



OP News

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Hans Hoheisen Wildlife Research Station officially opened

On completion of the first phase of refurbishment, the Hans Hoheisen Wildlife Research Station was officially opened on 25 August 2010.

It was a high-profile occasion that was attended by representatives of donor organisations, the Mpumalanga provincial authorities, the local Mnsi Traditional Authority, the co-signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding and invited guests.

The station was initially erected on a portion of ground close to the Orpen Gate of the Kruger National Park, donated by the late Hans Hoheisen to facilitate wildlife research in the Eastern Transvaal Lowveld under the management of the then Transvaal Provincial Administration. After the 1994 elections and the demarcation of the borders of new provinces, the responsibility to manage the

station became that of the Limpopo provincial authorities, and subsequently after the re-demarcation of the provincial borders, that of Mpumalanga. In the last 15 years, the station fell into disuse and the infrastructure was poorly maintained.

After extended negotiations, the Peace Parks Foundation, the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency and the University of Pretoria signed a Memorandum of Understanding to refurbish and upgrade the facility. It was agreed that the station would be developed as a research platform to provide state-of-the-art facilities for national and international researchers to conduct research into the dynamics of diseases at an interface between wildlife, domesticated animals and humans. The research would further focus on the development of transfrontier parks (peace parks), and their impact on local communities at the interface.



A member of the Mnsi tribe during one of their cultural days.

Read more about the cultural events of the Mnsi community on p 6.

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Faculty Day highlights the need for research and challenges for the profession

For the past 26 years, Faculty Day has represented the focal point of the faculty's academic year, serving as an event to showcase the research activities in the faculty to colleagues and peers. This year was no exception and it provided an effective and successful forum for the exchange of information on the research projects in the faculty. The

oral and poster presentations were of a high standard. The annual photographic competition also contributed to the exciting atmosphere of the day.

In his welcoming address, the dean, Prof Gerry Swan, pointed out that innovative and cutting-edge research remains an integral part of the faculty's **Continued on p 4**



Dr Rebhone Moerane presented this year's Arnold Theiler memorial lecture.



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Faculty of Veterinary Science

From the Desk of the Dean



At the end of a year, one needs to seek those crucial factors that have stood out during that year as something that is so important that it is worth reflecting on and must be revisited. Dr Rebhone Moerane, the president of the South African Veterinary Council, highlighted a few such aspects during this year's Faculty Day when he presented the Arnold Theiler Memorial Lecture.

Dr Moerane mentioned four priorities in the government's current developmental agenda and emphasised the responsibility of the veterinary profession to identify itself with these priorities and, at the same time, to demonstrate its contribution towards these priorities. These are the improved quality of basic education, a long and healthy life for all South Africans, a skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path, and vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities with food security for all. Failure to do so, according to Dr Moerane, will continuously relegate the profession to the bottom of government's agenda with no consideration of or recognition for its impact on rural development and poverty alleviation. He listed some challenges for the veterinary profession, among others, poor access to services, deteriorating veterinary services, slow transformation within the profession, an increase in animal disease outbreaks, and a lack of interest in research.

He furthermore called for the review of current animal health policies, an increased focus on primary animal healthcare and participation at local government level to advance animal welfare and a holistic human health approach, including an increased focus on food safety in training, the need to improve linkages between animal health and human health programmes and a concentrated effort in promoting the One World One Health concept.

In support of this, and taking some existing relevant elements in the faculty's strategic plan and mission into account, I want to reiterate the

question that I asked in my welcoming address at this year's Faculty Day, namely, are we able to live up to the expectations of our stakeholders and are our activities and those of the veterinary profession in general aligned with what our country really needs?

We need to continuously revisit our strategic goals and objectives, and determine if these are still applicable and viable. In future planning, the faculty has to take into account the possible influences on the future provision of services, including changes in society through major demographic, political and environmental, disease, technological and economic influences, and becoming socially engaged.

Veterinary education of the highest quality provides training that meets the needs of a particular society and remains relevant to changing national, regional and international expectations. The eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, among others, has to be a principal millennium goal applicable to veterinary education for the immediate future and beyond.

A leading faculty is one that recognises and acknowledges change, adapts to it and plans its strategic direction and path accordingly. Therefore, to more effectively address some of the crucial issues mentioned, the faculty is currently involved in negotiations aimed at establishing a Chair in Primary Healthcare, which is to develop, implement, assess and promote the philosophy, concept, methodology

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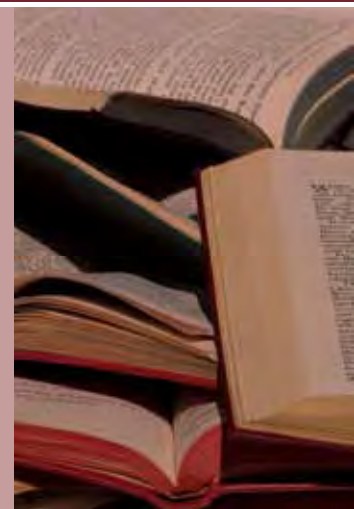
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and training material used when the veterinary profession provides a primary healthcare service to rural livestock owners.

