

# Community Engagement Newsletter



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

## Faculty of Veterinary Science

Autumn: March 2018



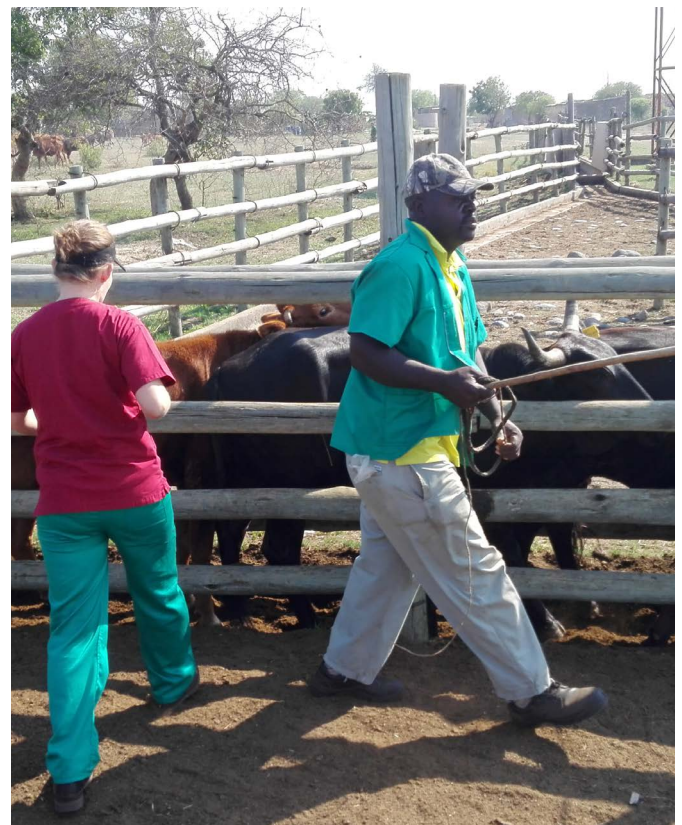
# THIS IS WHY

Deborah Jemima Chetty (BVSc VI)

You think with the amount of sleep one gets before a road trip, one would be passed out in the car for the seven-odd hours' drive, while occasionally sight-seeing petrol stations and vast land speckled with cattle.

What our eyes witnessed meandering through the most beautiful Mpumalanga province laced with pine trees, life-giving lakes and dams with mountains exuding boldness and confidence, was indeed a sight to behold. Being greeted by a herd of elephants upon arrival was the warmest welcome we could have received. This was followed by greetings from zebra, wildebeest and buck, as if we were cast in the great Circle of Life.

Whilst waking at three or four am seemed a treacherous crime on a Monday morning (and, well, every work day), we had our day's work cut out for us at the Hluvukani Animal Health Clinic (HAHC). The HAHC was immaculately maintained, with equipment partitioned according to the corresponding labels and a well-stocked orderly pharmacy. The region was experiencing a foot-and-mouth disease outbreak, so strict biosecurity was implemented and students were assigned to dirty and clean areas. Our team comprised Dzunisani Ngobeni, Carina Sibio, Bradley Taylor and myself, emanating an explosion of colours – a true "rainbow nation", as Dzuni stated proudly – united in one cause. And may I just add: we made a fine team! Dr Louise Biggs took to our names from day one and went on to amaze us all. She possessed a fountain of knowledge that sprang forth with more



*Students helping animal health technicians vaccinate cattle against foot-and-mouth disease at the communal diptank.*

vigour each day. Her optimism and passion for the community and their animals was so unrelentingly refreshing, and her life philosophies, which came with her years of experience, were so real and authentic.

Each of us grew in confidence as Dr Biggs lived out the example of what a clinician should be – something we were far from accustomed to. She trusted us. She believed in us. She saw our potential. She gave credit where credit was due. She was just and fair. All our cases were performed one hundred percent by ourselves, no matter if we had done it before or not, no matter if we did not know what to do, no matter if we were terrible at it. We did it all. Procedures involving intravenous drugs to the jugular and joints, bandages, tourniquet applications, splints, burdizzoing, bandages, wound management, mouthing, rectals and – have I mentioned bandages? (shout-out to the epic nurses that get this so painfully correct!) – were performed. Like a well-nurtured seed watered daily with encouragement and affirmation, we grew and thrived in the tasks laid before us. This has been a phenomenal experience; having gained prime knowledge and the practical skill set to work agonistically, whilst serving the thankful and humble community.

