



From the Desk of the Dean



We are already well into the year 2002. This year differs from the preceding two or three years as many of the contentious issues that have tended to clutter our activities in the past have been resolved. Two of the most important matters that have been settled are the restructuring of the veterinary course and the enrichment of the curriculum, as well as the finalisation of the number of CI personnel in the Faculty. In addition, the Faculty has adopted a strategic plan to increase the quality and volume of focussed research outputs. This will also feed back into both the quality and scope of our postgraduate programmes. Delineation of our research strategy is essential for our Faculty to position itself as an internationally accredited role player in the global research arena focussed on making a substantial contribution to the needs of trained human resources in Africa. This must be one of our primary objectives if we wish to be a leader in the conduction of locally relevant research that will be beneficial to the health and welfare of the animals and communities we serve.

I am happy to announce that sufficient funding has been allocated to the Faculty to establish a computer-aided instruction laboratory that can accommodate in excess of 120 students at a time. This facility should be available for use at the latest by the end of July this year and will most certainly provide new incentives to both lecturers and students to expand our use of modern teaching methods.

VETEX is currently involved in the development of a strategic plan for the Faculty. Following wide discussion of the proposed document within the Faculty, the strategic plan will be forwarded to Faculty Council for adoption, after which it will become the framework according to which activities in the Faculty will be planned during the course of the next three years. The new policy of the University regarding resource allocation (finances, infrastructure and human resources)

will require the allocation to be done according to the strategic and work plans of faculties and departments within faculties. Budgetary allocations will only be made to fund those activities within the Faculty that are well motivated, supported by a management and business plan and aligned with the strategic plan of the Faculty and University.

To manage this new approach and to ensure alignment of faculties and departments within faculties with its policies and strategies, the University has adopted, with the approval of most of the trade unions, a process of performance management. Although the implementation of this process is incomplete in that it is not as yet linked to incentives, performance management became mandatory from the beginning of 2002. Members of staff should thus by this time have had discussions to contract their specific duties, outputs, and personal development plans for this year.

Three other matters of major importance will be attended to during the course of this year: employment equity, the intake of students from the designated groups into undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and the finalisation of the numbers of C2 and C3 personnel to sustain the activities of the Faculty. These are critical issues which, if not attended to, will have a profound effect on the sustainability of the activities of the Faculty and eventually on the sustainability of the veterinary profession in this country.

To deal with these matters successfully we will need the support and constructive contributions of all members of staff. We have come to a stage in the development of the new amalgamated Faculty where commitment to ensure the success of our endeavours has become critical. Petty infighting and passive opposition to what has become the status quo within the University and the Faculty are unlikely to alter the adaptation that has taken place in South Africa and in the Faculty. Such activities, however, may have a very negative effect on the ease and effectiveness with which these and further changes are effected. A positive, rational approach, taking into account the varying opinions of members of staff and stakeholders, is the only way to ensure the future of this Faculty and to unlock the full potential of the current staff and the students attracted to this Faculty.

There is still some time left in this year, but time is precious. We need to spend it on those issues of importance. We can no longer afford the luxury of doing what we wish to, irrespective of the expressed needs of the communities that we serve. I have no doubt that most members of staff subscribe to these sentiments.

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Leading the way in Epidemiology



The SA Society of Veterinary Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine (SASVEPM) was formed at the end of 2000, with the objective of promoting veterinary epidemiology and preventive medicine in the Southern African region.

Bruce Gummow, who has been developing epidemiology at the Faculty over the past few years, began to see the need for a forum to bring together expertise in veterinary epidemiology in Southern Africa. One of the reasons for starting a regional society was the realisation that we have unique problems and circumstances in Africa that require us to formulate a unique brand of epidemiology that can be applied in the region.

For too long resources had been wasted on disease surveillance and control because of a lack of understanding about epidemiology or because of the application of methodology that is inadequate for our region. Our biggest problem was the lack of capacity in the discipline. We therefore needed a forum that would enable those with some expertise, or an interest, to cross-pollinate expertise and ideas, with the objective of building capacity in the region, but also of creating a unique methodology applicable to our region.

The Society also aims to enhance communication between epidemiologists in the region. With the weakness of the currencies in the region it is also becoming increasingly difficult to attend conferences or continuing education courses overseas; a regional society thus allows local veterinarians to attain these goals at an affordable cost.

The SASVEPM now has a multi-national membership of about 75, including private

vets, state vets, vets in industry and several Faculty members. The Executive Committee of the Society presently consists of Bruce Gummow (President), Willie Ungerer (Vice-President), Peter Thompson (Secretary), Poncho Mokaila (Secretary), Anita Michel and Rick Mapham.

The first annual conference was held in May 2001 and was a successful blend of scientific papers, posters and continuing education sessions, attended by over 60 delegates. In February this year the Society ran an intensive two-week course on risk analysis, led by two of the world's leading experts in the field - Paul Suttmoller (qualitative risk analysis) and David Vose (quantitative risk analysis). The 2002 SASVEPM Conference will be held at the Grasdak, OVI on 22 and 23 July. The theme will be surveillance, and the Society will be bringing out Klaas Frankena from Wageningen Agricultural University, a world authority on the subject, to lead the CE component of the Conference.