The phasing in of a new curriculum with a more comprehensive core-elective approach in 2011 is a further faculty response to adapt to new challenges facing the profession and to more effectively incorporate global animal and public health issues into veterinary education.

Another crucial aspect deserving the faculty's continued attention is to increase the number of African veterinary and veterinary nursing students. Existing awareness and recruitment initiatives have been revisited and additional measures will be implemented to strengthen our current initiative. While recruitment in itself is a specialised function that, to a great extent, falls outside the ambit of communication and marketing, a proposal was formulated for creating a specialised recruitment post at the Client Service Centre (CSC) of the University of Pretoria that will be specifically earmarked to cater for the needs of our faculty by effectively assisting in increasing the numbers of students from the designated groups.

However, transformation does not only involve changes to transform the student body. It is about social debate and our involvement in those debates. It also constitutes the basic realisation that changes are indeed needed, followed by noteworthy responses. We have to acknowledge the fact that certain important challenges remain and should be part of our focus beyond 2010. The faculty, in line with the University of Pretoria's mission and objectives, is committed to the greater cause of transformation and remains positive about its ability to implement changes in support thereof. A landmark for the faculty is the operation of its first advisory board and we envisage that this committee will play a major role in promoting the faculty and providing stakeholder advice on its future.

The faculty similarly supports the University's notion of creating new research themes with the ultimate view of promoting the One World One Health concept, focusing on the health and welfare of animals and humans. It will involve closer cooperation with other faculties relevant to every specific research theme and we look forward to broadening the scope of our activities in this regard. Through this we will also be able to provide an impetus to our objectives of increasing quality research outputs and encouraging active researchers.

This year's Faculty Day has again proven that there is an almost unlimited potential for cutting-edge research in our faculty and that our staff members are up to the task of ensuring an increase in the number of NRF and staff ratings in the faculty.

A special word of congratulations must go to all our researchers, and in particular those who have received awards in acknowledgement of their



Dr Moerane receives the *Lectori Salutem* from Prof Swan on Faculty Day.

dedication and hard work. A word of thanks must also go to everyone who contributed to a very spirited and successful Faculty Day.

The Faculty of Veterinary Science is on an exciting new path, one that will not be without challenges, but one that will ultimately contribute to this faculty's vision to be an international centre of veterinary excellence. This year will be remembered, among other things, for a successfully hosted Soccer World Cup, which energised all of us – an energy we allowed to flow through into the faculty, thereby ensuring the tremendous success of our own local soccer fun league. This event not only brought people together, but also brought a new spirit to our hallways, our offices and our consulting rooms.

We had an increase in the number of publications in 2009, resulting in 83,88 subsidy units, while all the publications were in ISI-accredited journals, emphasising the high quality of the research. Our rugby and netball teams won their respective finals and were both crowned as league champions, while the success of the 'I want to be a vet' initiative of the Onderstepoort Veterinary and Paraveterinary Student Council (OPVSC) has led to it becoming an annual event on the OPVSC and faculty calendar.

My gratitude goes to every staff member who contributed to the success of this faculty's endeavours in 2010. Let us make 2011 – a year in which the World Veterinary Congress will take place – an equally successful year, only surpassed by our continued and passionate efforts to take this faculty to an even more distinguished level of excellence. My wife Lina and I wish you a wonderful festive season. God bless.

Prof Gerry Swan
Dean

Faculty Day highlights the need for research and challenges for the profession

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Prof Gerry Swan, Dean (right), presents the Researcher of the Year Award to Prof Banie Penzhorn.

strategic plan. It is also part of the faculty's mission, which underlines the importance of increasing research outputs through effective postgraduate programmes and making research a primary thrust to stimulate and focus the faculty's research programmes on uniquely South African animal disease problems.

He stressed the fact that one needs to ask the question, which is also applicable to research: Are we able to live up to the expectations of our stakeholders and are the faculty's activities and those of the veterinary profession in general aligned with what the country really needs? In this regard, the dean called for the continuous revisiting of the faculty's strategic goals and objectives to determine if these are still applicable and viable. In the process, and as a leading faculty, it must recognise and acknowledge change, adapt to it and plan its strategic direction accordingly, representing a noteworthy response.

According to Prof Swan, high-quality veterinary education provides training that meets the needs of a particular society and remains relevant to changing national, regional and international expectations. He highlighted the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, among others, as a principal millennium goal applicable to veterinary education for the immediate future and beyond.

