcases its success

On the morning of 3 March 2011 there was a buzz at the Rietfontein farm near Ventersdorp in North West. Eight excited participants from the Faculty of Veterinary Science's small-scale farmers' project were busily finalising their preparations for a red-letter day on their calendar. Preparations were in honour of distinguished guests from the Old Mutual and Rand Water foundations who had travelled more than 300 km to meet the beneficiaries of their generosity.

Chairs were moved into a meeting room and a table was prepared with delicacies rarely enjoyed, as the men spoke among themselves of the "old days". This farm is in an area where harsh weather conditions often dictate the fortunes of this group, and seven years ago they were still seasonal workers whose income fluctuated and many of the families living on the farm went to bed hungry. They ruminated about how the project, offering training, practical application, mentoring and the necessary equipment, had kick-started and sustained their entrepreneurial dreams. The good natured chuckle from Sagaria, the natural leader of the group, could be heard often while the men worked in their usual companionable way. His contagious happiness is found in the success of the project that facilitated his development into a successful farmer and entrepreneur.

Dr Hendrik Geldenhuys is the local state veterinarian who mentors the farmers with the blessing of the provincial authorities that allow them time and space to be involved



Dr Hendrik Geldenhuys demonstrates to farmers and representatives from Old Mutual and the University of Pretoria the benefits of prickly pears as a fodder during drought conditions.

in this project. This sustainable, income-generating operation for small-scale farmers aims to become a model that could be easily customised and replicated in other areas across the country. Mentorship enabled Sagaria and the other seven beneficiaries to grow beyond their own belief. Today the income from Sagaria's successful piggery is supplemented by a successful spaza shop selling more than a hundred litres of milk per day and some of the farm's produce.

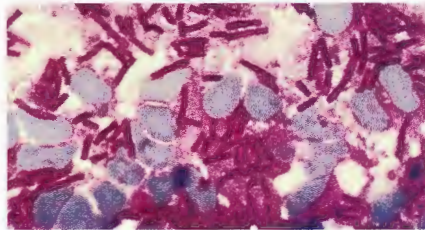
The guests arrived, shaken from a drive on a rough farm road, and were warmly welcomed. Prof Leon Prozesky, the leader of the project, gave a brief presentation on the development plan, combining business and agricultural skills, and elaborated on the successes of the project that sustains 21 families. He also highlighted the academic service learning aspect of the project and explained how

veterinary science students visited the farm at regular intervals to assist with examining livestock and advising on the improvement of the animals' conditions.

The donors then interacted with the farmers and were encouraged to ask questions and verify the true nature of the project as experienced by its beneficiaries. Afterwards Dr Geldenhuys accompanied the group to view the earthworm fertiliser project, trudge through the uneven prickly pear field, see a huge pumpkin proudly displayed by one of the participants and greet the fine herd of cows waiting patiently to stare balefully at the visitors. The meeting concluded with refreshments, a word of thanks from Ms Angie Phaliso from the Rand Water Foundation and a renewed pledge of support from both donors. The farmers were delighted and the visit was considered a great success!

Colloquium

on zoonoses and neglected infectious diseases in Africa



Delegates are invited to attend the Joint Colloquium on Zoonoses and Neglected Infectious Diseases in Africa that is taking place from 1 to 4 November 2011 at the Indaba Hotel in Johannesburg. This is the second in a series of three regional colloquia on research for the control of neglected infectious diseases. It is organised jointly by the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Belgium and the Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases of the University of Pretoria.

The event will offer a platform for animal and human health researchers and professionals to debate common challenges and identify key research priorities for the future. It will

consist of four core sessions, each focusing on a particular group of zoonoses and neglected infectious diseases and a specific cross-cutting topic. These include disease surveillance and intersectoral approaches to control (viral diseases), the role of animals in disease transmission (protozoan diseases), diagnosis and burden of disease (bacterial diseases) and drug use and drug resistance (helminths).

The goal of the colloquium is to review current disease knowledge at the interface of human and animal health and to provide the information needed to more effectively manage such zoonoses and neglected infectious diseases

at national, regional and global levels. The outcomes include the identification of future research directions, the stimulation of intra- and intersectoral collaboration and making recommendations on policy and organised changes, using the underlying science to inform and drive the process.

