

VOLUME 4 • NO 2
Summer 2004

OP NEWS

From the Desk of the Dean

**The end of the year is close by, and not a day too soon
for some of us.**

This year did not only bring the end of the amalgamation process but also its own stresses and strains that left an imprint on the minds of the staff of the Faculty, and sometimes on their bodies too. In the end, I have a feeling that the Faculty and its members are better off than they were a year ago. There is a degree of stability and commitment that was lacking in the past.

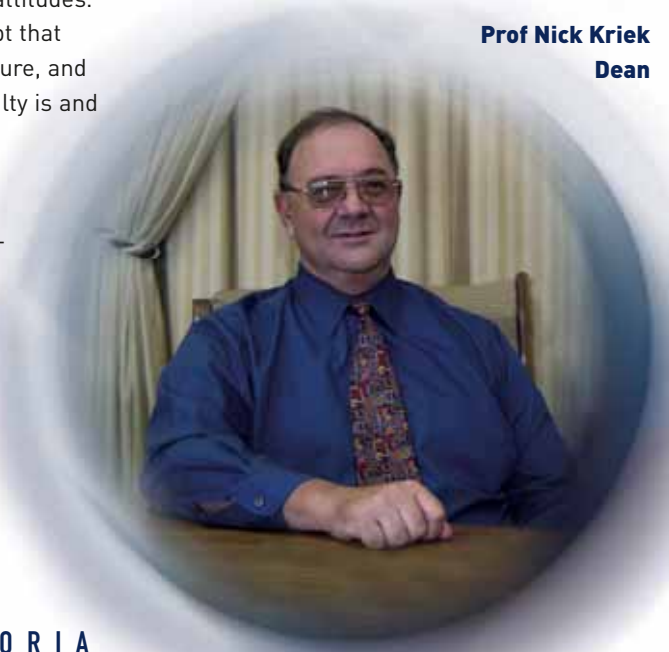
Looking at the Faculty's management data, I have no doubt that the improvement is not a figment of my imagination but a reality that is based on improving outputs and attitudes. Given the opportunity, I have no doubt that these trends will continue into the future, and that the expectations of what this Faculty is and should be, will be realised.

Next year, and in the medium term, the activities of the Faculty must be strengthened, and more resources put into those areas in which our strengths lie, as well as in those areas that address the needs of the country.

There are major challenges: financial, political, regional and international that will influence our activities and those will have to be considered with a fresh mind in the New Year. I have no doubt that we will have to apply our minds and energy to these issues to guarantee the future of the Faculty.

I would like to thank you all for your commitment during the course of the year. I wish you all a well-earned rest during the month of December, and a peaceful Christmas season. Best wishes too for the New Year and I trust that you will all come back in January with renewed commitment to deal with the challenges of the future.

**Prof Nick Kriek
Dean**





Dispelling the myths about research

Dr M. de Vries – Biomedical Research Centre

Earlier this year the the University of Pretoria's Biomedical Research Centre (UPBRC) organised a workshop for interested students regarding the welfare- and ethical issues around animals used in research and teaching.

The workshop was organised in conjunction with the Department of Companion Animal Clinical Studies and was sponsored by Nola. The NSPCA and the Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, Prof Nick Kriek, were actively involved in the planning and development of the project.

Experts in the fields of research, ethics, regulation, drug registration and animal care spoke on the role of animal research in drug development, the necessity of animal research in the various fields of medical science, the procedures and requirements to obtain Ethics Committee approval for this, as well as alternatives to research on animals.

Dr. Roland Auer introduced the students to UPBRC's national and international role, and Ingrid Rosendahl from Nola's petfood division talked about the use of animals in food trials. Addressing a more practical issue, a clinical psychologist discussed the emotional aspects of working with research animals.

The UPBRC recently moved to the Onderstepoort campus and is thus geographically linked to the Faculty of Veterinary Science. The reason for involving the students was not only to dispel myths about the use of animals in research and teaching, but also to give interested students an opportunity to get involved in environmental and social enrichment for the research animals stationed on the campus.

The response was incredible. About eighty second, third and fourth year veterinary students attended the workshop and more than forty subsequently volunteered to become involved in ongoing enrichment of the animals. In practical terms this means taking time off from studying to interact with animals in ways that will improve their quality of life, without affecting the outcomes of research.

The volunteers will get a chance to focus on their species of interest, including rodents, dogs and farm animals, while some will be more active in aiding research about alternatives to animal use. For the first time in the history of the faculty, veterinary students, veterinarians and veterinary technologists involved in research, will be working together to complement each other, and to reach the common goal of improving the lives of the animals under our care.

