

Community Engagement Newsletter



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Veterinary Science
Autumn: May 2018



LOCUMING IN PARADISE

Dr Luke Arnot (Veterinarian)

I have had the privilege of being a locum veterinarian at the Hluvukani Animal Health Clinic (HAHC) for seven weeks over the past six months.

The Mnisi area on the western border of the Kruger National Park is the most beautiful part of South Africa in which to work. The days start early, where we often leave our comfortable accommodation at the Hans Hoheisen Wildlife Research Centre (HHWRC) at 04:45 in order to be at the dip tanks by 05:30. Every day, one has to drive about 8 km through the Manyeleti Game Reserve. One is often confronted by a roadblock of a herd of elephant or a pride of lion in the road. This is a fantastic start to any day.

Early mornings are spent at sunrise seeing hundreds of communal cattle arriving at the dip tanks amidst the cool morning air at sunrise. This is mixed with dust and the noise of stock whips, yapping dogs and the whistles of the herders. It is a spiritual experience.

After working at the dip tanks, the clinician, the environmental monitor and the students attend to call-out cases. These



The students get to feel like veterinarians.

can be anything from sick or itchy pigs, to cattle dystocias, prolapses, downer cows, calf limb fractures or sick chickens.

During these call-outs, we drive extensively around the Hluvukani area from call-out to call-out, while getting a good idea of the way of life of the people here. We often stop to sample food on offer at the roadside food stalls, like the famous mammas chicken or the chilli chip shop. The community members have always been very happy to have us around, and I think they really appreciate our efforts. It is often very hot, dusty and sweaty, and the days are long, but it is so much fun. After the call-outs are done and dusted, we return the HAHC, where dogs, goats and the odd cat are presented for a range of complaints. The students deal with those as well.

The day usually finishes around 14:00, or after the call-outs are done. The afternoons and evenings are spent either at the pool, bird watching, game viewing or sleeping. Beer, braais and biltong are a common occurrence in the evenings at the HHWRC accommodation – so is laughing about who got chased by a mad cow or fell in the mud of a dirty pig sty.

The students generally love the rotation, because they get exposed to a variety of species and get to do most procedures themselves. They get to feel like veterinarians, and are often blown away by the appreciation of the livestock owners. There are few fancy handling facilities on

call-outs, so the techniques of casting and wrestling cattle to the ground are often used. The students learn to appreciate good handling facilities when they do see them. They learn what can be done with little equipment, other than ropes and a tree stump. If there is any wildlife work (like the darting of carnivores) happening at Manyeleti Game Reserve, the staff there often invite us along so that the students can get involved with a bit of wildlife work when the opportunities arise.

The environmental monitors who accompany us, Vincent Khosa, Hendry Mathebula and Philemon Mbhungele, act as our tour guides, interpreters and cattle wranglers. They are awesome. They prevent us from getting lost in the sprawling Hluvukani streets, and keep us safe. Dr Illana van Wyk and Jenette Wentzel, who are based at HHWRC, always go out of their way to keep us comfortable, and always include us in any wildlife work they might be doing at night.



After working on the call-out, the students learn to appreciate good handling facilities when they do see them.

Photographs by Dr Luke Arnot

REAL ABOUT RABIES AT RIBANE-LAKA

Sylvia-Anne Farmer, Daniel Parsons, Matthew Woods and Hendre van Zyl (BVSc III)

Our project involved us going to a selected local school and educating the learners about any topic of our choose.

We reached out to Dr Jeanne Rudeman at the Mamelodi Animal Health Clinic for advice on what we should present, as well as any background information on the community. Dr Rudman explained to us that rabies and misinformation on general dog behaviour is a concern for the Mamelodi community. We then decided to talk about rabies and dog handling, and to lightly touch on dog fighting.

We set up a meeting prior to the day of presenting to meet with Ms Lebogang Laka, the Life Orientation teacher at Ribane-Laka Secondary School. We toured the school and discussed how familiar her learners are with rabies and if she had any concerns or advice for us. We continued to stay in contact with Ms Laka until implementation day.

We presented to the Grade 12 class. It was clear to us that they had minimal exposure to rabies and general dog handling. Most learners did not even know that dog fights are illegal or that it is a very common occurrence. We believe that our talk with the class



It was a truly rewarding experience to teach the learners something new.



The rabies booklets enabled the learners to share what they had learned with their friends and family.

benefited the learners, as most of them pointed out that they did not even know that you needed to vaccinate your household pets. It was incredibly rewarding to see how they took in what we said and learned from the past misconceptions that they had regarding rabies. We continued to debunk the myths that these learners had about dogs, and taught them what to do in life-threatening events like when you get bitten by a dog, or when a dog comes running towards you.