Epidemiology, the study of disease in populations, has relevance to almost every field of veterinary science. The Southern African Society of Veterinary Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine is in the process of being shaped into something relevant to the needs of the Southern African region, and will help to make veterinary science increasingly relevant and applicable to the demands of our wide diversity of clients. Anyone interested in finding out more about the Society, or about the 2002 Conference, can contact Peter Thompson (pthompson@op.up.ac.za) or Bruce Gummow (bgummow@op.up.ac.za).

Spotlight on personnel achievements

Prof Henk Bertschinger, now of the Veterinary Wildlife Unit, Prof Johan Nöthling and Dr David Gerber of the Section of Reproduction in the Department of Production Animal Studies, were accorded the status of founding members of the newly-formed European College of Animal Reproduction (ECAR) in January 2002. This is the European equivalent of the American College of Theriogenologists, of which we also have two diplomates amongst our current staff complement, plus three others amongst the past graduates of our MMedVet programme.

The awarding of founding member status was based on their research track record and a proven clinical training in a specialist reproduction setting. The presence of a strong team in reproduction places the Faculty's Section of Reproduction in a good position to apply for accreditation as a specialist training institution with ECAR and will help to entrench the reputation of this Faculty as a centre of excellence in research and training in reproduction.

Several members of the Department of Anatomy and Physiology have been recognised as leaders in their specific fields. The research prowess of Prof Tom Aire and Prof Johnny van der Walt was recently rewarded by the National Research Foundation (NRF). Prof Aire was rated in the research category CI and Prof van der Walt in category C2.

The South African Society for Animal Science awarded the David Uys Trophy to Prof van der Walt for the best contribution to *The South African Journal of Animal Science* (van der Walt et al, Vol. 25, p105)

Prof Tom Aire and Prof John Soley were invited speakers in Symposium I, *Comparative biology of spermatozoa and male genital ducts in vertebrates*, at the XVIth International Symposium on Morphological Sciences at Sun City during July 2001

Mr Dirk Booysse won the best poster presentation award at the South African Association Veterinary Technologists' Conference which was held in Gordon's Bay in September last year for his poster on *Basic digestive tract parameters of a hindgut fermenter - the warthog*

Prof John Soley is the honorary editor of the Journal of the Anatomical Society of Southern Africa and was also recently appointed as an editorial board member of *The European Journal of Morphology*. Prof Johnny van der Walt serves on the editorial panel of the South African Journal of Animal Science.

Members of the Department of Anatomy and Physiology are also active in the management of relevant societies. Prof Herman Groenewald is the secretary of the Anatomical Society of Southern Africa, while Prof John Soley serves as the treasurer of the Microscopy Society of Southern Africa.

The Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases continues its active role in postgraduate training in the Faculty. In November 2001, Dr A Vatta received his MSc degree with distinction, while at the graduation ceremony in April 2002, Dr J Crafford (with distinction) and Dr A Regassa from Ethiopia were awarded their MSc degrees.



*The phantom mare is no match for ECAR Founding Members
Johan Nöthling, David Gerber and Henk Bertschinger*

Other information about goats

The Angora goat breeders produce four million kilogram of mohair a year. At present prices are very favourable. There is a wide selection of excellent animals to choose from. For more information about the industry, visit the website www.mohair.co.za, or contact Frans Loots at e-mail info@mohair.co.za.

Boergoats are in great demand as the best meat-producing goat breed. There is a wide selection of breeders to choose from. For

more information visit the website <http://studbook.co.za/boergoat/index.html> or contact the Society at society@studbook.co.za.

Research on goats is carried out by a wide range of organisations across the country. For a review see Ramsay & Donkin (2000): *A review of the current status of goat research and development in South Africa* which is on the Goat web page, www.up.ac.za/asservices/ais/vet/goatweb.html

Goat news

Goat farming has come to play an increasingly important role in the broader agricultural business in South Africa and the Faculty plays an active role in promoting the growth of this sector of the country's agribusiness.

- A goat webpage has been developed by Amelia Breytenbach in the Faculty's Academic Information Centre. The web address is: www.up.ac.za/asservices/ais/vet/goatweb.html
- A regional workshop on goat development in Southern Africa was convened in Malawi in 2000. The scope was widened to include sheep and the network was named the Southern African Small Ruminant Network (SADC-SRNET). Contact Ned Donkin (ndonkin@op.up.ac.za) or Heleen Els (hels@op.up.ac.za). It is planned to hold a regional conference in South Africa in 2002.
- The Fifth International Sheep Veterinary Congress was held at Stellenbosch in January 2001. A wide range of papers was presented. The proceedings are available on a CD from Gareth Bath (gfbath@op.up.ac.za) or Ken Pettey (kpettey@op.up.ac.za). The website is: <http://www.up.ac.za/academic/lhpg>. This is also linked through the goat webpage.