While the benefit to the UPBRC animals is undeniably great, possibly the best outcome of this venture was becoming aware of how much people are willing to do in order to make a difference. Many speakers and students went beyond the call of duty out of compassion and concern.

For more information on this project, please contact Dr M. de Vries on (012) 529 8472 or Dr R. Auer on (012) 529 8082.

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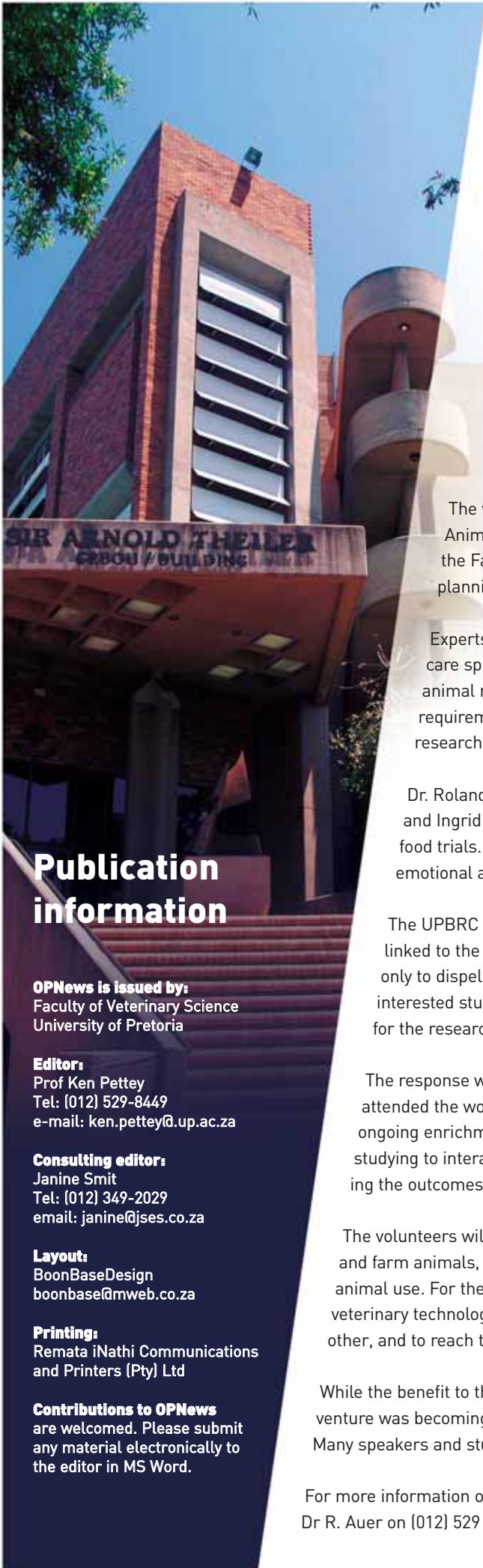
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This edition of *OPNews* does not have any details of the class of 1927. Dr R D Bigalke, the chairperson of the Veterinary History Committee of the South African Veterinary Association was unable to supply *OPNews* with an article on this class as he recently underwent spinal surgery. However, Dr Bigalke's spinal surgery was successful and we can look forward to the continuation of this series of articles in the next edition!

Veterinary Science joins partners to tackle African health issues

Chris van Blerk - Head: Marketing and Communication

Veterinary tropical diseases are an issue of great concern, especially when one considers the impact that tick-borne diseases, in particular, have on livestock that is the prime source of food for many African communities.

The Faculty of Veterinary Science has taken an important step in addressing this issue through the signing of a trilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the African Union Centre for Ticks and Tick-borne diseases (CTTBD) in Malawi and the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Belgium. Together with these two research centres, the Faculty's Departments of Veterinary Tropical Diseases and Production Animal Studies will collaborate to find research and training solutions, that will help prevent ticks and tick-borne diseases within the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Prof Nick Kriek, Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science at Onderstepoort (left) and Dr Misheck Mulumba, Director of the CTTBD at the signing ceremony at the Faculty of Veterinary Science.

The MoU was preceded by important groundwork done by the Head of the Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases, Prof Koos Coetzer, and the Director of the CTTBD, Dr Misheck Mulumba over the last few years. A visit to Malawi in August by the Dean of the Faculty, Prof Nick Kriek, Prof Andy Mogotlane, Vice-Principal at UP, Prof Coetzer and Mr Chris van Blerk, Head of Marketing and Communication at the Faculty, concluded the discussions prior to the finalising of the MOU.