This was reiterated by Dr Rebone Moerane, president of the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC), who presented the Arnold Theiler Memorial Lecture, one of the highlights of Faculty Day. In his lecture, entitled *The role of the veterinary profession in the current developmental agenda in South Africa*, Dr Moerane pointed out that the government had received a clear agenda for a developmental state with the focus on rural and poor communities. He elaborated on four priorities: the improved quality of basic education, a long and healthy life for all South Africans, a skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path, and vibrant, equitable and sustainable rural communities with food security for all. He emphasised that the veterinary profession had to identify itself with

these priorities, and demonstrate and market its contribution to these priorities. With this in mind, he listed some challenges for the veterinary profession, including poor access to services, deteriorating veterinary services, slow transformation in the profession, an increase in animal disease outbreaks, and a lack of interest in research.

Dr Moerane highlighted a few proposals on how the veterinary profession can align itself with and support the identified development agenda. He encouraged the development of training material for Early Childhood Development (ECD) and the use of qualified professionals in the development of material for ECD. He called for the review of current animal health policies and schemes and a concentrated effort in promoting the One World One Health concept, which also calls for increasing adaptive research. He emphasised the need to improve linkages between animal health and human health programmes and a multidisciplinary team to develop new initiatives based on identified risks. Dr Moerane referred to the moral and social responsibility to build communities from grassroots level and appealed for the development of a Rural Development Strategy, an increase in paraveterinary professionals, and participation at local government level to advance animal welfare and a holistic human health approach. He stated that an increased focus on food safety in training and producing more specialists, as well as more veterinary training agreements with other institutions, global accreditation and continuing professional development for all professionals, would go a long way to support the notion of a skilled and capable workforce.

The following awards were made to acknowledge researchers and lecturers for their hard work during the year:

PFIZER

Lecturer of the Year – R15 000	Prof L Coetzee
Vet Nurse Lecturer of the Year – R10 000	Dr P Mabeta

INSTAVET

Young Lecturer of the Year – R10 000	Dr M Crole
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BAYER

Researcher of the Year – R15 000	Prof B Penzhorn
Best Paper – R2 500	Dr N Lindsay
Best Poster – R2 500	EM Debeila

OBP

Young Researcher of the Year – R10 000	Dr S Clift (Teaching staff)
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No sponsor

Young Researcher of the Year – R10 000	Dr R Bhoora (Non-teaching staff)
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Hans Hoheisen Wildlife Research Station officially opened

Continued from p 1



At the opening of the research station were, among others: Mr Charles Ndabeni (CEO of MTPA), Prof Gerry Swan (Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science), Mrs Mnisi and Chief Mnisi, Mr Sello Moloko (Chairman of Alexander Forbes), Mr Jabu Mahlangu (MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Mpumalanga), Mr Anthony Nicklin (Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust) and Mr Werner Myburgh (CEO: Peace Parks Foundation). Prof Robin Crewe, Vice- Principal: UP (not visible on the photo), was also present.

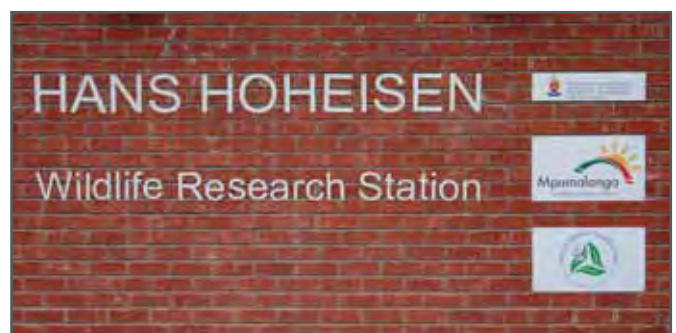
The University of Pretoria was given the responsibility of managing the research facility on a day-to-day basis in the context of the structures and policies guiding research at the University. The responsibility for this management lies with the Centre for Veterinary Wildlife Studies (CVWS) of the Faculty of Veterinary Science. Dr Richard Burroughs assumed responsibility for the management when he recently became director of the CVWS, while the day-to-day management is the responsibility of the current manager of the station, Dr Louis van Schalkwyk.

The Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust, Foundation Hoffmann, Alexander Forbes, the Turner Foundation, and ADC Telecommunications (Africa) funded the first phase of the process. This involved the upgrading of basic services (water, electricity, sewage and IT), the laboratory and office complex, and accommodation for students and researchers. Further refurbishment and upgrading that will focus on providing camps, pens, cages and bomas will take place over time, depending on the availability of further donor funding.