- In 2004, the eighth International Conference on Goats (ICG) will be held in South Africa. This will be the first time on the African continent. We are looking for support from all people involved in this field of endeavour, in order to ensure that this conference is a great success. Norman Casey is the Chairman of the organising committee, which involves members of our Faculty (icgsa@icon.co.za). The website is www.icgsa.co.za

Short courses

Applied Veterinary Bacteriology and Mycology module: Dr J Picard: 3 - 27 June (3.5 weeks)

Diagnostic Veterinary Pathology: Prof M C Williams: 24 June - 19 July (4 weeks)

Veterinary Business Management: Prof C McCrindle: 25 - 27 July (2 weeks)

Game Capture Course for Veterinarians: Prof H J Bertschinger: 2 - 10 August (1 week)

Applied Veterinary Virology Module: Prof E Venter: 12 - 30 August (3 weeks)

African Epizootic Diseases: Prof J A W Coetzer: 16 - 20 Sept (1 week)

Applied Veterinary Ectoparasitology and Protozoology: Prof B L Penzhorn: 16 Sept - 11 Oct (4 weeks)

Molecular Biology and Recombinant DNA Technology: Prof E Venter: 7 - 18 Oct (2 weeks)

Applied Veterinary Diagnostic Toxicology module: Dept Paraclinical Sciences: Oct/Nov (2 weeks)

Refresher Course in Epizootic Diseases of Livestock for Animal Health Technicians
Prof R C Tustin: 21 - 24 October (4 days)

Small Ruminant Conference: Prof E F Donkin: 28 - 31 October (4 days)

Building Communities from the Grassroots: Prof C Stewart: 11 - 15 November (1 week)

Empowering Communities for a Sustainable Future Prof C Stewart: 4 - 28 November (1 week)

Immunology and Serology Module: Prof M van Vuuren: 4 - 28 November (4 weeks)

Tick Identification Course: Prof I Horak: 25 - 29 Nov (1 week)

Applied Veterinary Helminthology Module: Prof R C Krecek: End of 2002 (4 weeks)

Faculty plays key role in Continuing Education

The scientific and organising prowess of the Department of Anatomy and Physiology and the EM Unit features prominently in Continuing Education through their pivotal involvement in several important international conferences.

Members of the Section of Anatomy played a key role in the organisation of the very successful XVIth International Symposium on Morphological Sciences that took place in July 2001 at Sun City. Prof Herman Groenewald served as the Scientific Secretariat, Prof John Soley as the Scientific Organiser and Prof Ken Booth as a member of the Local Organising Committee.

Prof John Soley will continue his organising duties of CE courses this year as a member of the Secretariat of the 15th International

Congress of Electron Microscopy that will be held in Durban during September. The two ladies of the EM Unit will accompany him. Ms E van Wilpe will serve as a member of the Publicity Committee and Ms D Josling as a member of the Workshop Committee. Prof Soley has also been appointed as a member of the organising committee of the 9th International Symposium on Spermatology, which will take place in Cape Town during October 2002.

Prof Johnny van der Walt is a member of the Organising Committee of the 4th International Congress of Pathophysiology that takes place in Budapest, Hungary in July. Prof Lisa Boomker will be the Ruminant Session Organiser at the 4th Biennial Symposium of the Comparative Nutrition Society, to be held in Antwerp in August this year.

Veterinary Wildlife Unit News

During the past 12 months the unit has undergone a number of personnel and other changes. Prof Woody Meltzer retired from the Unit at the end of 2001. He continues to assist, however, with under- and postgraduate lectures and game capture courses. Prof Henk Bertschinger has been appointed as acting Director of the Unit until such time as a new Director has been appointed. The endocrine laboratory, run by Mrs Human, has also been transferred to the Unit.

The current staff of the Unit consists of Prof Bertschinger (acting director), Alexander Forbes Chair in Wildlife Diseases (vacant), Prof Skinner (honorary professor), Ms Annemarie Human (technologist), Ms Ellen Nel (part-time secretary shared with the Section of Reproduction) and Ms Ilse Lüther (Technicon student).

The Unit was moved to the Veterinary Academic Hospital Building where it is housed in the facilities previously occupied by the Depart-

ment of Paraveterinary Studies. To get to the new facility, follow the signs (highlighted by the striking picture of the three adult black-maned lions). It didn't take a day before a student had added the following below one of the signs: "Three impotent old men". Can't imagine who they were referring to!

Currently the Unit has nine masters' and one PhD student registered for postgraduate studies. The aim of the Unit is to graduate at least six postgraduate students per year.

The Unit looks forward to working together with as many people within the Faculty as possible and to attracting more veterinary graduates to its postgraduate programme. Collaboration with outside local and international units and institutions working in the field of wildlife will be actively pursued. Wildlife Health and Production has been identified as a Faculty Research Focus Area. For further information, please contact Prof Henk Bertschinger at henkbert@op.up.ac.za.



FAO network for helminthology in Africa

Africa now has a Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) electronic network for helminthology. This network has been established through the co-operation and support of the FAO of the United Nations, the Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases at the Faculty of Veterinary Science and the Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute (Agricultural Research Council)

A part-time senior administrative assistant, Mrs Elmé Janse van Vuuren, was appointed in March 2001 to assist with the preparation and capturing of data for the web site and activities related to this project. The co-ordinator of the web site is Prof Tammi Krecsek.

A database membership list of 121 persons from 37 countries and their contact details has been compiled. A web site has been designed and is used as an electronic mode for the dissemination of information. The web pages include aims, discussion groups, events, news, links, list of members' names and e-mail addresses.

You are invited to visit the web site of the FAO Network for Helminthology in Africa at www.worms.org.za and become a member of the network. An e-conference on *Livestock helminths and anthelmintic resistance* took place during March of this year. For feedback on the workshop please contact Prof Tammi Krecsek.