The MoU aims to develop and nurture new partnerships and to share human and material resources. The respective representatives agreed that the institutions should establish and promote mutually beneficial scientific, training and other relations. The agreement will be valid for four years, and will be reviewed within one year prior to termination. Two of the most important elements of the MOU relate to scientific cooperation and cooperation in education and training.

Scientific cooperation will be broadened, strengthened and supported through, among other things, exchange of scientists, staff and postgraduate students for research training; and exchange of postgraduate students for research towards MSc and PhD degrees and joint research projects - preferably involving other partner institutes in the European Union (EU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). It will also include the exchange of research findings and materials and the organisation of and participation in scientific seminars and courses.

Cooperation in education and training will be developed through the exchange of teaching materials, staff, postgraduate students, joint training courses and the use of each other's facilities.



News from SASVEPM

Wilna Vosloo - President: SASVEPM

The fourth annual conference on the Southern African Society for Veterinary Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine (SASVEPM) was held in August and was attended by 75 delegates from South Africa, Namibia, Malawi, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Belgium, USA and Denmark.

The conference consisted of continuing education (CE) sessions as well as a normal conference program of paper and poster presentations. The plenary speaker, Prof Paul Rheeder, Head of the Clinical Epidemiology Department, touched on the idea of One Medicine, i.e. the simultaneous use of both human and veterinary skills, as a means of controlling diseases. We hope that this meeting will result in closer collaboration between the two professions.

The CE portion covered aspects of epidemiological and statistical tools for the analysis of serological data with emphasis on test evaluation and was presented by Matthias Greiner from the International EpiLab at the Danish Veterinary Institute in Copenhagen. In addition to this, delegates were exposed to the use of Geographical Information Systems and many were impressed by the potential use of these tools in disease surveillance and control.

Anyone with an interest in epidemiology is invited to join the SASVEPM. More information on the society can be obtained from the SASVEPM website at <http://www.up.ac.za/academic/sasvepm/home.htm>.



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Small Scale Dairy Project improves farming practices

The *Small-Scale Dairy Project* was initiated in 2002 to assess management, disease control and milk safety on 15 selected small-scale dairy farms.

In a series of structured interviews and during farm observations, farmers were asked if they had problems with cattle diseases, which diseases occurred, which diseases were the most common, whether they could recognise mastitis and the number of cattle deaths per year. They were also questioned on the treatments given, places that stock remedies were purchased, methods of parasite control and the people they approached for help.

It was found that veterinary help was seldom requested, despite the fact that all areas are served by state veterinarians. Attention to milk hygiene was inadequate, and the milk produced on these farms does not always meet the safety requirements of local or international legislation. The correct use of medications was also sub-optimal which could affect human health.

The project's first priority was to develop a record keeping system for the farmers so that the impact of interventions could be measured. An information day on record keeping and development of data sheets was held and all cows in the project were numbered.

From July 2003, the research team and local extension officers were involved in collecting milk records on a monthly basis and the data was recorded onto a spreadsheet. Farmers were enrolled in the North West Province mastitis programme and udder health is now monitored quarterly by a registered veterinarian. Bulk milk samples and water quality is monitored monthly.



Participants in the SASVEPM Conference (see article on left).

Orbivirus research collaboration

Prof Estelle Venter – Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases

Dr Jim Maclachlan, Professor in Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology in the Equine Veterinary Disease Laboratory at the University of California Davis, School of Veterinary Medicine visited the Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases (DVTD) at the beginning of September.

The objective of the visit was to meet all scientists currently involved with orbivirus research in South Africa, and to participate in a round table discussion aimed at consolidating some of the research initiatives currently pursued in the domain of orbivirus infections.

Members of the DVTD who attended the round table discussions coordinated by Prof Estelle Venter, included Prof Koos Coetzer, Prof Moritz van Vuuren, Dr Jannie Crafford, Ms Anne-Mari Bosman, Daleen Nel and Sandra Prinsloo as well as Prof Alan Guthrie from the Equine Research Centre.

Invited guests from the Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute (OVI) included Drs Dion du Plessis, Truuske Gerdes, Christiaan Potgieter, Otto Koekemoer and Mr Gert Venter. The University's Department of Genetics was represented by Prof Henk Huisman and Drs Wilma Fick and Vida van Staden.

From left to right, Dr Jim Maclachlan, Prof Alan Guthrie and Dr Ron Bester enjoying the outdoors on a Southern Free State sheep farm.

