

Community Engagement Newsletter

Faculty of Veterinary Science
Summer 2010



Veterinary Footprints in Calvinia and Brandvlei

Prof Geoffrey Fosgate

Julie, a pregnant female Jack Russell terrier was lying quietly in her dog-bed watched over attentively by her owner.

An intravenous catheter was placed to provide Julie with stabilizing fluids prior to surgery. Bernadine "Bernie" Raymond, soon to qualify as a veterinarian, had examined Julie and determined that intravenous fluids were required to reduce the surgical risk. Dr. Brighton Dzikiti was consulted and suggested a modified pre-medication protocol to ensure a safe anaesthetic experience, which was duly provided by Sr. Tania Serfontein and Dr. Dzikiti. Dr. Quixi Sonntag performed the necessary surgery in a kitchen modified as a surgical suite and expertly managed by Sr. Melanie McLean.



Julie recovered in warm surroundings under the watchful eyes of Sr. Nicole Mills. The work of Steve Mofokeng, Solly Mapaya, Piet Matjila, and Louise Geyer ensured that Julie received treatment in an organized and caring environment. Julius Zwart indirectly cared for Julie, and all other patients seen by the team, by ensuring that all the needs of the veterinary team were met. Eugene Machimana arguably had the most difficult job of the team by teaching and entertaining the children of Calvinia affording the veterinary team the opportunity to focus on Julie's care.



The veterinary team which travelled from the Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Pretoria travelled to the communities of Calvinia and Brandvlei in the Northern Cape did so as part of a veterinary outreach programme.



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The beneficiaries of this programme included the animals and people of the communities but, possibly even more importantly, the participants themselves. I suspect that I benefited more from the project than the residents of the communities. This project afforded me the opportunity to participate within a hard-working and professionally dedicated team of individuals. Bernie was a great partner in the clinical evaluation section as she embodies the perfect combination of technical skills and knowledge with the openness to learn and enhance those attributes. Despite the tough exterior that she projects she is filled with empathy and compassion for animals. Tania had amazing organizational skills and ensured that animals were moving efficiently from the clinical examinations to surgery. Brighton provided professional advice and, more importantly, a calming influence to prevent distractions and turmoil from negatively impacting our progress. Steve probably does not realize how much his efforts were appreciated but he was indispensable for the efficient functioning of the clinical evaluations. These are the people that I worked with directly during the program but I also observed the incredible commitment and hard work of all volunteers. Quite possibly, Srs. Serfontein, McLean, and Mills worked harder and with more dedication and compassion than any other individuals that I have directly observed. The University of Pretoria should be proud of the efforts of these exceptional people. Drs. Gerhard van der Westhuizen, Lizanne de Beer, and Elfrede Alberts are not affiliated with the university but they also graciously volunteered their veterinary expertise to ensure our success at Calvinia and Brandvlei.



The statistics regarding the number of animals that were examined, treated, and sterilized in Calvinia and Brandvlei were recorded and are certain to be reported elsewhere. What was not recorded and therefore cannot be reported in any official document is the number of smiles, laughs, and thanks delivered to team members during our time in the communities. The human-animal bond transcends politics, religion, race, social economic status and any other factor that can be used to artificially separate human beings into categories. The domestication of animals made advanced human civilizations possible and an enlightened society recognizes the importance of animals to the social well-being of communities. My personal goal for the Calvinia (and Brandvlei) Community Outreach Program was to experience these communities and hopefully address social well-being while testing my limitations and learning about myself.



I learned that a few dedicated individuals can make a large difference in a community and that the key ingredient for a successful project is having respect for basic human dignity. Julie had an uncomplicated recovery and returned home that afternoon. Julie's owner visited on a subsequent day to express his gratitude and to delivery treats as a token of appreciation. The praise (and cookies!) were shared among all members of the team. We are not capable of predicting the future of Julie or her owner nor are we able to know what would have happened had we not gone to Calvinia and Brandvlei. What we do know, however, is the joy that receiving the gift of appreciation from Julie's owner brought to us. Everything that we do in life leaves its mark, its footprint, upon our consciousness. The smile of a young girl, the line of children waiting to look through the microscope at a patient's blood smear, the gift of Julie's owner – these are the footprints of a successful outreach program.