For more information regarding the colloquium programme, registration and abstract submission, send an email to colloq2011@gmail.com or call the Faculty of Veterinary Science on 012 529 8185 or visit the website at <http://web.up.ac.za/colloquium2011>.

Students attend a darting course to raise funds

On 26 March 2011, the Department of Paraclinical Sciences presented a darting course as a fundraising event for the International Veterinary Student Association's (IVSA) South Africa-Spain exchange programme.

The day started with theoretical lectures on wildlife immobilisation drugs, remote projection systems and medical complications during wildlife immobilisation. Each participant received a compact disc that included all the lecture material.

The theory session was followed by a practical demonstration of the Dan-Inject dart system, after which all the participants had the opportunity to prepare darts and shoot at stationary targets with the rifles. Dawid Roberts and Laura Salisbury (BVSc III) kindly assisted in keeping the shooting range safe and showing the participants how to prepare darts and operate the rifles.

The course was organised by Tanya Viljoen (BVSc III) and the lectures and demonstrations were presented by Dr Leon Venter.



Students learnt all the intricacies related to darting wildlife.

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Norway:

a presentation on high-impact diseases

A course on high-impact contagious and vector-borne diseases that was organised jointly by the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science and the Norwegian Food Safety Authority (Mattilsynet) was presented from 4 to 6 May in Stavanger, Southwest Norway.

Prof Moritz van Vuuren from the Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases was invited to be the keynote speaker, supported by a number of local speakers. Other presenters included Dr Armin Elbers (Central Veterinary Institute, Lelystad, the Netherlands), Dr Keren Bar-Yaakov (Norwegian Food Safety Authority), Dr Bjørn Lium (Norwegian Veterinary Institute), Prof Jacques Godfroid (Norwegian School of Veterinary Science) and Dr Gunilla Hallgren (Statens Veterinärmedicinska Anstalt, Sweden).

Norway is a country with very few infectious diseases that affect its livestock. The objective of this course was to sensitise and update veterinarians working for the Norwegian Food Safety Authority on high-impact and transboundary diseases that may pose a risk to Nordic countries in the wake of recent incursions of serious contagious and vector-borne diseases into many regions of the world. Norway has a population of five million people and a livestock population represented by 400 000 cattle and two million sheep. It strives to protect the current favourable situation in terms of infectious diseases in livestock; hence, the importance attached to a course of this nature for regulatory veterinarians.

Prof Van Vuuren presented several topics during the course that included all the indigenous African transboundary diseases. He shared the South African experience with the course participants following recent outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease, European swine fever,

African horse sickness, porcine respiratory and reproductive syndrome, Rift Valley fever and other viral haemorrhagic fevers.

The course on high-impact diseases followed on a similar course that was presented in Oslo, Norway, in 2009. It forms part of the activities covered by the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science and the Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Pretoria. This was renewed for a period of five years in August 2009, and included the scientific cooperation agreement that was conducted under article 1 of the MoU.



From left to right: Prof Moritz van Vuuren, Prof Maria Stokstad, Dr Armin Elbers, Dr Tone Kjeang, Prof Torleiv Loken and Dr Keren Bar-Yacov.

Vets in Vienna

Pfizer held a two-day conference in Vienna in November last year to which Prof Neil Duncan of the Department of Paraclinical Sciences in the Faculty of Veterinary Science was invited. Out of the 308 people invited, 226 were vets, and 24 countries were represented.

The conference was held at the Intercontinental Hotel in central Vienna. The first area that was covered involved advancements in infectious bronchitis (IB) diagnostics, pathology, serotyping, serological responses to vaccine and field challenges, and new variant vaccines (especially against the latest strain causing problems worldwide – the Chinese QX strain). Pfizer also intends to carry out a worldwide survey on IB. After this, each country or region will know exactly which serotypes are present in their specific area (something South Africa does not know at the moment).

The second area that was covered at the conference was the concept of *in ovo* vaccination, whereby the vaccine is introduced into the hatching egg at 19 days of incubation. This allows the vaccine to escape the deleterious effects of maternal immunity, as well as reducing the problems associated with on-farm vaccinations. While this concept is well known and widely used overseas, it is not used in South Africa at a commercial level due to the large numbers of chicks required to make it financially feasible. However, it will probably become the accepted method in the future, as this is the direction some of the vaccine companies are moving towards.