This discussion was the first time that researchers from the four mentioned institutes have met together. The general consensus was that new ground was broken and that the discussion will contribute to meaningful research, especially in terms of Bluetongue and African horsesickness.

In order to achieve some of the objectives of the discussion, Dr Maclachlan will spend part of his sabbatical leave at the Onderstepoort campus during 2005 to do research on the pathogenesis of the bluetongue virus in sheep. Financial support for this research programme will be obtained from the School of Veterinary Medicine, at Davis.

At the end of the discussion, most of the participants enjoyed dinner together and committed themselves to the stated research objectives (with the support of some excellent South African red wine!).

To enable Dr Maclachlan to familiarise himself with a typical South African sheep farm, Prof Koos Coetzer and Prof Alan Guthrie accompanied Dr Maclachlan to the farm of Dr Ron Bester, a veterinarian who farms in the Luckhoff district in the Southern Free State. Dr Maclachlan's visit was concluded with a visit to the Western Cape where he and Prof Guthrie met with people involved in various aspects of the equine industry.

Phytomedicine conference excursion

Prof Kobus Eloff – Department of Paraclinical Sciences

During July, ten students from the Phytomedicine Programme in the Department of Paraclinical Sciences ventured to chilly Clanwilliam to present a variety of papers and posters at the Indigenous Plant Use Forum (IPUF).

The IPUF is an annual conference attended by scientists and other delegates interested in the investigation, development and commercialisation of indigenous plants, particularly with regard to their medicinal properties.

This year, a field trip to view Bushmen paintings and medicinal plants of the Cederberg area was included. Local traditional healers accompanied delegates and contributed to a very interesting experience.

A highlight of the formal part of the conference was the awarding of the best young scientific poster presentation to Theresa Ntloedibe and best paper presentation to Lyndy McGaw, both members of the Phytomedicine Programme.

This forum does not only provide delegates with an opportunity to make contact with scientists involved in this field, but also enables participants to gain presentation experience and receive useful feedback regarding their research projects.



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ICTTD meeting held in Maputo, Mozambique

Dr Visva Pillay – Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases

The International Consortium on Ticks and Tick-borne Diseases (ICTTD) recently held a meeting in the picturesque setting of Maputo.

Seventy people from tertiary and research institutes were invited, and these included local and international specialists in the field of tick and tick-borne diseases.

The first two days of the meeting focused on reviewing the current status of tick and tick-borne diseases around the world. Three printed guides and taxonomic CD's entitled "Ticks of Veterinary and Medical importance in Africa", "Ticks of Veterinary and Medical importance in the Mediterranean Region" and "Ticks of Veterinary and Medical importance in Latin America and the Caribbean" were also launched at the meeting.

The remainder of the programme included working group formations, small group presentations and facilitated discussions regarding the way forward on various aspects of tick and tick-borne diseases. The working groups were divided according to the following subjects: a tick host pathogen database (THPBase) group, a biosystematics group, a molecular diagnostic network, genomics and vaccine development group and a group on tick and tick-borne zoonoses (TBZ) in the tropics and subtropics.

Veterinary Tropical Diseases takes the lead in e-learning

Three papers on the new, primarily web-based, course-work MSc in Veterinary Tropical Diseases and certificated online modules in Tropical Animal Health, were presented at the joint 11th International Conference of the Association of Institutions for Tropical Veterinary Medicine (AITVM), and the 16th Veterinary Association of Malaysia Congress that was held in Malaysia in August.



Pictured at the event are Maxime Maddler (ITM Belgium), Koos Coetzee (DVTD), Carl Zessin (AITVM president), Elmarie Mostert (Project Manager TLEI), Anne Strehler (Head of e-Education, TLEI) and Morkel Terblanche (Deputy Dean, Faculty of Veterinary Science).



The isolation of *Theileria parva* parasites from buffaloes in Kruger Park

Dr Marinda Oosthuizen – Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases

The Development of a Molecular Diagnostic Test Kit for Tick-borne Pathogens Project, which involves the isolation and molecular characterisation of *Theileria parva* parasites from different African buffalo populations in South Africa, is an important objective of the BioPAD project.

Ear bags were placed on the buffaloes' ears, R. appendiculatus nymphae were put into the bags and left to engorge.

A consortium consisting of the University's Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases (DVTD), Utrecht University, Isogen Lifescience and the ARC-Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute (OVI) currently undertakes the project.