A fully developed station will allow animal experimentation with indigenous wildlife and domesticated animals, and diseases that are endemic to the area and that have a serious economic impact. Since the station is located in the Kruger National Park, within the endemic area, work with these diseases and disease agents can be

done without access to the sophisticated and very costly BSL 2 and 3 facilities required when working with them outside areas where they are prevalent.

This development provides researchers in the faculty with an opportunity to do cutting-edge research in diseases with a serious economic impact. Most international researchers do not have this opportunity. There is thus a challenge for the faculty over the next couple of years to capitalise on this opportunity and to establish itself as a true leader in this sphere of research.



The entrance to the Hans Hoheisen Wildlife Research Station.



Cultural events in the Mnisi community

The Mnisi Traditional Authority is a local tribal authority in an area close to the Orpen Gate of the Kruger National Park in the Bushbuckridge Municipality. It has jurisdiction over a population of about 40 000 inhabitants, many of them exceedingly poor, living in rural conditions. There are about 1 500 subsistence livestock owners in the community, most of whom are dependent for their day-to-day survival on the income generated by the livestock they own.

Faculty members and students have come to know the area and its inhabitants during the development of the Mnisi Community Programme and the Hluvukani Animal Health Centre over the last two years or more. More recently, the Hans Hoheisen Wildlife Research Station was also commissioned, adding to the presence and impact of the faculty's activities in and on the area.

At this stage, it is particularly the Hluvukani Animal Health Centre (generally known as the Hluvukani Clinic) that is having a major impact on the local community. It offers, among others, clinical services, an ambulatory service, information, vaccination, animal medicine, and extension and information services to the schools in the area. Primary schools are given information on the care and treatment of their animals. Secondary school talks include discussions on career options and programmes at the University, and specifically the different opportunities available in veterinary science. The clinic is now an integral and indispensable part of the community, and has become the face of the Mnisi Programme, which also includes focused research and extension. Dr Greg Simpson, who is currently in charge of the clinic, has made a tremendous impact on the community, and has earned their respect and gratitude.

After having been exposed to the community, veterinary students often comment on the life-changing experience they have had; not only because of their veterinary work and experience, but particularly because of the impact the people had on them during their clinic rotation. (See the article on p 14 by Group 9, the group of students who completed their two-week rotation recently.)

The people from Mnisi are a proud nation, with strong ethics and value systems, and they maintain their community in an orderly fashion in spite of their limited resources. They have embraced the faculty's staff and researchers, as well as the students who have done their clinical rotations at the Animal Health Centre in the area over the past two years.

The traditional authority arranges a number of cultural events during the course of the year; and in most instances, a formal invitation is extended to representatives of the University to attend. At many of these events, Prof Nick Kriek and Ms Marie Watson of the Centre for Veterinary Wildlife Studies represented the faculty and the University. They attended, to name just a few, two cultural days, and were also invited to the Women's Day, where they were the guests of honour of Chief Mnisi and his lovely wife, Mrs Chief Priscilla Mnisi. The courtesy visits to the chief's office and his spokesperson were also welcomed and in that way they are kept informed of the different actions that are taking place, or are in a planning phase. It is at these occasions that one realises the extent of the impact of the work being done by the faculty in this community. Every time, in flowing prose, the values of the University, and appreciation for what it is doing for the community, are expounded by the representatives of the various wards, and by the chief's spokesperson.

It has become unthinkable that, for whatever reason, the faculty would terminate its involvement with these special people. Not only the community would lose; large numbers of students would lose even more if they could not experience the quality of a segment of our country's population that is largely unknown and much underestimated, and a facet of veterinary science that has largely been ignored in the past.

Production Animal Studies

provides crucial support to the dairy industry

Dairy farming has become a highly technical game, driven by the necessity to achieve high levels of operating efficiency to survive, as well as first-world demands on product quality enforced by virtue of globalisation. There is a great need for technical support in this environment. The expertise of staff members of the Department of Production Animal Studies is therefore in great demand.

Prof Dirk Lourens was invited to join the technical team judging the annual Master Dairyman competition run by the Agricultural Research Council and the Milk Producers' Organisation (MPO) in collaboration with various private companies. This is a rigorous process involving a primary selection process followed by on-farm inspection and evaluation by the multidisciplinary panel. Besides the honour of participation, it provides an opportunity for studying excellent examples of practical dairy farming in the field and comparing different approaches, and for networking and benefiting from the range of expertise on the panel.

The department's milk laboratory, managed by Dr Inge-Marie Petzer, offers a diagnostic and advisory service to commercial dairy producers in South Africa and neighbouring countries. This is a valuable tool for preventing and managing mastitis. Dr Petzer's expertise in udder health is in high demand.

The databank generated by the laboratory contains microbiology and cytology data from 800 000 samples drawn from 700 herds. This provides a valuable research resource and is used for undergraduate and postgraduate student training in udder health. It also forms the basis of the development of CPD courses based on relevant South African data and management trends. The department also provides valuable support in other areas of training.

