

# Community Engagement Newsletter

Faculty of Veterinary Science

Winter 2013



## IVSA Symposium 2013

### Community Engagement Day

**Nicole Frohlich**

IVSA Symposium Vice-chair  
and Community Engagement Coordinator

The South African Chapter of the International Veterinary Students Association (IVSA) had the honour and privilege of hosting the IVSA Symposium in January 2013. A total of 95 international delegates landed in South Africa and were to spend eight days at the Faculty of Veterinary Science in Pretoria.

The members of the Organising Committee definitely had their work cut out for them! The symposium theme was *One World, One Health*, and it was aimed at bringing all aspects of human and animal health together. The Organising Committee tried to show the delegates all aspects of veterinary practice in South Africa by showing them both the top-class facilities at Onderstepoort, as well as the more down to earth and rural veterinary tasks and welfare work that are so vital to improve the quality of life of both animals and humans in many parts of South Africa.

Organising 10 community engagement projects and transport for 95 delegates proved a daunting task. This could definitely not have been achieved without the help and contacts of

Mr Eugene Machimana, Dr Quixi Sonntag and Faculty support, together with the Community Engagement Committee.

On 9 January, delegates attended discussion panels on biogas production and greening, the future of veterinary education techniques, and complementary homeopathy to drug treatment and phytomedicine. At 10:45, members of the Organising Committee were waiting with ten quantums, packed lunches and lots of excitement for the long awaited community engagement outing. Ten groups went to different places around Pretoria and Johannesburg to volunteer with and help out as many organisations as possible.

The first port of call was the South African Veterinary Association (SAVA) Community Veterinary Clinic (CVC), where Sr Debbie Pleaner helped organise students to help with animals in Makapanstad. Dogs were sprayed with tick and flea control products, vaccinated and dewormed. Two groups of students attended vaccination campaign clinics in Soshanguwe, organised by state veterinarian Dr Nolvuyo Magadla and Mr Ali Makgato (Animal Health Technician).



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These clinics were quite busy and delegates got to see a number of different cases. One of the Organising Committee members even adopted a puppy. The dog was aptly named 'IVSA' and has recently found a new home! Another group visited the Mamelodi Animal Health Clinic (MAHC), where Dr Cherrie Liebenberg took them around and students got to see a few cases and learn about the work they do there.

In addition to the previously mentioned organisations, further groups of students were sent to volunteer at various welfare organisations, including Wetnose, Highveld Horsecare Unit, the Vulture Conservation Programme (VulPro), Friends of Rescued Animals and the Endangered Wildlife Trust. Delegates were shown around the facilities, given talks on the welfare projects and got to help build some perches for the vultures, and dip and walk some dogs. Thanks are due to Yvette Janse van Rensburg, Bev Seabourne, Clive Kinghorn and Rynette Coetzee for getting involved and organising these visits and talks.

The final project involved going out to an informal settlement near Salvokop Prison, which had been identified by human healthcare workers as an area being in need of veterinary assistance. Students were introduced to the community by Lorinda Strydom and Dudu Mbembe (who work in the community). The students were asked to assess the situation, talk to the people and report back to

the University for a follow-up community project later in the year. Everyone was very humbled by the visit. People who had no food to feed themselves were making sure that their animals were fed and were building makeshift kennels for their dogs. Uncontrolled breeding and parasites were some of the problems identified for the follow-up project.

IVSA would like to thank the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC) for its support and sponsorship of the vehicles used to take the delegates to the community projects. A big thank you is also due to Merial for sponsoring the Frontline spray that was used at the community veterinary clinics and at Salvokop.

The members of the Organising Committee are pleased to say that the day was a success and sincerely hope that all the delegates took a realistic view of Africa back to their countries, and that they will be enthusiastic about returning to South Africa to help out in any way they can!



## MEETING

A Community Engagement Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, 14 August 2013 @ 13:30.

## DONATIONS

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

**Sr Sarah Johnson**

012 529 8387 / 079 183 1878

sarah.johnson@up.ac.za

**Mr Jacques van Rooyen**

012 529 8339 / 083 289 1312

jacques.vanrooyen@up.ac.za

**Mr Eugene Machimana**

012 529 8100 / 083 687 0181

eugene.machimana@up.ac.za

# Walking with elephants

Jaco Brink (BVSc III)



On Wednesday, 10 April, about 30 learners from Bela Bela Secondary School, Maope Secondary School and Raeleng Secondary School woke up with much excitement and anticipation. Today was going to be the day many of them would get the chance to touch or even see an elephant for the first time.

Many people may argue that these learners come from rural areas and should come into contact with wildlife on a regular basis. Why then should these learners be taken on an outing of this nature? That is not the case. Virtually all game in the area is privately owned and confined behind high fences. Therefore, these learners have not had the opportunity to see wildlife in its natural environment.