With the kind permission of SANParks, six buffaloes in the Kruger National Park (KNP) suspected to be *T. parva* carriers were made available for parasite isolation. During August 2004, six members of DVTD visited the KNP to do tick feedings on buffaloes kept in a boma in the Satara region. The team included Dr. Hein Stoltz, Milana Dunsterville, Rhaksha Bhoora, and postgraduate students Kgomotso Sibeko and David Lorum.

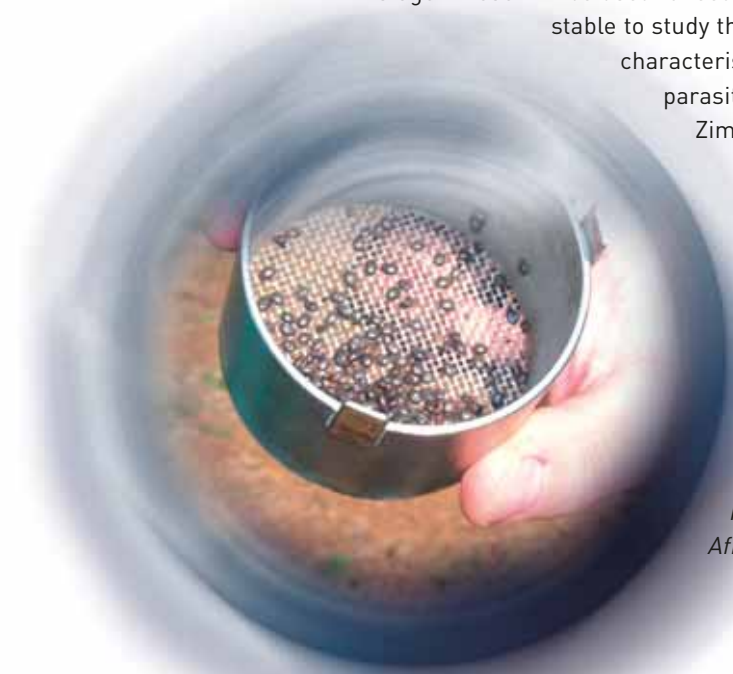
On day five, ear bags were removed and engorged R. appendiculatus nymphae were collected.

The animals were darted early in the morning and ear bags were placed on their ears using Gemkem (glue) and surgical stitching. Flat *R. appendiculatus* nymphae (600 per ear per bag) were put into the ear bags and left for four days to engorge. On the fourth day one animal was darted to determine whether the engorged ticks had dropped into the bags. Since most ticks were still firmly attached, a decision was made to wait another 24 hours before removing the ear bags. On day five, all ear bags were removed and more than 6 000 engorged nymphae were collected.

These ticks were washed, packed in containers and placed in an acaridarium to moult to the adult stage. These will be used to feed on a susceptible bovine at the OVI East Coast Fever quarantine stable to study the course of the disease. The *T. parva* parasites will also be characterised on a molecular level, and compared with other *Theileria* parasites belonging to the *T. parva* group causing East Coast fever and Zimbabwean theileriosis.

A fantastic time was experienced by all, and the expert knowledge of Dr Hein Stoltz and Milana Dunsterville provided an opportunity for the rest of the group to learn more about ticks, tick feedings and *Theileria* spp. The team also met with Dr Marcus Hofmeyer, Head: Veterinary Wildlife Services, KNP and Dr Roy Bengis, state veterinarian, KNP, who shared their knowledge and experience.

As an added bonus, Dave Lorum (an MSc student) had the opportunity to collect buffalo faeces for his coccidia project entitled *Isolation, characterisation and description of Eimeria species of African buffaloes and other indigenous mammals.*





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The working cats at OP

Hill's has been involved with the Onderstepoort blood bank for many years.



Dr Liezel van der Merwe (left) is pictured here holding Monster. On her right is Dr Guy Fyvie with two new kittens, Velvet and Paisley.

Congratulations

Congratulations to all new vets and nurses! Welcome to the wonderful world of (real) work!! We look forward to seeing you become a productive part of our fantastic profession.

Hill's has a proud history of innovation, the best quality products and strong ties with Veterinarians around the world and is committed to education, not only about clinical nutrition, but all skills needed by future colleagues in the veterinary faculty.

Please contact Dr Guy Fyvie at guy@hillspet.co.za for further information or advice.

Hill's provides food for the in-house animals and treats for the external donors. Good quality nutrition is necessary to ensure maximum blood production without compromising the animal's health. A new addition to the blood bank is the blood donor cats. What other work could you expect a cat do? Thanks to a generous sponsorship from Hill's, the cats' living quarters have been revamped. The new housing makes life more interesting for the cats and increases their amount of exercise and interaction. The housing also provides a place for relaxed interaction between students and the cats. This is both therapeutic for the students and stimulating for the cats. A win-win situation for all involved!