Our two weeks involved novel cases of cattle, goats and pigs, with some dogs to add to the variety. Without the expert handling and restraint from Vincent, Stanley and Philemon who also threw in Xitsonga 101, none of our work could have been achieved. They put themselves in the firing line daily, with much blood, pain and sweat, all to allow us to efficiently examine and treat the animal at hand. I have not seen bravery, agility and skill that could match that of these men.

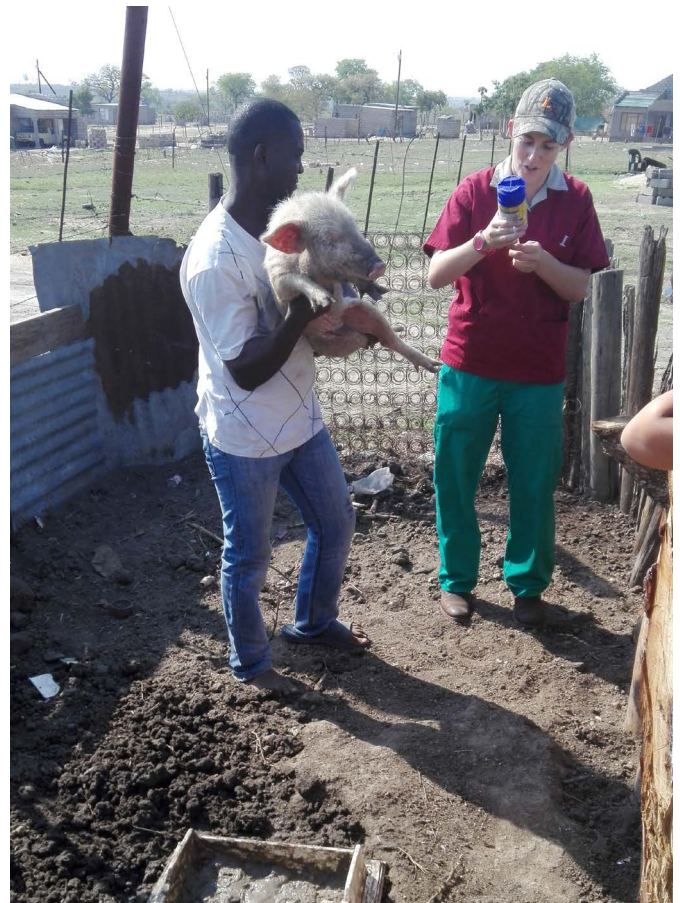
A definite highlight for the community, which brought tears to Dr Biggs's eyes and lit the children's faces with bright smiles, was our school engagement project. With Dzuni being the mastermind behind it all, we were able to produce a musical, incorporating acting, singing and guitar to educate the children on the five freedoms in their language of Xitsonga. By getting down on our hands and knees, mimicking animal movements and noises, "it was indeed a humbling experience" – the words Carina so perfectly summed it up.

Towards the evenings, we were exhausted, filthy, smelly, irritable and ravenous, but the drive from the Orpen gate to Hans Hoheisen was worth while. After admiring the beautiful nature, we could reflect on our accomplishments for the day. Life is about the little things; the little victories. The simple fact that our service

eased an animals' pain outshone everything else we did. It made the farmers' load easier. It put a smile on their face and engraved appreciation in their hearts. It gave them hope. It gave us hope. Simply put, there is no greater reward than that of gratitude.

HAHC rekindled my flame of passion for this career; a flame I am honest to admit was barely flickering for the past months. To claim it is the best clinic Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital has to offer is a pure understatement. Those two simple, hard-working, life-giving weeks made me realise why I am doing what I am doing; and this is why.

*Photographs by Dr Luke Arnot*



*Student treating a pig with skin mites.*

## PRIMARY HORSE CARE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

Tyla Mitchison (BVSc III)

On 6 June 2017, our group of five third-year veterinary science students implemented the Veterinary Professional Life (VPL) community project in the Orange Valley community, in collaboration with the Highveld Horse Care Unit (HHCU). This is a project we had been working towards for the entire year thus far, and we were very excited to finally see it through.

Due to the community partners mainly involving themselves with horses in the nearby community, we decided that a project following the horse care route would be our best bet. After meeting with the HHCU team and discussing our ideas, we

decided to do research into making horse halters from recyclable materials such as old T-shirts. This was the main skill we wanted to teach the community; however, we also decided to speak on the primary wound care of horses, and African Horse Sickness



*The veterinary science students in the Orange Valley.*

(which has recently been a major problem in the community). Our community project was very interactive, as we worked in smaller groups and taught hands-on horse care skills.