Members of the department have been crucial in the establishment of dairy managers' training modules offered by the MPO's Centre for Producer Development, in conjunction with the annual Dairy Expo. Dirk Lourens and Pete Irons from the department ran modules this year, which entailed the presentation of a large amount of material and the setting of assignments aimed at the facilitation of the practical application of the information in each manager's situation.

Added to this are the better-known forms of support provided to dairy farmers, veterinarians and other consultants. These include veterinary and specialist training and continuing education, consultations, clinical service delivery in the course of student training, and, last but not least, the provision of research. The end result is a powerful support role to the industry, enabling it to compete with the best in the world and play its role in food provision to the nation.



Prof Lourens discusses calf management with a dairy manager during the Master Dairyman competition.

Production Animal Studies sharpens focus on food security

Food security came out tops during a recent review of departmental research themes conducted in the Department of Production Animal Studies. In this broad theme, the department specified its interest as being the management of production and reproduction in food animal husbandry systems.

"The focus on food security is expected to promote the development of and participation in research, making it easy for staff and students to initiate and do projects that fall within the ambit of enhancing food security," said Prof Pete Irons, head of the department.

This was one of four themes selected during the review. The others were emerging and re-emerging diseases at the interface between animals and humans, wildlife and environmental health, and biotechnological applications in animal health and management. Several existing research programmes already feed into the food security theme.

The department has bolstered its extraordinary staff component in support of these themes. Dr Celia Abolnik strengthens the focus on poultry diseases, while Dr André Ganswindt increases capacity in

the non-invasive monitoring of health and physiological functions. This brings the staff in the department to 14.

The department also contributes to the development of the University's proposed institutional research theme that focuses on food and wellbeing. Should this ambitious project be realised, it would place the department on a strong platform of collaboration between faculties and other partners. Improving the lives of people by improving access to high-quality food is a powerful vision, which will be carried forward by this renewed impetus in research.

Veterinary expedition to Xixiakou Zoo in China

Dr Adrian Tordiffe (National Zoological Gardens of South Africa)

At the invitation of the government of the Republic of China, Dr Gerhard Steenkamp of the Faculty of Veterinary Science at Onderstepoort and I travelled to Xixiakou Wildlife Zoo in the town Xixiakou in Shandong Province on China's east coast. We had been asked if we would be willing to assist with the treatment of one of the African elephants housed there. The zoo is privately owned and has one of the largest animal collections in China. It is an important tourist attraction and a significant source of income for one of China's wealthiest towns, which receives up to a million visitors a day in the peak summer season.

The zoo had imported two young elephants from South Africa in 2003, when they were four years old. The 11-year-old bull had fractured his left tusk soon after he arrived in China. We had very little information about the condition of the tusk. Veterinary facilities at the zoo are limited and we had to bring all drugs and equipment with us for the procedure. We brought all the equipment and medication we would need to fill the tusk, but were also prepared for the possibility that an extraction might be indicated.

On the morning of 19 October, we inspected the elephant enclosure, evaluated the facility and saw our patient for the first time. We were pleased to discover that his keepers had managed to keep the tusk fairly clean and infection-free by flushing the tusk's pulp daily with hydrogen peroxide and then closing it with swabs. However, the Chinese keepers reported that they were having some difficulty working with the young

African elephants. The absence of any adult African elephants at the zoo is probably a contributing factor in the unpredictable and sometimes aggressive behaviour of these two youngsters. Both animals frequently charge up to the steel gates, pushing their trunks through a gap in the bars, which results in their short tusks banging against the bar below. Dr Steenkamp pointed this out to the keepers and suggested that this may have been the cause of the fracture.

We then set about identifying a suitable place where the elephant could safely be immobilised. The option we selected was one of the night rooms. Immobilising an elephant in a confined space on a concrete floor presents a number of risks, especially during the anaesthetic induction. Sternal recumbency causes significant breathing difficulty for an elephant, and, because of the sheer size and weight of the animal, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to manipulate the animal once it has gone down, without mechanical assistance. The hard surface has the potential to cause damage to tusks if the animal falls, and there is also a risk of radial nerve damage due to hypoperfusion, especially if the procedure takes a few hours. Our aim was to get the animal down in right lateral recumbency in the middle of the room on a soft bed of hay. The bull had been starved for 24 hours, so he was quite happy to stand in the middle of the room eating from the large bed of hay. He was darted with a low dose of etorphine and azaparon, which caused some distress initially, but he soon settled down to eat. After 15 minutes he was unresponsive to major stimuli and we could move some of the bedding around to ensure a softer landing.