The cats are also fed Hill's cat food according to their individual needs. This has allowed for a general improvement in health. Kittens are fed Hill's Kitten, overweight cats are fed the diet formula and the rest are fed Hill's Hairball Control Senior or Light as needed.

The Hill's Dictionary: Compliance

The dictionary definition for Compliance (or adherence) does not adequately explain what it really means in our profession. The best explanation is the answer to the question: "How many of my patients are getting the best care they can?" Poor compliance is not only an issue in Veterinary medicine, however. Studies have shown that only 50% of people with heart disease actually take their own lifesaving drugs!!

A recent study by the AAHA (American Animal Hospital Association) concluded that the biggest hurdle to compliance was not cost, but an unclear or non-existent recommendation from the veterinarian and his/her team! This included mixed messages from different members of the healthcare team, which ultimately leads to confusion. To give your patients the best possible care, take the time to explain not only the treatment regimen, but also the reason for the treatment, how long it should continue etc. Write it down and use visual aids such as pamphlets and posters. Many treatments, especially therapeutic diets are lifelong, something clients are often not aware of.

British Vets come to South Africa for CPD!

Two vets and two nurses won an unforgettable trip to South Africa at the BSAVA (British Small Animal Veterinary Association) congress from Hill's. The focus of their trip was feline CPD (Continuing Professional Development). They attended lectures at Onderstepoort as well as toured the facilities. Some of their comments were 'Wow it's big!', 'There is so much great equipment' and 'It must be wonderful to be trained in such an environment!'. They also visited the Moholoholo rehab centre in Mpumalanga for some experience with wilder cats. Dr Peter Brothers conducted the tour, which included darting and inserting tracker devices to cheetah. This was certainly one of the highlights of their trip.



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Surveillance and monitoring programme for antimicrobial resistance

Prof Moritz van Vuuren – Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases

A successful workshop to train laboratory technologists to participate in a future surveillance programme for antimicrobial resistance was held in the Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases in September.

The emergence of resistance to antimicrobial drugs was noted soon after antibiotics were first introduced to human and veterinary medicine in the 1940s. Scientific research on resistance was minimal during the 70s and 80s but was re-established in the 90s, pushed by growing concerns relating to several findings.

Foremost of these was the discovery of human commensal bacteria naturally resistant to vancomycin, an important antibiotic in the armamentarium of medical practitioners. Other contributing findings included the appearance of numerous infections in humans in the UK and North America with zoonotic, multiresistant strains of *Salmonella Typhimurium* DT 104.

During the last decade, it was confirmed at several international meetings, that key elements in containment strategies against resistance included prudent use of antimicrobial drugs, education of users of antimicrobial drugs, and surveillance of resistance and use of antimicrobial drugs. The ultimate objective is to preserve the therapeutic efficacy of antimicrobial drugs and to prolong their useful life for both animals and humans.

To work towards these objectives, the Faculty of Veterinary Science developed an antimicrobial resistance research programme initiated by Prof Moritz van Vuuren and Prof Gerry Swan. As a result of existing contacts and collaboration with the Department of Antibiotics of the National Veterinary Institute in Sweden, a research proposal was presented to the National Research Foundation (NRF) for consideration within the Bilateral South African/Swedish Scientific Cooperation Agreement. The proposal was successful and funding for a period of three years was obtained with Prof Van Vuuren as principal South African investigator and Prof Anders Franklin as principal Swedish investigator.

During March this year a team of four veterinarians from the Department of Antibiotics in Uppsala visited South Africa to participate in joint planning and discussions relating to the 3-year programme. More than 16 research projects were identified for possible collaborative research, of which a future national veterinary surveillance and monitoring programme for resistance and use of antimicrobial drugs represents the pivotal project in the research programme.

An important decision that evolved from the first workshop was to present a second workshop to harmonise laboratory procedures for the surveillance of resistance. The Department of Veterinary Tropical Disease hosted this second workshop in September. Laboratory technologists from 10 provincial and private veterinary diagnostic laboratories, representing 6 provinces in South Africa were invited.

The objective of the workshop was to harmonise laboratory methodologies for the detection of minimum inhibitory concentrations of antimicrobial drugs. Participants learnt the intricacies of the more demanding quantitative microplate broth dilution technique, and methods to isolate and identify bacteria included as target organisms in a surveillance programme.