The day was busy and very tiring, but in the end it was worth it to leave the community knowing we had made a difference in the lives of others. The community was very pleased to have us there and we could tell that they were listening to every word that we



*Community members learn valuable skills from the students.*

said. I believe that we left the community having imparted some valuable skills. I hope that the community members that were present at our project will share their new skills with others.

We really enjoyed this experience and we learnt more than I ever thought we could have through this short project. It was a pleasure working with such a wonderful group of students and learning something new from each and every one of them.



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

Dr Eugene Machimana 012 529 8100  
 Sr Sarah Johnson 012 529 8387

Senior Lecturer: Community Engagement Chairperson [eugene.machimana@up.ac.za](mailto:eugene.machimana@up.ac.za)  
 Small Animal Section Head and Referrals Co-ordinator [sarah.johnson@up.ac.za](mailto:sarah.johnson@up.ac.za)

## VETSCO VENTURES TO WINTERVELD

Uzair Carrim (BVSc IV and VETSCO Committee member)

The Veterinary Student Community Outreach Committee (VETSCO) organises two bovine outreaches on an annual basis. This is one of our biggest events for the year and a vast number of students eagerly sign up to participate in this amazing learning experience.

The outreach grants students the opportunity to gain hands-on experience that leaves every student feeling like a veterinarian.

Extensive planning and organising was done months before the day of the

outreach, which occurred on Saturday, 24 June 2017. On Thursday, 22 June 2018, training for the outreach took place. This mandatory training reminded the students how to perform basic clinical exams, vaccinate skillfully and how to appropriately address the farmers and

community members in the area. We had to highlight the importance of welfare and safety in the rural communities.

On the Saturday morning, before sunrise, 60 veterinary science students boarded a large bus, which was headed



*Even though students were immersed in dirt and smelled like cattle dung, they were thrilled that they had real clinical experience.*

towards Winterveld. We arrived at 07:30 and were welcomed by the friendly state veterinarians and animal health technicians. The students were then split into four large groups. Each group comprised 15 students from the same year level of study. Furthermore, we divided the Committee members evenly between each group. Most Committee members had previously attended numerous outreaches and were able to help coordinate the tasks of the day. A state veterinarian or animal health technician was assigned to lead each group.

Travelling to the designated farms required each group to jump onto the back of a bakkie. We drove on dirt roads through a magnificent landscape filled with stinkboom and marula trees. During this short ride, we also came across random herds of Nguni cattle and wondering goats. Once we arrived at the farm gate, we were greeted by beautiful orange orchids and hundreds of cattle. The tasks performed by each group were divided into two stations: pharmacy and vaccination. Pharmacy consisted of five students drawing up the vaccinations. The vaccination station consisted of ten students who administered the vaccines. BVSc students in the third to fifth year, as well as the second-year nurses, were given preference to the vaccinations. Farm workers, together with some students, helped herd the cattle into a crush. The crushes at the locations were not ideal, as rural areas lack the infrastructure to build stable and secure crushes. We used intuition and made use of our surroundings to overcome this problem. The biggest challenge was trying to herd as much cattle as we could to fill the crush, but at times, this proved most difficult and we ended up having to work on a large crush that had very few cattle.

Each group received four bottles of anthrax, three bottles of botulism and one bottle of black quarter. The group members administered 1 ml of anthrax vaccine, 2 ml of botulism and 2 ml of black quarter vaccines subcutaneously. Among the issues that arose were not having enough syringes and needles, and having too little black quarter and botulism vaccines. BVSc second-year students were given the option to dose the goats with Maxicare (dewormer). The fourth- and fifth-year students were given the opportunity to perform rectal exams for pregnancy diagnosis as part of their reproduction practical training.

The outreach ended at approximately 14:00, and all groups met at a central location. Even though students were immersed in dirt and smelled like cattle dung, they were thrilled that they had real clinical experience and I am positive that many created long-lasting memories and new friends along the way. Before we departed back to Onderstepoort Campus,

we captured one last group photograph as proof of our hard work and memorable experience.

We would like to acknowledge the sponsorship of 15 bottles of anthrax and 30 bottles of botulism vaccines from Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP) and the kind cash donation from the Department of Production Animals, which we used to buy seven bottles of black quarter vaccine.

I would like to thank the hardworking farmers of Winterveld and dedicated state veterinarians and animal health technicians for sacrificing their weekend to give us this unforgettable experience. VETSCO would like to thank Mr William Khutu and Mr Tsholofelo Mojanaga. I would also like to thank the enthusiastic students at Onderstepoort Campus and the VETSCO Committee for their dedication and contribution to this outreach; without you all, this would not have been possible.