Faculty hosts NUFU workshop

A very successful NUFU North-South research project workshop, hosted by the Department of Paraclinical Sciences, was held at the Faculty from 3 to 6 February 2002. Thirty-one delegates from southern and eastern Africa and Europe (Norway and Belgium) attended the three-day workshop. The aims of the workshop were to plan the collaborative research project and its organisation and administration.

The Norwegian Council for Higher Education's Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU) funded this research project to the value of 8,5 million Norwegian crown (approximately R9 million).

This collaborative research project in environmental toxicology and zoonotic diseases spans two continents and will require co-operation between Norwegian universities, institutes and their Veterinary School and several universities and institutes in eastern and southern Africa, including the Faculty of Veterinary Science of the University of Pretoria.

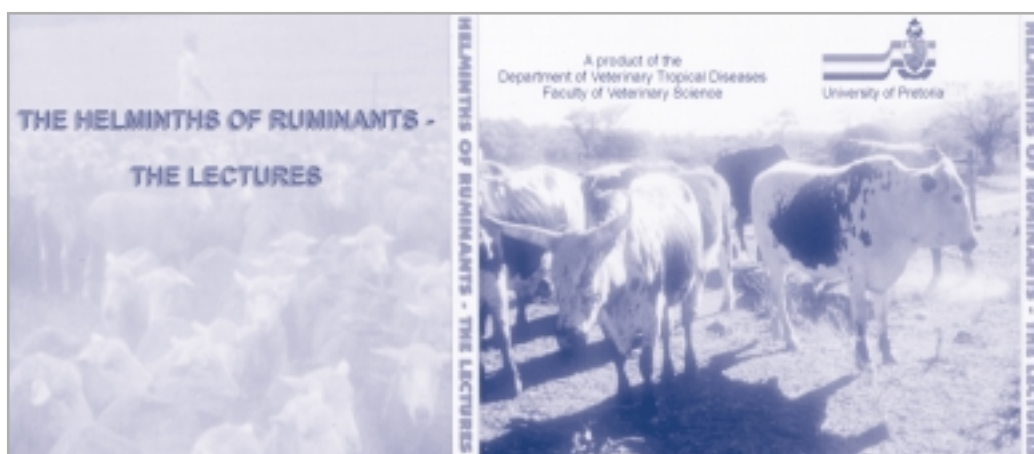
The main objectives of the sponsorship are the training of six PhD students and the creation of a collaboration network amongst senior staff from the various participating faculties and institutions.

The establishment of links and co-operation between Norway and countries in Africa is highly appreciated by the veterinary community in Africa and will contribute towards the transfer of knowledge, capacity building and upliftment in the region.

The workshop was organised by Prof Gerry Swan, Head of the Department of Paraclinical Sciences and members of his Department.

Delegates at the planning meeting for Workshop on *Taenia solium* cysticercosis in Eastern and Southern Africa, held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on 5 and 6 December 2001.

New teaching materials



Prof J Boomker of the Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases (VTD) has produced a CD on the helminths of ruminants. The CD includes lectures, pictures and illustrations (arranged by organ systems) of the helminths of sheep, goats and cattle.

The CD provides valuable study material for students and is ideal for the practitioner wishing to update his/her knowledge in this field. The cost of the CD is R40.00. For further information please contact Mrs Rina Serfontein at: rserfont@op.up.ac.za.

Electronic submission of theses

The University of Pretoria has embarked on the e-theses route, joining a worldwide endeavour to make publications more widely accessible.

Using the software created by the Virginia Polytechnic and State University, USA, the Academic Information Service of UP has enabled various theses to be published electronically this past year. On the web site, UPeTD (www.upetd.up.ac.za/ETD-db/) you can see how to create your own e-thesis, as well as look at those that are already available.

Mrs Antoinette Lourens (Tel: 529 8008, email: alourens@op.up.ac.za) can be contacted for any help you may require in getting started.

Sole repository for vet journals

Some years ago the SA Veterinary Association requested our Library to arrange for the storing of all available back issues of the *Journal of the South African Veterinary Association*.

The Library of the Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute had the same arrangement regarding back issues of the *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Research*.

Recent developments at the Institute involving transforming much of the present Library into conference and museum facilities now make it impossible for the Library to continue storing the back copies. We have now agreed to store them as well so as to ensure that these publications are not sent for pulping. These two publications are national assets and we are grateful to have the support of the Dean in ensuring their safekeeping and availability.

For any further information regarding matters pertaining to Academic Information Services please contact Erica van der Westhuizen at e-mail: ericavdw@op.up.ac.za

News from the Academic Veterinary Hospital

New ward at Outpatients Clinic

A significant upgrading of the facilities at the Outpatients Clinic of the Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital (OVAH) has occurred through the creation of a general ward. The idea behind the ward was to create a facility whereby relatively simple medical and surgical cases presented at Outpatients could be kept in a well-equipped ward for a few days to allow proper treatment to be administered. The advantages of this would be quality "outpatient level", less costly treatment of the animal, a reduction in inpatient caseload and hence an opportunity to take in more of the complex referred cases, and an opportunity for the students on duty at Outpatients to follow their cases through to completion and discharge. The facility was created in an area originally designed as an Outpatient large animal examination area that had fallen into disuse. The large animal crush and other pipe railings were removed, a new tiled floor and tiled walls were put in, workbenches shifted around, a grid/washtable and a standard procedure table installed together with procedure lights, electrical fittings, mobile cages for the housing of up to 11 small animal patients, a workstation with computer, telephone, etc. for the ward sister, air-conditioning and a ramp for easy access of trolleys and mobile cages into the facility. Thereafter basic laboratory and diagnostic instrumentation was acquired, mobile carts were stocked with all the necessary consumables and, together with the appointment of Sister Marizelle de Clercq, the stage was set on 4 February 2002 to begin with a new era at Outpatients.