This was a wonderful experience to give back to the community. Giving a 20-minute presentation might be small in the greater scheme of things, but a little can go a long way in the long run. We did not want to just teach one class, so we provided them with 80 helpful booklets containing the main facts about rabies and helpful tips about dog handling. We encouraged them to share what they had learned with their friends and family. We also provided extra booklets for them to share with classmates that could not attend our presentation. The highlight of this project was when we asked the learners to fill in a short questionnaire after the presentation. It was amazing to see that they listened to us and that we managed to teach them something new or change the mindsets they had about rabies and dogs in general. Overall, this was an enlightening experience for us.



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
Small Animal Section Head and Referrals Co-ordinator sarah.johnson@up.ac.za

LENDING A HELPING PAW

Kgopotso Mabote (Dip. Animal Health, Bsc Agric
Animal Health [Hons], North-West University)

It was on a warm and calm Saturday morning on 16 September 2017, from 06:30, when a group of veterinary students gathered to embark on a journey to Hekpoort.

The order of the day was to lend a much-needed paw (hand) to the residents of the Hekpoort and surrounding areas. The mission was to positively impact on the well-being of the community members and their pets.

Upon arrival, the students were given a final brief and an orientation of the area in which they were going to be working, as well as how to set up the venue. All the students played an active role in setting up the work stations. After setting up, they were divided into smaller groups according to the number of stations. The setup allowed for the following five work stations:

(a) Administration station: The students on this station were responsible for recording the details of the owners and the

animals, and for giving out a vaccination certificate to be presented to the two stations that follow.

(b) Clinical examination station: With the help of Dr Hermien Viljoen (State Veterinarian), the temperature, pulse and respiration (TPR) of the animals were taken, and the history of the animal was checked and evaluated. Minor wounds or injuries were also attended to. Finally, the animals got an oral deworming tablet (Quantel) and an external parasite spray.

(c) Vaccination station: Healthy animals that were older than six weeks were given two subcutaneous doses: 1 ml of rabies and 1 ml of 5-in-1 (distemper, infectious

canine hepatitis, canine adenovirus type 1 and 2, canine parainfluenza and canine parvovirus) for dogs or 3-in-1 (feline rhinotracheitis, calici and panleukopenia) for cats. After successful inoculation, the record certificate got signed and the vaccine bottle stickers were pasted onto the certificate.

- (d) Food collection station: After having their pets vaccinated, the owners went to this station and produced the vaccination certificate. If all was in order, they were rewarded with a bag of food courtesy of Royal Canin and Hills for their animal, and they were given proper advice on how to feed, house and take care of their animals in general.
- (e) Education station: This was the final and most important station. Its purpose was to reach out and teach the young children. This was the most active and interactive station of all. The children were taught the correct way of handling and taking good care of their pets and themselves. Lessons were taught to the group of children, where after they were asked random questions based on the lesson, and prizes were given to those who answered correctly. This was a way of ensuring that the children pay attention to what was being taught, thereby assuring that they actually gained the much-needed knowledge. The children also got face paintings of their choice and they had a chance to play soccer. After all the lessons and games, they queued up to get a pair of shoes.

When there was no any other sign of owners bringing in their animals, the equipment was packed up and the outreach headed to another nearby area. The students were divided into five groups, four of the groups were led by the Veterinary Student Community Outreach (VetSCO) committee members and the last one was led by Dr Viljoen. Each group had to go to each and every house, ask the owners for permission to vaccinate their animals, and give them food for their animals.



Pet-owners in the community could bring their beloved animals to get vaccinated.



The outreach was a rewarding experience for all the students.

It was a very educational and successful outreach, all thanks to the NewVs, and the third-, fourth and fifth-year students who woke up early and worked tirelessly throughout the day. VetSCO would also like to thank the final-year international exchange students, Clara Buxbaum from the Veterinary University of Vienna in Austria, and Giusy Manca Sylvania Cossu from the University of Sassari Sardinia in Italy, for making themselves available for the day. Their knowledge and experience came in handy and we look forward to having more international students on outreaches to communities like Hekpoort. We would also like to extend our warm appreciation to Sr Liesl Cronje, Dr Viljoen and Hannes Gouws for lending a helping hand in their personal time. This had a significantly impact on the community, and made the day a huge success overall.

The VetSCO team also wishes to acknowledge our sponsors for their massive support. We would like to thank the Community Engagement Committee at Onderstepoort Campus for acknowledging the work that we do. Thank you to Hills and Royal Canin for sponsoring dog food for most of our outreaches. The day would not have been a great story to tell if it was not for the most generous sponsor, CEVA pharmaceuticals.