*Cattle were treated in the local crushes.*

# MEETING

Community Engagement Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, 24 May 2018 at 13:30.

## Dr Eugene Machimana receives 2018 EASA Postgraduate Medal: Doctoral Award

Chris van Blerk (Head: Communications and Media)

Dr Eugene Machimana, Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Veterinary Science and previous Community Engagement Coordinator of the Faculty was awarded the 2018 Education Association of South Africa (EASA) Postgraduate Medal: Doctoral Award at a special gala evening held at the Elangeni Hotel in Durban on 16 January 2018.

The annual EASA conference, this year hosted by the University of KwaZulu-Natal, represents a platform for higher education institutions to share their experiences through paper and poster presentations. EASA is an association that strives to promote excellence in educational research and science by means of interactive network formation and inclusive discourse by developing education, training and community development.

Dr Machimana's award is in recognition of the successful completion of his PhD degree and subsequent publications based on the study for which two papers were presented by him at the conference. These had the following titles:

1. Higher education-rural school partners' expectations and power dynamics of a community engagement partnership
2. Benefits and barriers of higher education community engagement in the South African rural school context: non-researcher partners' perspective

His longitudinal study is titled "Retrospective experiences of a rural school partnership: informing global citizenship as a higher education agenda" and is available from <http://hdl.handle.net/2263/60954>. According to Dr Machimana his study at the Department of Educational Psychology in the Faculty of Education was conducted as part of a larger study called Flourishing Learning Youth (FLY), with Prof Liesel Ebersöhn as the principal investigator.

FLY is an intervention that builds on a collaborative community engagement partnership, and was established in 2005 between the University of Pretoria,

the Centre for the Study of Resilience, the Faculty of Educational Psychology and a remote South African secondary school located in the Enhlanzeni District Municipality in Mpumalanga. The main research purpose of FLY is to build knowledge of risk and resilience in rural schools by leveraging higher education and school community engagement partnership.

"It is indeed an honour to have received this award. Credit must go to Prof Ebersöhn for believing in me and for the nomination for the EASA award," Dr Machimana said. He therefore also dedicated the award to his two study supervisors, Prof Ebersöhn and Dr Maximus Monaheng Sefotho. "Many people contributed to the successful completion of my PhD degree whose support I really appreciate. Gratitude goes to Prof Henry Annandale, Mr Chris van Blerk and Dr Paul van Dam (Faculty of Veterinary Science) as well as Mr Pieter and Ms Wilna Swart in Fish Hoek, Cape Town. I furthermore appreciate the support that I received from all the partners involved in the long-term higher education-rural school community engagement partnership," he said.

Dr Machimana reserved special words of appreciation for his family: "My wife, Nondumiso, and Tomtenda and Tatenda (our handsome sons) paid a heavy price by living with an "absent" husband and father between 2013 and 2016 as they afforded me the space to pursue my doctoral degree. I will forever be indebted to them for this achievement. Thank you also to my mother, Ruth, for encouraging me and granting us siblings the opportunity to study. How I wish that the late Mr John Lawrence Machimana, my father, was here



*Dr Eugene Machimana after receiving his award.*



*Dr Eugene Machimana, Prof Liesel Ebersöhn and Dr Maximus Monaheng Sefotho at the gala evening.*

with us so that I could personally thank him for his contribution to our lives," he said.

Finally, Dr Machimana thanked the EASA team, under the leadership of Prof Motlalepule Ruth Mampame, for honouring him with the prestigious 2018 Postgraduate Medal: Doctoral Award.

# MOGALE PRIMARY SCHOOL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

Nydia-lee Brits, Anja Uys, Jennifer Adams, Luke Michaelides and Lulama Nsele (BVSc III)

We are third-year veterinary science students that study at the University of Pretoria (UP). Our subject, Veterinary Professional Life (VPL) 300, is a course that allowed us to further our knowledge and skills with regard to communities.



*Group 12 conducted their community engagement project at Mogale Primary School in Mamelodi.*

We learn how to engage with community members, as well as how to interact with our peers and formulate intellectual group decisions that can benefit communities and the environment. We are Group 12, which comprises five veterinary science students. Our group was allocated to the Mamelodi community, where we worked in collaboration with the Mamelodi Animal Health Clinic (MAHC) and Mogale Primary School. Our project was implemented on 7 June 2017 at the Mogale Primary School. We were allocated this date as it suited the learners and their teachers, especially in the midst of their examination timetable. We were very honoured that they made time in their busy academic schedule for us. We gave each of the three Grade 7 classes a 30-minute presentation and a permanent poster was left in each of the three classrooms. The purpose of this is to help reinforce the take-home message we wanted to leave behind. We also visited the high school learners that were part of the Mae Jemison Science Reading Room at the University's Mamelodi Campus. We

delivered a presentation to the high school learners about the importance of veterinary science in communities, as well as a few basic concepts of Rabies.