The clinic is now in full swing and first impressions are extremely favourable confirming that the original motivation for the creation of the unit was correct and that the envisaged benefits will be realised. Our thanks go to everyone involved in the creation of this unit, including Dr Liesl van der Merwe and other small animal clinicians, Prof P Bland, Director of Clinical Services, the Matron and the Outpatients nursing staff, Mr Werner Nel from the Department of Facilities and Services and the contractor, Mr Gawie Smit of Valentine's Contractors for their efforts in creating a top-quality facility. We trust that the unit will be effective in veterinary and paraveterinary student training as well as in providing service to our clients and their animals for many years to come.

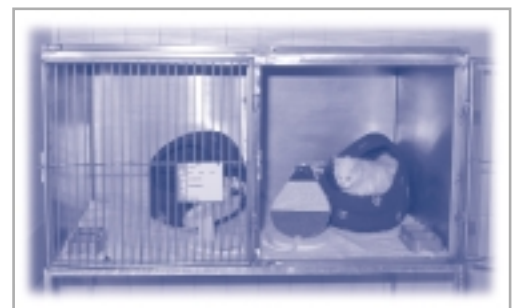


Improved OVAH cat ward

The less than cat-friendly cages in the cat ward at the OVAH have now been replaced with larger cages which have been fitted out to make them more comfortable, attractive and decidedly user-friendly.

The ward now sports new five star accommodation for our cat patients. Striking black with orange pawprint (Iams logo) igloos were commissioned, and cat scratch 'mouse pads' were customised. Each cage has been fitted out with a new soft dry-bed blanket, igloo, cat scratch pad, litter tray and food and water bowls.

Prime motivator behind the renewal project was Sister Sarah Maritz. Prof P Bland, put in a strong motivation for Faculty funding which, together with generous sponsorship from Iams for the accessories to make the new cages comfortable and attractive, resulted in the creation of this greatly improved facility. The combined effort has really paid off as cat patients are visibly more relaxed and comfortable in the peaceful





and 'dog-free' cat ward. Definitely the correct medicine and therapy for quick recovery!

On Thursday 28 March, a finger lunch kindly sponsored by Iams, was held to celebrate the 'new look' cat ward. The luncheon was attended by Mike Murray, Wendy Fisher and Sarah Miller of Iams, as well as Prof Bland, Matron Muller and lecturers and sisters from Medicine and Surgery. A vote of thanks was expressed to Sister Maritz for her initiative and drive, to Dr Sarah Miller of Iams for her enthusiastic support and sponsorship as well as to Prof Bland, Matron Muller, Sister Hamman and everyone else who had been involved for their enthusiastic commitment to and support for the project from the start.

Prof Osterhoff receives TuksAlumni Laureatus Award

Prof Deiter Osterhoff, Professor Emeritus and former Head of the Department of Ethology at the Faculty of Veterinary Science was recently awarded the TuksAlumni Laureatus Award in recognition of exceptional achievement and promotion of the interests of the University of Pretoria. Prof Osterhoff adds this prestigious award to several others he has received which include the Gold Medal of the South African Veterinary Association and the German Order of Merit from the President of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Second ostrich update available

The Second Update to the *Ostrich Bibliography*, covering the years 1995 to 2000 is now available in printed format. In 2002 we intend publishing the electronic version which will comprise the entire *Ostrich* database, from the 1800s to 2000 (approximately 4000 references).

Update No 2 consists of 1340 references arranged according to main headings, with a comprehensive separate descriptor and author list. Most of these references include abstracts. The local price is R200. It is interesting to note the new fields of interest within ostrich research and publications. Stress factors affecting these birds under farming conditions enjoy much attention overseas as well as animal rights and animal welfare issues. Electronic publications are increasing and several ostrich websites have emerged worldwide over the past six years. All these issues are covered in this latest *Update*.

Valuable input in the compilation of *Update No 2* was given by Dr Fritz Huchzermeyer, Dr DC Deeming of the UK and Peter Richards of the Faculty of Health Sciences, UP.



IAMS SA supports veterinary education

Research news

Personnel notes



Mr V Pillay has been appointed as research assistant in Molecular Biology to support a collaborative research project on theilerial and erlichial diseases of livestock and wildlife being conducted by the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Utrecht University, a private company (Isogen) in the Netherlands and the Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases at the Faculty. The post is funded by Utrecht University and Isogen.

Dr N Maingi, a senior lecturer at the University of Nairobi, joined the Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases in November 2001. He has been awarded a University of Pretoria Postdoctoral Fellowship to work on the control of gastrointestinal nematodes in goats in South Africa using anthelmintics and the nematode trapping fungi *Duddingtonia flagrans*. This novel form of biological control is one of the tools that is currently being tested to counter anthelmintic resistance.

The research status of two more members of the Faculty has been recognised by the National Research Foundation (NRF). Following NRF evaluation, Prof Tom Aire (Anatomy) has been rated in category C1 while Prof Johnny van der Walt (Physiology) has been given category C2 rating.