He went down into a sitting position and, with the help of several keepers, we managed to push him over gently into right lateral recumbency.

An intravenous line was set up and the elephant was maintained at a suitable level of anaesthesia with small doses of intravenous etorphine every 15 to 30 minutes. Dr Steenkamp proceeded to evaluate the damaged tusk. Two holes, dorsal and ventral to the pulp cavity, were explored with a rigid video endoscope. Only one of the two appeared to be communicating with the pulp cavity. The pulp itself seemed to be reasonably healthy, with very little sign of infection. The holes in the dentine were thoroughly cleaned and sealed with bone cement, while the pulp cavity was drilled, tapped and plugged with an implant. The end of the fractured tusk was then smoothed off with a file. The whole procedure took just over two-and-a-half hours and the elephant stood up calmly a few minutes after naltrexone was administered intravenously. We were impressed with the fact that, even before the procedure was finished, the Chinese workers had already started welding additional bars onto the gate to reduce the risk of the elephants damaging their tusks again.



View of the large carnivore section of the zoo.

Although our major mission had now been accomplished, we were able to assist with one or two other animals in need of veterinary attention. During the afternoon, we worked on two of the zebra. The zoo had unfortunately housed three stallions with a single mare and this had, as expected, led to a great deal of fighting. One of the stallions had taken the brunt of the damage, with a large haematoma/seroma on his left hind leg and oedema of the ventral limb. We immobilised him and the seroma was lanced and flushed, and anti-inflammatories were administered. The mare was then immobilised and translocated to another facility. We gave the zoo managers some advice on a more appropriated sex ratio for their zebras.

Earlier in our visit we were told that the zoo had a pair of elephant seals. We were intrigued and asked if we could see them, as these animals are very rarely kept in captivity. The elephant seals turned out to be a pair of walrus. The walrus were in need of Dr Steenkamp's dental expertise as they had both suffered damage to their tusks. Walrus belong to the genus *Odobenus*, which literally means 'tooth walker'. Apart from their use for fighting and possibly digging for food, their tusks are slammed into the ice for grip when the animals haul themselves out of the water. Because these walrus were housed on concrete, the tusks had suffered serious wear and possible fractures. The Chinese veterinarians had certainly shown some initiative and ingenuity by constructing steel caps to protect the damaged tusks, but the walrus bull had already developed a tooth root abscess and a draining sinus tract just below the eye. Unfortunately, we did not have the time, the drugs or the necessary equipment to treat these animals.



Dr Gerhard Steenkamp gets to work on the fractured tusk.

On our last day in the zoo, we were shown an Asian black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*) that was being led around in the zoo by one of the keepers. The lead was attached to two steel rings that had been placed through the bear's upper lip. Dr Steenkamp and I made it very clear that we were very unhappy with the situation. When we later discussed this animal with the director, he immediately ordered that the rings be removed. The managers were unfortunately unable to get a bolt cutter near the bear's face. Dr Steenkamp offered to remove them: I was sure that I could come up with some sort of drug combination from my very limited drug collection, which would provide sufficient sedation to allow us to remove the rings. Later that afternoon, I found myself sitting on a very sedated bear while Dr Steenkamp cut through and removed the steel rings with a bolt cutter. A quick look into the animal's mouth also revealed that its canines had been cut, exposing the pulp cavities.

China is reported to have about a thousand zoos and private wild animal collections. Only about 200 of these are members of the Chinese Association of Zoological Gardens. Besides the veterinarians at the Chengdu Panda Base in Sichuan Province, there are very few vets that specialise in zoological medicine in China and most of the country's zoo animals have either poor or no proper veterinary care. We have started discussions with the owner and director of the Xixiakou Zoo about establishing a proper veterinary hospital at the zoo and have discussed the possibility of assisting with the training of Chinese vets in zoological medicine. We will also provide the director with a report listing our observations and recommendations. It is hoped that a follow-up visit in April 2011 will further enhance our relationship with this zoo and open up the doors to a number of other Chinese zoos.



Dr Steenkamp examines the steel-capped tusks of the walrus bull.

Training Workshop held in Antwerp

Technology-enhanced learning: exploring possibilities
and tools for low-resource settings



The participants of the TEL workshop in Antwerp.

The LINQED Educational Network is a project funded within the Framework Agreement (FA3) between the Belgian Directorate General of Development Cooperation (DGDC) and the Institute of Tropical Medicine, Antwerp, Belgium (ITM), with the central theme of *Switching the poles*. Besides individual and institutional capacity strengthening, the programme contains an explicit component of networking.

The first network activity was a kick-off workshop in November 2008, which focused on the exploration of educational themes that would be relevant for the network. At the second workshop in Rabat, Morocco, in 2009, three topics were identified as projects for the future. They will be the focus of the next workshop, to be held in December 2010 in Indonesia. These include capacity building in technology-enhanced learning (TEL), capacity building through an educational exchange programme, and quality assurance towards a higher quality of education.