OUR SPONSORS



Photographs by Maggie Lee (VetSCO Vice-Chairperson)

MEETING

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

ONE HEALTH EFFORTS IN GAUTENG PUT TO THE TEST

Lindsey Burgess (BVSc IV), Devon Seaton (BVSc IV) and John Burgess (BVSc VI)

We set out from Onderstepoort Campus at 06:00 on 15 September 2017. The journey was, thankfully, uneventful, and we arrived on time at Rust de Winter to hear the welcoming speech and to be allocated to our various teams.

After being introduced to Dr Jillian Declercq (State Veterinarian) and David Matemetja (Animal Health Technician), we piled into the back of the bakkie and set off for farm number one where we were told just over 150 animals awaited us. While we waited for the animals to arrive, we drew up the vaccines and applied some much-needed sunscreen, because although it was barely past 08:00, the sun was already gearing up for its 35°C heat!

Our group was made up of a mix of year groups, with two fourth-year students and one final-year student. Dr Jillian was very kind to all of us, and even allowed us to help her with a few diagnostics along the way. When the first group of cattle were ready for us, we quickly learnt that these cows were not as tame as the ones we practice on at Onderstepoort. However, despite great effort on the side of the Brahman cows, by the end of the day we were masters at dodging horns, administering the vaccines and spotting those animals in need of medical attention.

We concluded our visit to the first farm with a brief talk on primary animal healthcare and animal management with the farmer and farm workers before heading to farm number two. We followed behind the second herd as we drove to farm number two, allowing a small reprieve from the dust and heat. After a short tea break in the car, we arrived at the farm and were quickly put to work vaccinating once again.

When we were finished, we headed back to the meeting point and were greeted by a warm, hearty lunch and some much-needed shade. All in all, it was an amazing experience. Our team leaders were remarkable. They taught us so many valuable tricks, and allowed us to put into practice things that we have only seen in the classroom thus far. We must have vaccinated over 100 cows each, allowing us to master the art of speedy subcutaneous injections, while being attacked by the horns and hooves of neighbouring animals. We are very thankful for the opportunity afforded to us and could tell from the farmers' responses that they were glad to have us on board to ensure the best treatment of their animals.



Each student vaccinated over 100 cows.



We became masters at dodging horns, administering the vaccines and spotting those animals in need of medical attention.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT GOES VIRAL

Andrè Els and Nydia-Lee Brits (BVSc III)

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

We learnt how to engage with community members as well as how to interact with our peers and formulate intellectual group decisions that can benefit communities, as well as the environment. A slight change

of events followed as Andre and I were approached by a foundation-phase teacher from Curro Primary School (Roodepoort) – Mariska Duvenage. We were asked to come and give a presentation to the Grade 3

learners. The presentation took place at Curro Primary School on 28 June 2017. It aimed to teach the learners about basic animal healthcare, important aspects regarding dog behaviour, as

well as important concepts on rabies. We presented to 105 learners in a large hall.

This project was unique, as it was not aimed at communities that the University allocated to us students. It was rewarding to know that not only do communities reach out and want to be involved with us, but so do private schools. Our project idea was to encourage the learners to be more aware of animals, as well as their pets' health and well being. We also encouraged the learners to understand the basic role of a veterinarian. We were privileged enough to acquire 110 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 reinforce the knowledge conveyed to the learners. These booklets would be beneficial to these learners as the booklets contain stickers and visual aids that are easily understood by foundation-phase learners. The certificate at the back of the book will also inspire the learners to adhere to their oath and to encourage others to do the same. We decided to also show the learners some reptiles and teach them a little bit about snakes (ball pythons and a bearded dragon), as well as interesting facts that the learners could remember about these particular animals. We also mentioned information regarding snake bites and how to deal with those incidences.

We were asked to return and teach the rest of the foundation phase as it encouraged the learners to want to learn more about animals and the veterinary science field. We hope to have benefited



The Grade 3 learners had an opportunity to interact with the snakes.

each learner and that the knowledge we shared with them was exciting and interesting. The project was a fantastic learning experience as it was completely different to our academic CE projects. It was interesting to see how the different communities responded and how the communities are worlds apart. The major highlight for us was experiencing the Grade 3 learners and how much knowledge they actually have with regards to the concepts that we covered. We were welcomed with open arms at the school and the learners were thrilled to listen and learn from us. The excitement of the learners was always at full force, and all questions asked were answered correctly by the learners. It was such an honour to be sourced out by the school and given the opportunity to teach the learners about our knowledge in the veterinary science field.



They learned interesting facts about these unique creatures.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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