Signs of stress in your colleagues

- Increased irritability
- Indecision
- Overeating or anorexia
- Loss of sleep
- Increased drinking and/or smoking
- Tension and anxiety
- Physical symptoms such as headaches, indigestion
- Loss of sense of humour or well-being
- Relationship problems

Signs of major depression

- Persistent sad or empty mood
- Low libido or impotence
- Substance abuse
- Feeling hopeless, helpless, guilty, pessimistic, worthless
- Fatigue
- Disturbance in eating or sleeping
- Increased crying or anxiety or panic attacks
- Trouble concentrating, remembering things or making decisions
- Persistent physical symptoms that don't respond to treatment
- Thoughts of suicide or plans for attempts

Signs that a colleague may be considering suicide

- Veiled references to suicide or a general preoccupation with death
- A person might say "I can understand why they might do that"
- Talking about feelings of hopelessness: "I probably messed that up" or "I just can't get it together. Nothing will ever change!"
- A depressed person suddenly feels happy
- A major pointer is when a person reaches rock bottom and suddenly seems to spring up again. Watch out for a person ringing old friends and talking in final terms: e.g. "I just want you to know how much you've always meant to me."
- Making arrangements: A new will, giving away possessions, suddenly organising to do something he or she has always wanted to.

Handling stress in the

Stress is what happens to our body when a "pleasant" or "unpleasant" demand is placed upon it. Using this definition, we are all stressed a few times each day! If depression creeps in and deepens, we find it increasingly more difficult to escape from the combined condition often resulting in poor performance at work, breakdown of personal relationships leading to alcohol abuse, drug abuse, attempted/successful suicide or family murders.

The first paragraph is true of any person in any country in the world no matter how safe and secure the environment. South Africa's high level of crime and violence just magnifies the issue!

Myths regarding stress

Myth 1:

Only unpleasant situations are stressful.

Winning a jackpot can be as stressful as losing your job; and falling in love can be as stressful as breaking up.

Myth 2:

What's stressful to me is stressful to you.

Situations are rarely stressful in and of themselves. What causes one person to "flip out" might not even ruffle another. Stress is not something "out there", it is something we create. It is dependent upon how we interpret situations and how we relate to the world around us. The good news is - if our mind creates our stress, then our mind can decrease our stress!

Myth 3:

In the ideal world, there wouldn't be any stress.

Too little stress (leading to boredom) can make us as miserable as too much stress. Everyone has an optimal level of stress (i.e. life change). One of the secrets of happiness is determining how much stress is enough, and how much is too much - then doing something about it.

The veterinary profession

A survey of the veterinary and medical professions carried out in the United Kingdom during the 1970s revealed that the veterinary profession had the highest divorce rate of all professions surveyed. Dentistry had the highest suicide rate.

In 1993, a report published in *Population Trends* listed occupations in order of Proportional Mortality Ratios (PMR) for suicide. Top of the list were veterinarians. The analysis covered men only, and was based on UK death registrations

from 1979 to 1990. Vets had three times the expected number of deaths from suicide, dramatically outstripping their nearest competitors - pharmacists, dentists, farmers and medical practitioners - all of whom had around twice the general population's expected deaths. The profession with the lowest PMR was physiotherapy.

In 2001, the New Zealand Veterinary Association and Veterinary Council of New Zealand combined to run a stress survey in New Zealand. Australia is preparing to run the same survey amongst its veterinarians.

New Zealand's national trends indicate that the suicide rate is rising. Since 1988, death by suicide has increased by 24%, now at around 22 per 100 000 population. Suicide has recently become the leading cause of death due to injury, ahead of motor vehicle accidents and homicide. And for every person who dies from suicide, another 30 to 40 have attempted it. These trends hold true for the veterinary profession. Rumour suggests that men in their forties and fifties are the most common suicide victims amongst vets. However, of the suicide cases reported in New Zealand during the last five years, the majority have been new graduates. A contributing factor could be: isolation - both physically and professionally. Many new graduates feel overwhelmed by practice; dealing with clients, long hours and feelings of inadequacy. They are also daunted by the prospect of frequently asking for advice, especially when practice owners unsuccessfully hide impatience from their inexperienced employees. New graduates often blame themselves for the death of patients during this transitional year. Financial responsibilities accumulated from student loans and setting oneself up in practice also contribute to depressive illness leading to self-medication through drug or alcohol abuse.

How can professional suicide be prevented?

Mentor schemes

These schemes are aimed at helping young vets with the stress of transition from university to practice. Non-university mentor schemes have been tried in many Australian states but the logistics of keeping in touch with new graduates proved impossible. The university-based schemes where the new graduates already know their mentors, were more successful. Towards the end of the final year, all students are asked to list, in order of preference, three faculty members they would like as mentors.

veterinary profession

Debriefing

Psychologists believe that crisis points should be better recognised by the profession and vets should be encouraged to “de-brief” after such events. Stress is cumulative and if not released, will result in “breakdown”. De-briefing or release points could include the following: the university’s mentor scheme, friends or family, a sympathetic employer or a professional counsellor.

Transition to practice

Australia recently developed guidelines for New Graduate Friendly Practices. Participating practices commit to providing support, supervision and backup to new graduates. In Australia, employers are legally responsible for the physical and psychological well being of their employees.