The goal of the TEL project is to develop and strengthen knowledge and skills among LINQED partners by building on the available pedagogical expertise in the network. In order to achieve this goal, the TEL workshop was held in Antwerp, Belgium from 13 to 17 September 2010. The participants were LINQED partners who lacked basic e-learning knowledge and skills, but wished to initiate or expand e-learning programmes in their institutions. The workshop focused on exploring tools for e-learning in low-resource settings, basic pedagogy and instructional design. The facilitators of the workshop came from the University of Pretoria, Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia (Peru) and the Institute of Tropical Medicine (Belgium).

The delegates who participated in the workshop came from the BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (Nepal), the Institut National d'Administration Sanitaire (Morocco), the Instituto Nacional de Higiene, Epidemiología y Microbiología (Cuba), the Instituto de Public Health (India), the Instituto Pedro Kouri (Cuba), the Institute of Tropical Medicine (Belgium), the Makerere University, the School of Public Health (Uganda), the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador (Ecuador) and the Universitas Gadjah Mada Yogyakarta (Indonesia).

The topics of the workshop were as follows:

- Social networks in education
- Design and architecture of a distance education programme – adaptations and contextualisation
- Pedagogical approaches and perspectives in e-learning
- Tools and delivery options
- Teaching with technology
- Computer-aided assessment
- Challenges in implementing e-learning programmes
- Tools and delivery options for second-opinion advice
- Setting up online support and exchange systems for health professionals
- Mobile learning

All the participants agreed that it was a very successful workshop. The atmosphere throughout was informal, open and participatory, and delegates shared their experiences and learnt from each other.

A picture is worth a thousand words...

OP News photo corner



Children with the *OP News* during this year's Veterinary Outreach to Calvinia and Brandvlei.



Liesl van Rooyen receives the Taurus prize on Faculty Day from Prof Morkel Terblanche for the Best Achievement in the Bovine Health and Production 500 module.

Dubai Equine

Hospital Externship



An entire month spent in Dubai – a wonderful way to fulfil one's final-year elective requirements.

I was the first South African to be selected to participate in the Dubai Equine Hospital externship programme that is open to veterinary students across the globe who have completed the theoretical part of their training and have started with their clinical rotations. The programme is intended only for those seriously planning to enter specialised practice. One student is selected for a period of one month, thus creating 12 externship opportunities a year.

The hospital is located right in the heart of Dubai, one of the seven emirates comprising the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The hospital was established in 1995 and operates under the patronage of His Highness General Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Ruler of Dubai and Vice-President of the UAE. The Dubai Equine Hospital is the nucleus of a veterinary practice that is dedicated to serving the needs of the area's thriving equine industry.

The hospital features orthopaedic and soft-tissue operating theatres, a clinical pathology laboratory, radiography, scintigraphy and MRI units, videoendoscopy, diagnostic ultrasound, and Nd: YAG laser. It is professionally staffed by two American College of Veterinary Surgeons (ACVS) Board-certified surgeons, an American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ACVIM) Board-eligible internist, veterinary technician, anaesthetist, medical engineer, clinical MRI technician, two laboratory technicians, two interns, an extern and 13 veterinary care technicians. The hospital can accommodate 35 patients and has a four-stall isolation barn.

As the extern, one has a set job in the daily running of the hospital. One assists in surgery, anaesthesia, radiology, ultrasonography, scintigraphy and MRI. One's duties include monitoring and treating surgical and non-surgical hospitalised patients and routine laboratory analysis for after-hours patients. One also assists in lameness examinations and other diagnostic procedures for a variety of clinical presentations.

Each selected extern receives a visa, round-trip air ticket to Dubai from a major airport in their home country, and room and board at the hospital.

This is an incredible opportunity which I enjoyed thoroughly. Those who have a strong interest in specialising in equines should definitely apply. Go to www.dubaiequine.ae for more information. Good luck with your application.

by Keri-Lee Dobbie



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BACKGROUND

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Students experience

the Hluvukani Animal Health Centre

by Group 9: Corné Polley, Debbie Opperman, Jana Ehlers, Liesel Steinmann, Sanja Coetzee



This report is only one of all the reports received on the life-changing experiences the final year veterinary students gained from attending the Hluvukani Animal Health Centre (also known as the Hluvukani Clinic).

What an amazing experience awaited us as we left Onderstepoort on Sunday, 10 October 2010. Long days filled with loads of challenges and heaps of fun. To our surprise, even the native cuisine was a welcome contribution to our whole rural experience.