As is the case with such conferences, time was also set aside for attendees to see some of the city and to socialise with their colleagues from around the world. Art galleries, winter markets, palaces and the famous Lipizzaners at the Spanish Riding School formed part of the social programme.

It was a good conference with directed, clear presentations balanced by an interesting and well thought out social programme.



A little evening fun at a Vienna night market.



When the vets weren't hard at work, this was their playground.

Maximus's journey (continued from page 1)



The unique operation was performed on 26 May 2011 in the Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital. The photographs show Maximus before and after the operation. A big thank you to Røth Medical who supplied the titanium reconstruction plates and screws for the operation.

PGSA approaches 2011 with renewed energy

There are approximately 260 postgraduate students in the Faculty of Veterinary Science. Postgrads can be found in every department, usually engaged in tireless research-related activities. This group comes from diverse backgrounds, skill sets, cultures and interests. In March, a new committee of the Postgraduate Student Association (PGSA) was elected to represent the postgraduate students' interests on the Onderstepoort Campus. The PGSA office is located in room 2-28 of the Arnold Theiler building. They can be contacted at 012 529 8409 or via email at op.pgsa@gmail.com.

The following members were elected to the new committee:

- President: Elizabeth Matshidiso Debeila
- Secretary: Tshepiso Jan Makhafola
- Treasurer: Thanyani Emelton Ramadwa
- Public Relations Officer: Okechukwu Chinazo Ndumnego
- Web Coordinator: Ayesha Zahra Hassim
- Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases: Dikeledi Petunia Malatji

Department of Anatomy: Umar Mohammed Bello
The PGSA aims to be more hands-on in dealing with postgraduate student concerns in 2011. In this regard, the committee is already

working on improving communication and networking to disseminate information relevant to students. Be on the lookout for more news and updates.



Back (left to right): Umar Mohammed Bello (Anatomy), Dikeledi Petunia Malatji (Veterinary Tropical Diseases), Ayesha Zahra Hassim (Web Coordinator) and Okechukwu Chinazo Ndumnego (Public Relations Officer). Front (left to right): Tshepiso Jan Makhafola (Secretary), Elizabeth Matshidiso Debeila (President) and Thanyani Emelton Ramadwa (Treasurer).



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BACKGROUND

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Pets' picnic in the park

On Sunday, 17 April 2011, the first-year veterinary nursing students of 2011 hosted a charity event at Rietondale Park in Pretoria. It took the form of a pets' picnic in the park and all donations went to the Joey Gracie McConnell Animal Foundation.

The purpose of the event was to raise awareness of animal health, grooming and behavioural care, as well as to let pets and their owners have a fun-filled day. The day began with performances from the Canine Freestyle dancers, which incorporated obedience and routines to music with owners and their pets. For most people, this was the highlight of the day. There were also various competitions, including a talent show and a lookalike competition, as well as competitions for the dog with the waggiest tail, the cutest dog and the naughtiest dog.

For those interested in a more educational experience, Q&A sessions were conducted by a veterinarian (Dr Kate May), a groomer (Was 'n Woef) and a behavioural trainer (Dr Quixi Sonntag). Sister Nicolien Fourie represented the veterinary nursing profession on the day. Members of the public could also while away their time at the many stalls that promoted pet-related products and services.

Donations were collected in the form of cash, as well as old or new pet-related products (blankets, food, collars and leads). In total, donations to the value of over R20 000 were presented to the Joey Gracie McConnell Animal Foundation. This included 450 kg of dog food sponsored by Royal Canin. Three raffles were held, with the winner of the grand prize in the main raffle receiving a weekend away at the Penwam Trout and Equine Estate in KwaZulu-Natal worth R5 000. The three runners-up each received a free wheel alignment from AutoWiel. The winners of the two smaller raffles received cat hampers worth R400 each, sponsored by the Mog-n-Mutt Pet Food Shop at the Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital (OVAH), and a T-shirt personally signed by the Parlotones.

The students are very grateful to Penwam Trout and Equine Estate, Royal Canin, Was 'n Woef, Queenswood SuperSpar, Cassendale Spar, Bayer, Virbac, AfriVet, Canine Connection, the Mog-n-Mutt Pet Food Shop, Shaun-Lee Photo, AutoWiel, the Veterinary Nurses Association of South Africa and many others for their support and sponsorship. A big thank you also goes out to Sister Botha for her assistance.