Stress proofing

Veterinary graduates face a lifetime of stress peculiar to the profession. More can be done at the

undergraduate level to give people the skills to cope. Be pro-active and stress-proof people. The University of Sydney Veterinary School has planned a new curriculum with a course in the first three years called Professional Practice, covering personal as well as professional skills. Years four and five will include lectures from psychologists.

In the USA, some veterinary schools have full-time psychologists included in the staff compliment. The University of Melbourne in Australia has a practitioner-in-residence who spends 10 weeks with the graduating class, during which time business advisers, career counsellors and psychologists are asked to give life-skills presentations.

Students must be taught how to recognise signs of depression in themselves and arrest it before they hit the downward spiral.

Compiled by Prof K Petty

Proven stress reduction tips

- Don't pin negative labels on yourself. Forgetting an appointment only means that you forgot an appointment; it doesn't mean you are “scatter-brained”.
- Be careful of falling into an “I want it now” mentality. Computers, fax machines and microwave ovens work fast; people work slower.
- Remember that the best thing about the future is that it comes only one day at a time.
- Talk about your problems with a trusted friend or, if necessary, a health professional.
- Less is more. Being happy with one dog does not mean you'll be twice as happy if you get another dog.
- See “failures” as stepping stones rather than roadblocks.
- Do the things you enjoy but stay out of debt.
- Are you human? Well then, it's OK to make a mistake.
- Do something that will improve your appearance. Looking better can help you feel better.
- Organise your home and work-space so that you always know exactly where things are.
- Write your thoughts and feelings down in a journal. This will help you clarify things and give you a new perspective.
- Simplify your life. Watch less TV. You will have more free time to get the really important things done.
- Do household chores with your kids; make up a game and have fun.
- Create a “buffer zone” between work and home (exercise, relaxing shower, change of clothes)
- Always be aware of your surroundings. Walk with “purpose” – your body language should say “Don't mess with me”.
- Unplug your phone or switch on you answering machine, while you take a bath, have dinner, etc.
- Ask for help. Other people may not know you're feeling overwhelmed unless you tell them.
- Be yourself; celebrate yourself. There's no one else like you anywhere. You have a special purpose for being here.
- Whatever you do, never lose hope.

Free, confidential, stress screening test

For a free, confidential screening test, visit: www.depression-screening.org

This is a New Zealand web site so please do not follow instructions on the site if indications are that you need help.

Contact details if you or a friend need help:

Clinical psychologist: Voula Samouris (visits Ouderstepoort on Wednesdays)	0837545427
24hr crisis line:	0800006428
Department of Student Support:	012 4202333
Tygerberg poison centre (24 hours)	(021) 9316129

Thanks to Julie Haggie, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Veterinary Council of New Zealand for information regarding the NZ stress survey and allowing me to quote articles printed in the Veterinary Council of New Zealand Newsbrief. Julie Haggie has also sent a copy of a book *In sickness and in health* containing two chapters dealing specifically with issues related to the health of persons in the veterinary profession. *In sickness and in health* should be read by all health professionals, their partners and families.

The Faculty of Veterinary Science library will be ordering extra copies to be available to students and staff. If you would like your own personal copy please write to the Doctors' Health Advisory Service, P O Box 812, Wellington, New Zealand. The cost of the book is \$28,00 (New Zealand dollars).

Thanks to Wellness Project Management (Johannesburg) for the stress reducing tips. Wellness Project Management can be contacted at (011) 781-1002 or fax (011) 781-1560 or e-mail: wpm@icon.co.za. Their web address is <http://www.wpm.co.za>

Alumni news

Dr Stan Marks (associate professor in the Department of Medicine and Epidemiology, School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California, Davis, USA), a 1986 graduate of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, Pretoria is visiting and addressing the Faculty on 22 July 2002.

Dr Marks completed two residencies in the USA in Small Animal Internal Medicine and Clinical Oncology at the Universities of Florida and California respectively. He then went on to complete a PhD Major in Nutrition. Dr Marks is a Diplomate ACVIM (Oncology; Internal Medicine) and a Diplomate ACVN (Nutrition).

Over the past 14 years he has received numerous prestigious awards including: Small Animal Resident of the Year, University of Florida 1988-1989; Recipient of Robert Emrie Smith Memorial Research Fellowship 1994; Mark L Morris, Distinguished Research Award 1997; Comparative Gastroenterology Society Research Award 1998.

He serves on or chairs more than 20 committees and is a reviewer for the following journals: *the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association (JAVMA)*, *Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine (JVM)*, *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, *Advances in Small Animal Medicine and Surgery*, *Compendium on Continuing Education* as well as *Veterinary Medicine*.

Textbook chapter contributions include; *The 5 Minute Veterinary Consult* (1997), *Veterinary Clinics of North America* (1998), *Small Animal Clinical Nutrition IV* (2000), *Kirk's Current Veterinary Therapy XIII* (2000) and *Ettinger's Textbook of Veterinary Internal Medicine* (2000).

Dr Marks has over 30 peer reviewed/refereed publications, numerous other publications and has also been an invited speaker at more than 80 congresses and symposia.

Research focus areas for the Faculty

So as to be locally relevant and globally competitive, the Faculty has drawn up a strategic plan to enhance its research programmes. Six focus areas have been identified to provide a dynamic and innovative approach.

The focus areas were chosen to establish, achieve and project an African uniqueness and to bond the Faculty's own areas of speciality with external expertise and technology. Projects within these focus areas will receive priority when researchers apply for faculty funding.