Loate Community Veterinary Clinic (CVC)

Sr Sarah Jonhson

The Loate Community Veterinary Clinic (CVC) started several years ago as part of a South African Veterinary Association initiative to provide primary veterinary health care to previously disadvantaged and very poor communities who have limited or no access to basic veterinary services. The Dept of Agriculture donates vaccines and a small quantity of veterinary drugs, and the rest of the drugs needed are obtained through donations by sympathetic veterinary pharmaceutical companies; ad hoc donations made by the OVAH; and drug purchases made possible through fund-raising. Thanks to the sterling efforts of individuals like Dr Dave Kenyon of Hatfield Veterinary Hospital, who 'carried' Loate for years in addition to his own private practice, the Loate CVC has slowly grown from a trickle of animals at its inception, to the current regular 'flood', as word spread that there was a place where local Soshanguwe residents could have their pets vaccinated and also obtain veterinary advice and treatment for a small token sum (less than R20).

Loate is approximately 25 kilometres from the Faculty of Veterinary Science, and forms a small suburb within Soshanguwe/Winterveld, whose southern border is only a few kilometres to the north of our campus. The bi-monthly clinic is held on a small piece of open ground outside the Loate police station every second Wednesday from 11.00 to 14.00 (starting earlier if possible, and seldom finishing before 15.00). There is no building, no water and no toilet facilities, and until last November, the only shade available was that supplied by a portable block of post-boxes. When the block was suddenly removed, SAVA stepped in and financed two large gazebos which provide at least some protection against the elements for those offering veterinary assistance as well as for some of the owners and dogs that seek it. There are two collapsible tables for 'reception' and vaccinations/treatments, and water is taken along in containers for patient needs and veterinary use. If toilets are urgently required then permission is requested to use the ablution facilities within the Loate police station.

Since September 2009, Dr Henry Annandale has kindly agreed that I may go out to Loate whenever my workload allows, in order to assist with primary veterinary health care.

Veterinary and para-veterinary support is on a volunteer basis, and it is here that the Faculty of Veterinary Science plays a vital role (and needs, I believe, to play an even larger one!). If it wasn't for several caring vets employed at the Faculty, plus a few keen students and myself, all of whom try to go out as regularly as possible, there would be many Wednesdays when the Loate CVC would simply not function, because the clinic cannot operate without a veterinarian on duty. With the help of a couple of SAVA-CVC staff members, Vhonani and Annette are absolutely indispensable and also public volunteers, the team of the day is often required to do the paperwork on, vaccinate, deworm and 'spot' treat (for fleas and ticks) as many as 150 dogs and pups within the space



of a few frantic hours! Over and above that, there is basic health, sterilisation and feeding advice to be given and many sick animals to be examined and treated!

All dogs presented are vaccinated against rabies as well as the major canine diseases (parvo virus, distemper and upper respiratory viruses). They are also dewormed against the major worms commonly found in dogs, and treated for parasites such as ticks/fleas etc. The sick ones are examined and if possible treated, or if severely ill and there is space, then loaded to be taken to a participating private practice for further diagnostics and treatment. Sterilisation is encouraged at every opportunity and the eight berth trailer, supplied by SAVA for the purpose of transporting dogs to be sterilised (the dogs are returned two days later), is put to good use. Unfortunately, only a few Pretoria practices make their services available to sterilise the Loate pets, and once again Dr Kenyon is a stalwart in this regard.

It is hot, dirty, hard work, and sometimes even wet and chilly, when the wind blows, or it the rains, but it is also incredibly rewarding and heart-warming. The dogs are generally an endearing, friendly bunch of canines, albeit often very skinny, scruffy and mangy. They are remarkably tolerant and good natured, and there is very rarely aggression shown towards us. There are seldom fights even though many of the dogs are not controlled by collars and leashes, and a few walk a fair distance to the CVC. Loate owners are, on the whole, very pleasant and committed to their pets, despite lacking money, transport, and basic animal-care knowledge, and most people patiently queue for hours in the hot sun waiting to be attended to.

So, if you have been wondering how to assist a community in need, why not consider volunteering for the odd Wednesday at Loate? There are never enough helping hands!

Please contact one of the following people if you would like to donate money, dog food, collars, leashes, baskets, or your time:

Sr Sarah Johnson	(012) 529 8387 / 079 183 1878	sarah.johnson@up.ac.za
Dr Quixi Sonntag	(012) 529 8472 / 082 458 9345	quixi.sonntag@up.ac.za
Mr Eugene Machimana	(012) 529 8100 / 083 687 0181	eugene.machimana@up.ac.za

Veterinary Nursing Students active in Community Engagement

Sr Esther Botha

The veterinary nursing students from the Faculty of Veterinary Science of the University of Pretoria, under the guidance of Ester Botha from the department of Production Animal Studies, have over the past few years been engaged in a variety of outreach projects in different communities.