The feedback received was so positive that the veterinary nursing students have been asked to do a repeat performance again next year. Their goal is for this to become an annual event organised by all the nursing students so that they can help change the world one paw at a time.



OP students visit Le Croc

Students doing the elective subject, Wildlife Ostrich and Crocodile Health (WOC610), recently visited the ultramodern crocodile farm, Le Croc, to learn more about this fascinating industry. This visit was organised by the WOC students and Dr Jan Myburgh and Dr Fritz Huchzermeyer from the Department of Paraclinical Sciences accompanied them to the farm. The whole Saturday morning was spent investigating and discussing different aspects of intensive crocodile farming in close contact with these animals.



Dr Fritz Huchzermeyer explains the unique anatomy of the Nile crocodile to the enthusiastic WOC students.

Le Croc has a tannery on the farm, and this was a golden opportunity for the students to see the whole spectrum – from the big breeders to the hatchlings and then the final product in the form of beautifully tanned skins.

Several post-mortems were performed on carcasses from the abattoir to illustrate the normal anatomy of the Nile crocodile to

the WOC students. Stefanie Muenscher, a postgraduate student who is busy validating a non-invasive method (using faecal samples) to determine stress levels in crocodiles, also accompanied the group and explained her MSc project to the students.

Other points that were discussed and investigated were crocodile endocrinology,

breeding management, incubation of eggs, health of hatchlings, crocodile nutrition, the physical handling of crocodiles (a crocodile of 2 m long was caught to show the students), skin quality and common health problems. The group of enthusiastic WOC students ended the day with a braai on the farm.



EspanJOL 2011

Three quantum vehicles, four provinces, 13 South African veterinary students, 14 days and 16 Spanish veterinary students: this was the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA) Group Exchange in April. The goal of this exchange was to promote the veterinary profession and opportunities that South Africa uniquely offers. It was the perfect platform for cultural, historical, veterinary and social activities between colleagues and friends.

Fundraising was an integral part of the planning for this exchange and several academic and social events were organised to make this happen. This included the Onderstepoort Diary 2011, the IVSA Darting Course, the Royal Canin Piglet Derby and quine Radiology posters, among others.

The Spaniards were warmly welcomed at OR Tambo Airport on 19 April with vuvuzelas, flags and plenty of OP spirit. The first priority was to introduce the foreigners to two very important traditions: the South African braai and rugby. Throughout their time together, Dr Louis van Schalkwyk and Dr Roy Bengis delivered fascinating lectures and the two weeks that followed were packed with activities and information for both the Spanish and the South African students.

This busy itinerary kicked off at the community veterinary clinic in Sqshanguve, which displayed some of the challenges that South Africa has when working in an informal settlement. Just after that, students were introduced to the University's Ngunt cattle. The next few days were full of adventure visiting places like Thaba Kwene (Crocodile Mountain), where the students enjoyed delicious croc-burgers, Hartebeespoort Dam's Elephant Sanctuary, God's Window and Three Rondawels in Mpumalanga, and even a visit to the Hluvukani Animal Health Clinic.



Running for puppies

with parvo!

In 2010, students and staff of Onderstepoort participated in the gruelling Comrades Marathon to raise funds for puppies with parvo (cat flu). A total of R4 000 was raised in this way.

On 23 April this year, they tackled the Two Oceans Ultra Marathon. The enthusiastic team of athletes comprised Dr V McClure, Dr Collin Albertyn, Dr Melvyn Quan, final-year student Stephanie Mallory and Sr Mandy Albertyn.

Sponsorship forms were available and the team went around Onderstepoort asking for donations or sponsorships for each kilometre the runners complete.

The funds are required for puppies with parvo, as their owners often do not have the



Athletic veterinarians and veterinary nurses raise funds for puppies with Parvo by competing in marathons across the country.

R3 000 that is required for treatment. Some of the money raised will also be donated to a foundation for community education.

If you are interested in supporting this worthy cause, please do not hesitate to e-mail mandyw@up.ac.za or stephaniemallory@hotmail.co.uk.

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.

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