The following are the six focus areas that will serve as the driving force behind all research and postgraduate programmes:

- Wildlife health and production
- Veterinary problems of developing communities
- Economically important conditions/diseases of livestock in the sub-Saharan region
- Veterinary public health and environmental safety
- Important conditions of companion animals in the sub-Saharan region
- Interaction of nutrition and disease under African conditions

These focus areas will be reviewed and refined on an ongoing basis so as to ensure the continued relevance of the Faculty's research programme in both the local and international research arenas.



Alumnus to speak at the SAVA congress

The company Iams SA is proud to sponsor and invite Dr Stan Marks (right) to speak at the 2002 SAVA Biennial Congress and to address the Faculty of Veterinary Science on "A Personal Perspective on Post Graduate Studies and Opportunities in the USA".

IAMS SA donates new digital still and video camera to Onderstepoort

The Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital recently celebrated the opening of its new cat ward on 28 March by holding a lunchtime get-together for staff and other invited guests.

Iams South Africa also donated the use of a much-needed new digital still and video camera to the Department of Companion Animal Medicine at the opening ceremony.

The camera was put to immediate use and the following stills capturing the moment, were the first resulting images.

Prof P Bland welcomed the new ward as an extension of Onderstepoort's commitment to offering continued superior service levels as an academic facility and a specialised service to the public and thanked Iams for their continued commitment to the improvement of veterinary care and education.

Sarah Miller – Technical Services Manager and Wendy Fisher – Marketing Manager of Iams SA alongside one of the learning stations in the ward.



Sister Sarah Maritz with a happy new resident of the cat ward



A ward resident makes himself quite comfortable.



Did you know?

You can buy a high quality doctor's jacket through Iams South Africa at the heavily subsidised price of R100 by simply calling Iams student representatives Vanessa at 083 232 4002 or Jac at 082 269 6156 (5th year at OP).

Need any nutritional information?

Visit the Iams Learning Centre in Medicine Clinic I for a wide range of articles and literature relevant to clinical applications of nutrition. This centre was established in 2001 as part of the ongoing Iams commitment to veterinary education.

Iams Best of Class in Nutrition for 2002

Congratulations to Stan Browning (BVScV). He has won the Iams South Africa Best of Class in Nutrition prize as the top achieving student in the 4th year for Companion Animal Nutrition.

His prize consists of a trip to an exotic destination in Europe in November to join up with all the other Best of Class in Nutrition winners from around Europe. From there he will fly to the UK to spend one week in the Companion Animal Internal Medicine Department at the Royal Veterinary College, London.

Congratulations Stan!

News in equine research

The African horse sickness (AHS) outbreak in Stellenbosch in March 1999 resulted in the suspension of the export of horses from South Africa.

The Equine Research Centre played an active role in re-establishing the quarantine zone in the Western Cape and the suspension was lifted in May 2001. Since the lifting of this suspension in excess of 100 horses have been exported and have competed very successfully in international events. Racing successes include "Palace Line" winning the Singapore Derby, "Hoeberg" winning the Chairman's Stakes in Singapore and "Spook Express" winning the Galaxy Stakes in Lexington, Kentucky, USA.

The first suspected case of African horse sickness this year was submitted to the Faculty early in January. AHS was wide spread in Gauteng during January since specimens from numerous suspected AHS cases were received from many parts of the province. The occurrence of these cases was markedly earlier than usual but was probably associated with the above average rainfall experienced in the early part of summer. Due to the increased incidence of AHS in Gauteng, the Directorate of Veterinary Services introduced a restriction on the movement of horses from Gauteng to the Western Cape. This embargo was later extended to include KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape Provinces.

The Equine Research Centre, Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases, Department of Genetics of the Faculty of Biological and Agricultural Sciences and the Department of Pathology, Immunology and Microbiology of the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of California, Davis have recently set up a collaborative Industry funded project (R2, 4 million over a three year period) which has been matched by THRIP. The primary aims of the project are to develop more rapid serotype specific diagnostic techniques for AHS and alternate strategies for immunization of horses against AHS.

Faculty receives indigenous pig herd

The Onderstepoort Veterinary Institute (OVI) recently donated a herd of 19 indigenous pigs to the Faculty of Veterinary Science.

The pigs will be kept as an outdoor herd as soon as suitable shelters (arks) have been erected. The newly acquired herd will mainly be used for student training but will also be used to conduct research relevant to the production potential of this breed. Very little research on this hardy breed has been carried out to date. The acquisition of the herd will thus provide unique opportunities for postgraduate students in the field of porcine studies. The Faculty would like to express sincere thanks to the OVI for this very kind donation.

For further information please contact Dr BT (Tom) Spencer at (012) 529 8069.



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		
- Dr Kenneth Joubert (VAH)	8137	082 445 7280
- Sr Amanda Hamman (VAH)	8064	083 269 8874
- Sr Riani de Kock (VAH)	8149	082 802 3329
- Dr Lynette Bester (VAH)	8136	083 695 5078
- 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 Johny vd Walt (Ethology/Physiology)	8025	082 784 8092
- Prof Ken Pettey (Ethology/Physiology)	8449	082 882 7356
- Ms Daléne Joslin (Anatomy/Physiology)	8212	082 374 1583
- Prof Colin Cotton (Paraclinical)	8350	082 634 2778

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