Tutors that provided theoretical and bench training during the Workshop were drawn from the

Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases (DVTD), Onderstepoort, and the Department of Antibiotics (DA), Uppsala. From left to right: Ms Janita Greylingh (DVTD), Ms Maria Finn (DA), Prof Moritz van Vuuren (DVTD), Dr Jackie Picard (DVTD) and Dr Christina Greko (DA).



Book Review

Infectious Diseases of Livestock

Edited by JAW Coetzer and RC Tustin

The 2nd edition of *Infectious Diseases of Livestock* has been extensively updated and expanded since the highly-acclaimed first edition. The new edition has significantly expanded the subject matter to include the majority of the infectious diseases in livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and horses) that occur worldwide.

The new edition will be printed as a set of three volumes. Each disease is discussed in terms of its introduction and history, epidemiology, pathogenesis, clinical signs, pathology, diagnosis, differential diagnosis, and control. A comprehensive list of references is provided for each disease.

The book has been written by almost 200 contributors from 16 different countries and is illustrated in both colour and black and white photographs. This is an essential reference work for veterinarians, research institutes and laboratories, students, and stock breeders and owners.

Sports teams ace Academics

Once more, the student sports contingent totally outclassed its academic 'non-rival'. The teams once again recorded a notable multiple triumph, this time in men's rugby (for the third time running!), women's hockey (first time!), women's squash (first time!) and men's waterpolo (first time!). The men's cricket team also won the SA veterinary championship.

The Republic of Onderstepoort's Senate was again forced to mortgage itself and award a total of 68 Ph.D* certificates.

*Pretoria Hostel Destroyers



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The Novartis – OP student promotional initiative

Bridget de Klerk - Veterinary student

This year has seen the initiation of a partnership between Novartis Animal Health and veterinary students, in which students are employed to educate pet owners on pet healthcare with reference to deworming and flea control, and to raise awareness about the various products that are available for this purpose.

Most of the promotional work is done at various large dog and cat shows throughout Gauteng, and exhibitions such as the World of Dogs and Cats where students are able to interact with pet breeders and learn something about the less common pet breeds!

Novartis management regularly organise workshops to discuss their products and marketing, during which students are able to share their ideas regarding future ventures. The students have learned skills that include marketing and product promotion, as well as applied skills involving various aspects of communication.

Next year promises to be an even busier year with more events and talks on the cards. Due to the success of this project, Novartis wishes to expand it, and during the course of next year will be recruiting more students to join the promotional team.

New postions in the ICU

24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year qualified service at the intensive care unit – dream or reality?

The goal of having a qualified member of staff in attendance at ICU, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, was a bold but necessary one. Thanks to the determination and hard work of everyone involved, we are now one step closer to realising that goal.

Sr Leonie Coetzer was the first to start working the new and demanding 19h00 to 07h00 night shift at ICU in October 2003. Sr Yolanda de Witt, who was employed at Small Animal Medicine, soon joined her on a rotational basis. Although small gaps still exist, we are close to providing the 24 hour qualified service envisioned.

With the help of dedicated and highly competent final year BVSc students, we are striving to provide an even better level of quality patient care at ICU. Already the results are there for all to see! Greatly improved survival rates of critical cases, improved patient care through continuous pain management, control of vomition, maintenance of hydration status etc, have resulted in high levels of confidence amongst clinicians and animal owners using the facility.

Sisters Yolanda de Witt (left) and Leonie Coetzer in ICU.



Onderstepoort Faculty Day

The Faculty of Veterinary Science at Onderstepoort held its annual Faculty Day on 16 September.

This tradition in the Faculty is aimed at highlighting the research activities of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, as well as exposing young researchers to a conference environment. It is also a means of marketing the Faculty to prospective students and researchers by promoting the research activities of its staff and students.

The day was concluded with a prize-giving function during which several awards were presented to staff and students:

Lecturer of the Year: Prof Andrew Leisewitz (Companion Animal Clinical Studies)

Researcher of the Year: Prof Moritz van Vuuren (Veterinary Tropical Diseases)

Best Young Researcher: Mr Andrew Taylor (postgraduate student)

Dean's Award for Best Presentation: Dr Michael Gray (Companion Animal Clinical Studies)

Dean's Award for Best Poster: Prof Remo Lobetti (Companion Animal Clinical Studies)

Dr Richard A Kock (left) of the Pan African Programme for the Control of Epizootic Diseases from the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources in Nairobi Kenya. He delivered the Arnold Theiller Memorial Lecture at Faculty Day and received a certificate from the Dean, Prof Nick Kriek.