At 11:00, two minibuses pulled up in front of the Adventures with Elephants (AWE) Game Farm just outside Bela Bela and a bunch of very eager learners popped out. The Veterinary Science students gave them a quick, early lunch,

while they waited for the owner of AWE, Sean Hensman, to finish the preparations for the day. Then the fun started. The elephants arrived and the excitement was boiling over. First, the learners were introduced to what is done at AWE and were given a few general facts about elephants. The veterinary students also had the privilege of interacting with the elephants and were divided into groups.

Each group was then taken to each of the six elephants to interact with them, touch them and feed them. Each elephant has a trademark activity. The most popular one was the elephant bull who played soccer and “kissed” the ladies. Another popular activity was the bull who sprayed everyone with water when they least expected it.

After the interaction with the elephants and the game drive, the learners went home with smiles on their faces and a better understanding of human-animal interaction and why conservation is important. This was all made possible by the sponsors. A special word of thanks is also due to Dr Quixi Sonntag and Mr Eugene Machimana of the Faculty for organising petrol money for the students to get to Bela Bela, and to Carel Coetzee and his staff at Bela Bela Spar for sponsoring burgers. A special word of appreciation goes to Sean Hensman and all the elephant trainers who gave the learners a truly memorable experience. We enjoyed implementing this project as part of Veterinary Professional Life (VPL 300).

# Community excursion

to Rust de Winter

Roxanne Mavrides (BVSc III)



It is said that you will never quite understand the lifestyle in a rural community until you have experienced it for yourself. Although I was not ignorant to the fact that animal husbandry in the rural areas is very different to the way it is in the suburbs, this excursion was still an eye opener.

In accordance with the requirements for the Veterinary Public Health (PHE I) module, I attended a community excursion to farms in Rust de Winter. As was to be expected, the day left us tired and well worked.

The majority of the cattle that were vaccinated were in good condition, with the exception of the odd abscess or branding wounds. What I found to be lacking were the crushes, as four of the five farms did not have decent crushes or working head clamps. The fact that the cattle were wild made our job nearly impossible, very dangerous and time consuming. The cattle got injured quite often during the ear tagging process, as the lack of working head clamps had the cattle moving when we applied the ear tag, thus tearing their ears. The one farm that did have decent facilities was a pleasure to work on, as we worked efficiently and got the job done in no time.

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With the help of the Animal Health Technician, Mr Joseph Manamela, we could proceed with our ear tagging and vaccination operations with much more confidence, as he was able to show us the ropes beforehand. Having him on the trip was a great benefit, as he could provide some guidance along the way.

Sadly, though, the trip was not all fun and the harsh reality of a dog's life in a rural community was indeed shocking. The first farm we visited was home to three dogs, who were in a surprisingly decent condition, except for one dog who had a congenital eye problem, as well as what the owner described as epilepsy. As we had a time constraint and no qualified vet to check up on the dog, we had to leave after only being able to administer the vaccinations. Unfortunately, the dog will probably receive no further care due to the owner's financial constraints and lack of understanding of the fact that the dog needs a check up.

Although that was sad, what I saw next was something I will not forget. Coming from the suburbs, I am used to the majority of people caring for their animals and seeing to their basic needs. I was therefore shocked when we arrived at one farm and saw seven dogs in a terrible condition. All the dogs were extremely emaciated and severely malnourished. We asked the helpers to bring the dogs to us for vaccinations, after which they hoisted one dog into the air by its hind leg. The dog yelped in pain, to which the man's response was to swing the dog around laughing. The other men subdued the other terrified dog by standing

on its feet and body and sticking a boot in its mouth. This left us horrified. No matter how vehemently we voiced our objections, they landed on deaf ears. That is when I realised the barrier of communication between us.

I realised that these men were completely unaware of the importance of spaying and the fact that an animal perceives pain as much as we do. They were also unaware that animals have the right to their five freedoms. I felt that there was so much I needed to tell them, but we had so little time, not to mention the language barrier. This left me wondering how we can infiltrate communities on a mass scale, as I believe people need to be informed in order to improve the lives of animals. I left with a heavy heart, feeling that I had not fulfilled my duty as a future vet. Make no mistake, this problem cannot be left alone. It will take a huge effort on the part of vets, animal welfare personnel and veterinary technicians to improve animals' standard of life.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Event	Venue	Date
Production Animal Outreach Clinic	Makapanstad and Ratjjejan Project	Wednesdays
Mamelodi Animal Health Care (MAHC)	Mamelodi Campus	Mondays to Fridays
Loate Community Veterinary Clinic	Winterveldt	Bimonthly on Wednesdays



**DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO PUBLISH?**

The Community Engagement Committee invites you to submit short articles to be published in the next newsletter (Spring 2013). The community engagement article should not be more than one page in length. Contact person: Eugene Machimana Tel: 012 529 8100 (w) Cell: 083 687 0181 Email: [eugene.machimana@up.ac.za](mailto:eugene.machimana@up.ac.za)

Visit the UP Community Engagement website regularly for updates about projects and funding opportunities.