Our project aimed to help the Grade 7 learners get a clear understanding of the importance of basic animal health care, basic concepts on dog training, the One Health concept, important aspects regarding dog behaviour and language for dog bite prevention, as well as how to improve relationships with animals and pets. We also wanted to help the learners understand the basic role of a veterinarian. This project sought to encourage learners to be more aware of their animals and animals around them within and around their communities. We aimed to inspire the learners and stimulate their minds by using a visual approach; posters containing pictures with minimal wording, which helped to overcome any language barriers. We dressed up to help encourage the visual image we wished to portray. We were privileged enough to acquire 170

sponsored Rabies booklets that were given to the Faculty of Veterinary Science by the Global Alliance for Rabies Control to give to the learners with whom we interacted. These booklets helped us by reinforcing the knowledge we conveyed to the learners. These booklets are beneficial, because they not only convey the message to the learners, but also because it can be passed on to the family members of the learners when the booklets are taken home.

We found out that the school had introduced a support group called Soul Buddies that ensured that learners were not alone with regards to any particular difficult situation they were potentially facing within this community. Soul Buddies is a non-profit organisation (NPO) that allows learners to come together and face their struggles together and get help from organisations that address issues such as HIV/Aids and rape. Soul Buddies invites guest speakers who would inspire the learners towards a positive future. We were asked that this community engagement

project be implemented annually at this school as it would benefit the learners to become positive about animals. It also has the potential to encourage learners to learn more about the veterinary science field. We hope to have benefitted each learner and that the knowledge we shared with them was exciting and interesting. The struggle within communities is beyond our comprehension, but we believe that our enthusiasm and love for our field of study encouraged the learners and that a little bit of hope was planted into their hearts. The learners at the Mae Jemison Science Reading Room were enthusiastic and, despite their time allocated for examination preparation, they still listened to us.

The community engagement project was a significant learning experience; it opened our eyes to the different challenges communities like Mamelodi face. Furthermore, it gave us ideas on how we can help combat some of these issues. We were always aware of the poverty and difficult living circumstances within and around communities, but spending the day in Mamelodi and engaging with the learners really gave us a sense of appreciation and a new perspective on life. The absolute thankfulness, positive spirit and exceptional manners each learner had will never be forgotten. We learnt that humility can come in many different sizes. The joy and gratitude the learners had for what they have was something we most definitely learnt from them. No matter what they had to face, their spirit and joy was never burdened by their current circumstances. In our group, we were very much in sync with each other – like a living organism, each



*As the students spoke and shared their life stories, more and more learners asked questions about the veterinary science field of study.*

member was a specialised organ doing its job to ensure that we function efficiently. We got a lot done together and contributed as much as we could to educating the learners at Mogale Primary School.

were bright and enthusiastic about life. The learners had impeccable manners and we truly were so impressed by their behaviour.

The major highlight for us was how we were appreciated at the school. They welcomed us with wide open arms. The excitement of the learners was always at full force. The learners listened intently and could answer all our questions. The interaction was phenomenal and the knowledge of the learners far surpassed what would be expected of their age group. These learners

We noticed that many of the learners at the Mae Jemison Science Reading Room were not interested in being veterinarians, but as we spoke and shared our life stories, more and more learners asked questions. They became very interested in the veterinary science field of study, which was most definitely a highlight for us. We were indeed privileged to have a fantastic group to work with and that made every other experience a bonus.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Event	Venue	Date
Production Animal Outreach Clinic	Makapanstad and Ratjjean Project	Tuesdays and Wednesdays
Mamelodi Animal Health Care (MAHC)	Mamelodi Campus	Mondays to Fridays
Mnisi Community Project	Hlulukani	Mondays to Fridays



### DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO PUBLISH?

The Community Engagement Committee invites you to submit short articles to be published in the next Newsletter (Winter 2018). The Community Engagement article should not be more than one page long.

**Contact person:** Dr Eugene Machimana  
**Tel:** (012) 529 8100 (w) | **Email:** eugene.machimana@up.ac.za

Visit the UP Community Engagement Management System (CEMS) for updates about community project opportunities.