After the prize-giving Prof Kriek gave a special word of thanks to the sponsors of the day. Without their generous contributions, this successful day would not have been possible.

PhD student visits the Hans Knöll Institute (HKI) for Natural Product Research

Jerry Angeh – PhD student in the Phytomedicine Programme, Department of Paraclinical Sciences

Jerry Angeh was fortunate enough to be awarded a Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD) award for a young scientist to carry out part of his PhD research at HKI in Jena, Germany for a four-month period. Here is his report of his stay:

Part of my research was carried out at the Molecular Natural Products Research Department, where I learned a wide range of techniques and strategies for rapid chemical dereplication of bioactive compounds from crude extracts. This mainly concerned the isolation and purification of milligram-to-gram quantities of target bioactive compounds from crude natural extracts, and chemical structure elucidation through NMR (Nuclear Magnetic Resonance) and MS (Mass Spectrometry) interpretation.

My stay at this institute was extremely useful because I was able to achieve all my research plans within a short time. This was due to the excellent organisation of the research environment and the co-operation of all members of staff and students in this institute, particularly the Molecular Natural Product Research Group that is led by Professor Sursane Grabley and Dr. Isabel Sattler.

Another benefit of my visit is the fact that the Phytomedicine Group from the Department of Paraclinical Sciences now has research co-operation ties with the Molecular Natural Product Group. As a result, students of the Phytomedicine group now have the prospect of performing aspects of their research at HKI as part of an exchange programme.

Community involvement

For the last two years, Veterinary Extension and Communication has formed a formal part of the curriculum of 5th year veterinary students.

In 2003, the student evaluations suggested that, while the course was very interesting and useful, they wanted to be introduced to the realities of rural life.

In collaboration with Dr James Sekokotla, the state veterinarian of the Moretele district and a post graduate student at the Faculty, a visit to Opperman was arranged. The students were first introduced to the entire community of Opperman during a community meeting which was attended by the local councillor.

The farmers shared their frustrations and problems with trying to farm on communal grazing areas and dealing with tropical diseases like Elephant Skin Disease (Besnoitiosis). Marketing is difficult for them due to the lack of loading ramps to take cattle to the abattoir or auction sales by truck. Older farmers also find it increasingly difficult to castrate their bull calves, many of which are Brahmans and this results in indiscriminate breeding.

During the visit the students were able to speak to individual farmers about their problems. After the discussion, the community and councillor provided the students and farmers with refreshments.

This excursion will become an annual event as the feedback from the 5th year students was overwhelmingly positive and the Opperman community is happy to host them again in future.



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Just in case • Emergency numbers

• Security Services (main campus)	6911	420-2310
• Flying Squad	6022	10111
• Police Pretoria North	6005	353-5666
• Ambulance:		
- Rosslyn	6003	541-3421/6
- Pretoria	6002	326-0111
• Fire Brigade (Wonderboom)	6024	543-0335
• Tygerberg Poison Centre	6179	(021) 931-6129
• Emergency Medical Help: OP		
- Sr Amanda Hamman (VAH)	8064	083 269 8874
- Sr Riani de Kock (VAH)	8149	082 802 3329
- Ms Anne-Marie Human (VAH)	8216	082 540 4833
- Prof Frik Stegman (VAH)	8279	8148 (operating theatre)
- Mr Chris Neetling (Feed Store)	8004	8004 (roving phone)
- Prof Ken Pettey (Ethology/Physiology)	8449	082 882 7356
- Mrs Daléne Meyer (Anatomy/Physiology)	8212	082 374 1583
- Psychologist at OP (Wednesday), Voula Samouris	8243	083 754 5427
- Psychologist - main campus, Rina Buys	6126/6151	082 908 3688

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

News from Onderstepoort Riding Club

Caron Elton – Chairperson, OPRC 2004

The Onderstepoort Riding Club (OPRC) finished off a very memorable year by hosting a fun day and a show in October. Three teams were entered in the show: OP staff, OP students and the Equine Research Center. Events included a dressage test, gymkhana and show-jumping. The OP Staff team won the first place, the Student team came in second and the Equine Research team came in third place.

Other activities organised by the Riding Club this year included a dressage show, gymkhana, treasure hunt and the big OP derby. Furthermore, the dressage arena was revamped and a new judges box was built for it, and the jumping arena judge's box was renovated. An emergency fund has been set up for sick horses. All this was possible due to exceptional hard work by a dedicated committee consisting of Mari Muller, Jo Thomas, Liezl Hogewind, Bridget de Klerk, Robin Moore, Tamsyn Pulker and Camilla Weyer.