An ongoing project is that of the community veterinary clinic run from House Judea, situated in Wolmer, Pretoria North, under the auspices of the South African Veterinary Association. The target beneficiaries are the financially challenged animal owners in



Members from the community registering to receive primary animal health care

Wolmer, an area north of Pretoria. This is a non-curricular outreach project where veterinary nursing students voluntarily donate some of their free time in order to provide primary animal health care to the community and to teach members of the community the basic needs of animals and how to care for their pets. Emphasis is placed on emotional enrichment of the pet owners by strengthening the animal-human bond. A four weekly programme is followed.

Lecturers and students of the Faculty of Veterinary Science are always prepared to be of assistance in community outreach projects where ever the need may be.



Dogs receiving primary animal health care at the community veterinary clinic at Pretoria North

Production Animal Outreach Clinic: Production Animal Studies

Dr Dawie Blignaut



The Production Animal Outreach Clinic (PAOC) established a few years ago, serves as a mobile extension of the Department of Production Animal Studies (PAS) and is partly funded by the Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital (OVAH). This clinic serves the communities of Ratjiespan, Makapanstad and surrounding areas by delivering basic and professional health care to all species of animals in these areas.

Most of the area between the N1 (Polokwane) on the east, Pilansberg on the west, Bela Bela to the north and Soshanguwe/ Brits to the south is utilised for grazing by communal farmers from this area. A large number of cattle graze these areas, and currently, these communal farmers cannot contribute to their full potential to the meat industry of South Africa.

The main aim of the Production Animal Outreach Clinic is to deliver professional veterinary services to these communal farmers and other animal owners. Professional veterinary services aid these communal farmers in making a step forward to contribute to the meat industry.

The mobile clinic consists of a vehicle that is operated by Production Animal Clinicians, Sisters and final year students, who rotate in groups, whose aim is to provide veterinary clinical and advisory services to clients with animals in need.

Services include:

Basic Primary Health Care: Professional basic medical and surgical assistance.

Basic Herd Health Management: Professional Veterinary advice on management, nutrition and disease control on a herd basis.

Basic Preventative Care: Endo-and ectoparasite control. Potential zoonotic (animal to human transmission) diseases control. Vaccination for potential animal and zoonotic diseases.

Education: Education of the communities in and around the mentioned areas. This includes education in the production of sound and safe animal products (meat, milk and eggs) for human consumption and the proper care of animals.

The long term objective of this clinic is to expand service delivery to the areas currently visited and also improve on the services delivered. The clinic could also be utilized as a research tool in various aspects (i.e. Disease Monitoring and Control), however, this will only be possible with proper funding and management.

I know what you did last August

Bernadine Raymond



During August 2010 I had the privilege of joining a team of veterinary professionals on a community outreach to Calvinia in the Northern Cape. With a heart for community work, and a state veterinary elective left to complete in my final year, this was the perfect opportunity to do what I love, feed on the wealth of experience of all the attending professionals and complete my State Veterinary elective.

As the only student, it was an awkward two day drive to Calvinia in the Quantum with people I only knew as my lecturers, clinicians and sisters. But that Monday, we hit the ground running and we soon became colleagues working hard towards a common goal; and shortly after that, i.e. the same day, great friends that I cherish dearly and respect even more. We worked closely with Calvinia State Veterinary services: Dr. Lizanne de Beer and her team of Animal Health Technicians.

My duty, which I was proud of and worked hard at, was general pre-surgery clinical examinations and primary veterinary care, with Professor Fosgate, who soon became just Geoff, an awesome friend and teacher. Aided by Louise Geyer at reception, and Eugene Machimana, community engagement coordinator, we were the people the community interacted with and what a joy it was. My heart grew bigger every time I saw a child smile or show an intense interest in what I was doing with Lady and Bruno; or seeing Lady and Bruno up and awake walking out the door, healthy and sterilized!

I had the honour of doing the last spay of the campaign under the watchful eye and guiding hand of Dr. Quixi Sonntag and



Dr. Brighton Dzikiti, a specialist veterinary anaesthesiologist. He, with Sr. Serfontein ruled the induction room and Sr. Mills was in charge of recovery and client communication.

