

behind clinical governance, the professional development phase (PDP), the RCVS certificate in advanced veterinary practice (CertAVP), and the Practice Standards Scheme. Greater transparency comes with an effort to develop a greater understanding of what is involved. May and Swift appear to underestimate the value of self-reflection, which only partly addresses the issues of competence and assessment. However, I welcome the raising of these issues. There is considerable research behind the development of the RCVS CertAVP, which addresses the complex issues of educational needs, professional development, reflection and assessment. This research has wider and bigger implications than for the CertAVP alone.

The profession could be perceived to be a silent dinosaur, but it could respond angrily and/or vigorously and with fire to a proposal of extinction, and survive, evolve and thrive in the future.

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CAT HEALTH

Cases needed for feline idiopathic cystitis clinical study

THE Feline Centre at Langford Veterinary Services, University of Bristol, is undertaking a clinical study to evaluate the efficacy of a dietary supplement in the management of feline idiopathic cystitis, alongside standard medical and behavioural therapy.

We are recruiting cats with a history of two or more episodes of lower urinary tract disease over a six-month period. An initial investigation to confirm the diagnosis of idiopathic cystitis will be performed at a reduced cost. The package cost will include full medical and behavioural assessments, blood tests, urinalysis, and diagnostic imaging as appropriate. Owners will receive a detailed medical and behavioural treatment plan. We would be grateful to hear from colleagues with suitable cases, and hope this study can advance our understanding of the management of this challenging condition. Free CPD sessions (worth two hours) are available for each case referred. For more information on this please contact Clare Main, e-mail: clare.main@bristol.ac.uk

For further information or queries about the suitability of a case, please see www.langfordvets.co.uk (under the News section) or do not hesitate to contact us at the address

below, telephone 0117 928 9420, fax 0117 981 1277.

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OVERSEAS

Celebrating the BVA Travel Grants

I HAD the great pleasure at the BVA Congress in September of attending the session 'Celebrating 100 BVA Travel Grants', in which four past recipients of the awards briefly outlined how they had changed their careers.

Among others, Mike Teale, as BVA Overseas Chairman from 1985 to 1997, instigated these awards, and it is a great tribute to him that they have been such a success. I was lucky enough to know Mike personally, and I sat there knowing how proud he would have been that the awards have achieved so much. His boundless enthusiasm and good humour were an inspiration to all who encountered him and it is a great tribute that this lives on through these grants. I look forward to shuffling into a lecture theatre in the future to celebrate the next 100 grants awarded!

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MEDICINES

Importation of Johne's disease vaccine

JOHNE'S disease (paratuberculosis) is an infectious wasting disease of cattle and other ruminants caused by *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies *paratuberculosis* (MAP). Infection with MAP results in chronic enteritis, and affected animals that develop clinical disease eventually and inevitably die. In dairy cattle, Johne's disease will significantly reduce milk yields well before other signs of the disease are recognised. Johne's disease remains notifiable in Northern Ireland, but not in Great Britain. Throughout the UK its control is the responsibility of the private sector.

There is currently no vaccine available in the UK for use in cattle for the control of

Johne's disease and, therefore, since 2005 the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) has permitted the importation of an inactivated vaccine called Gudair (CZ Veterinaria) from Spain under its Special Import Certificate (SIC) scheme. Importation of this vaccine into Northern Ireland is subject to further controls and specific licensing for use. This vaccine is authorised for use in sheep and goats only. Use in cattle is not in accordance with the Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC) of Gudair, and veterinary surgeons should apply their clinical judgement and assess the benefits and risks of such use. It should also be noted that vaccination of an animal against Johne's disease may affect that animal's response to tuberculin-based tests, potentially leading to a false-positive or a false-negative result. Therefore, care is required in the interpretation of tuberculin skin tests carried out in cattle (and any other species) previously vaccinated against Johne's disease. In Great Britain, if a veterinary surgeon is intending to use any imported Johne's disease vaccine on any farm, they must keep a record of all vaccinated animals and report the farm and animal details to the local Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency office. If vaccine use is being considered in Northern Ireland, please contact the local Divisional Veterinary Office for information on how to proceed.

- To aid Defra and the devolved administrations in Great Britain in monitoring the use of the Gudair vaccine, and any other imported product that may interfere with existing disease surveillance schemes, veterinary surgeons will shortly see a Fair Processing Notice attached to the import certificate application forms. This notice sets out the way in which personal data will be shared with other government bodies and will avoid the need for the VMD to contact veterinary surgeons directly to seek permission to share these data. However, under notice, the VMD will not permit any unwarranted breach of confidentiality, nor will it act in contravention of its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.

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