Under the command of Sr. Melanie McLean in theatre the surgeons were hard at work and we would have starved and gone without a few other things if it weren't for Julius Zwart, our hero in the white Vito. Not forgetting the invaluable efforts of Piet Matjila, Solly Mapaya and Steve Mofokeng, the hard working all-rounders. Everyone had their place as part of the whole and the sense of achievement after a hard week's work with a team of friends was greater than I ever imagined.

I cannot put into words what Calvinia meant to me; the lessons learnt, the experience gained, the lasting friendships made and the fun had. Calvinia and the team have a special place in my heart and I would like to thank everyone who made this incredible opportunity possible.

Introduction to Eugene Machimana



The Faculty of Veterinary Science now has its very own Community Engagement Coordinator in the person of Eugene Machimana. Eugene originally hails from Limpopo Province and moved to Cape Town in 2001 to pursue studies, and also worked there.

Eugene has worked in the NGO sector for over 7 years where he has held various positions that relate to community development. He worked with the Planned Parenthood Association of South

Africa (PPASA)/ Love Life. He has also held the position of Student Development Advisor with Rural Education Access Programme (REAP) where he was responsible for selecting, counselling, mentoring and training students who were studying at institutions of Higher Education (HE). Before joining UP he held a position of Project Coordinator with Equal Opportunity Foundation (EOF), where his responsibilities included facilitating funding for, and supporting grassroots projects connected to Early Childhood Development, HIV/AIDS and Income Generation Projects.

His educational qualifications include a Higher Diploma in Education (HDE) from Giyani College of Education, a BA (Psychology major) from Stellenbosch University, and an Honours degree in Social Behaviour Studies in HIV and AIDS from UNISA. He is currently studying for MA in Social Behaviour Studies in HIV and AIDS.

We welcome Eugene to our faculty and wish him much success in his endeavours.

Seminar on curricular community engagement

Dr Quixi Sonntag

On 21 September, the Faculty's Community Engagement Committee hosted a seminar on curricular community engagement. The aim was to expose staff at the Faculty of Veterinary Science to the different types of community engagement, and in particular curricular community engagement and to stimulate debate on how this should be dealt with at the Faculty.

Prof Morkel Terblanche opened the proceedings and was followed by Prof Denver Hendricks from the Department of Community Engagement at the University of Pretoria. He explained the concept of community engagement and how it fitted into the strategic plan of UP. His colleagues, Dr Gerda Bender and Mrs Gernia van Niekerk, further elucidated the various aspects of community engagement emphasising respectively the scholarly nature of curricular community engagement and the importance of understanding the communities we are in and viewing them as partners rather than subjects.

Drs Martina Crole, Dawie Blignaut, Nenene Qekwana and Quixi Sonntag gave us innovative ideas of how community engagement can be incorporated into the veterinary curriculum in a variety of modules. Prof Nick Kriek, Mr Jacques van Rooyen and Dr Greg Simpson introduced the Mnisi programme and the work done at the Hluvukani Animal Health facility where students are already participating in service delivery to the local community.

During the tea break delegates could view a small exhibition of community engagement projects at the Faculty of Veterinary Science. Many delegates used this time productively for networking and discussing the preceding presentations.

The delegates then had an opportunity to see how other faculties approached community engagement. Excellent speakers from the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Health Care Sciences gave us an overview of their community engagement initiatives, as the University encourages interfaculty and interdisciplinary projects not only in community engagement but also in research. The insight into the activities at other faculties provided us with some interesting perspectives to consider as we move forward towards consolidating curricular community engagement at our faculty.

Dr Henry Annandale closed the proceedings after a short open discussion on community engagement at the Faculty of Veterinary Science. It is the Community Engagement Committee's hope that this exposure to community engagement would help to clarify curricular community engagement for OP staff, and that the Faculty will further develop its already impressive community engagement activities to make our institution a centre of excellence in this field.

Prof Denver Hendricks who gave a key note address, subsequently gave a positive feedback about the seminar. The following extract expresses his views about the seminar: *Congratulations on hosting an excellent seminar. The quality of the organisation and content was outstanding. We need more of these seminars on community engagement around the campus. There is a lot of good community engagement work happening in your faculty. I am of the opinion that there is no need any longer for advocacy work for community engagement at Veterinary Science and that our involvement with you should now progress to a different level.*



The Department of Community Engagement will offer a UP Priority Course next year. Please be on the lookout and register for the next intake. Contact person Ms Ans Jansen Tel: (012) 420-4178 Email: ans.jansen@up.ac.za
Visit the UP Community Engagement website regularly for updates about projects and funding opportunities.