Apart from all the physical practical veterinary work, we also experienced some other tasks associated with the day-to-day management of a clinic: water and plumbing problems, vehicle service and maintenance, and stocktaking, to name just a few. We also had to find innovative ways to overcome communication barriers with clients, due to language and education differences.

Our days were filled with early-morning dip tank visits, which provided ample opportunity to practise veterinary medicine and monitoring (while one is still waking up). Apart from observing animals for obvious lesions or illness, we were also assigned to cases. This taught us to delegate and lead a team to achieve a common goal – a diagnosis and treatment plan.

We also had the opportunity to assist with large animal ambulance cases, which included positron emission mammography (PEM), dehorning, hot-iron branding, dystocias (a unilateral shoulder flexion, with four feet and the head protruding), parafilaria, helminthosis, abdominal hernias, retained foetal membranes, stifle degenerative joint disease (DJD), penile prolapse and lameness. What a wonderful experience!

We learnt how to tube calves, to use an embryotome and embryotomy wire, to use a hoof knife and successfully restrain almost any bovine.

We became more acquainted with the trade names of drugs, as well as dosages. We also made blood smears and faecal floats – too many to count.

The small-animal clinic entailed things such as client education, vaccinations and lots of translating. We were mostly kept busy with vaccinations (5-in-1, rabies) and deworming, suspect mast cell tumour, sarcoptic mange, cases of malnutrition, distemper, a hind limb amputation and also cases of mango fly.

Other daily tasks included stocktaking, ordering new stock, sterilising theatre packs, entering data on the computer and looking after staff welfare (doctors buying everyone coldrinks, 'vet cookies', ice cream and the like).

Afternoon activities included a visit to the Reptile Park for an extremely important information session, some much needed Shangaan lessons, primary and high school visits, clinic visits and assignments with medical students. We were treated to the following very interesting talks:

- Dr B Reininghaus – Controlled diseases and career options
- Dr W Twine – Ecology and health of Bushbuck Ridge
- Dr L Biggs – One Health
- Dr L v Schalkwyk – Interfaces

It was an amazing experience. We learned so much, met new people and had loads of fun. We went home that Saturday with an abundance of fantastic memories, like Debbie doing her first dystocia (she and the cow becoming one), Bobby the three-legged foxy dog (that stole our hearts at first sight) and so much more...

Thank you for the opportunity to experience life as a 'veterinarian' in a rural area, doing community work and engaging with, as well as educating, the farmers, people and children of the area.

OP Rugby 2010

House League Champions

by Martino Truter (Captain 2010)

After an unbeaten season last year, overshadowed by a controversial final, OP stood up once again this year, dominating the league, and finally managed to get the name Onderstepoort engraved on the Steinhoff Tuks House League trophy.



The Onderstepoort rugby team was crowned as the Steinhoff Tuks House League Champions in 2010.

It is the first time that OP has ever won the University's first league cup and our success was truly worth all the sweat, blood and endless support. Over the past two years, we have managed to feature twice in the final, losing only one game. All the players and other dedicated persons involved ensured a fun-filled season and a great escape from our sometimes hectic academic programmes. The passionate, green-clad OP supporters with their cracking whips backed us all the way and we owe a lot of our success to the die-hard support we received from them!

The season started with a warm-up match against Wits Rugby Club's second team. It was a very physical match and although we did not come out victorious, we gained valuable experience and game time. In the league, only eight of the nine scheduled matches were played, due to an unfortunate forfeit. OP managed to win seven, scoring 304 points and conceding only 82 on our march to glory. The points difference of 222 was the result of a fearless defence and superb rounding off by the 'dangerous' backline. Our defence proved to be our best offence, with the saying: "Give a life or take a life!"

The men in black scored 35 spectacular tries (74% converted), 15 penalties and two vital drop goals. We ended the group stage on top of the log, securing a semi-final against the highly rated Sonop. After conceding an early try, our backline kicked into gear, responding with two quick tries, silencing the opposition's fans! After conceding a few penalties and scoring a try in the second half, we were 23-20 ahead in the closing stages of the game, until the opposition fly-half, Muff Jones,

put a drop goal over, making it 23-23. After a few phases, we made our way into the opponents half where Piet-Piet Swart (OP Sportsman of the Year) slotted a drop goal of his own in the dying minutes to win the game and break Sonop's hearts.

We faced Mopanie in the final on 7 September at the LC de Villiers Rugby Stadium, where the team was greeted with an electrifying atmosphere! The dean, Prof Gerry Swan, our beloved housefather, Dr Jan Myburgh, various clinicians and numerous students engulfed the touchline, offering loud and passionate support!

From the first whistle everything seemed to be going OP's way. The half-time score was 12-8 in favour of OP and, after forcing our game plan on them in the second half, we managed to seal the victory with a final score of 33-13. After years of preparation, hard work and immense self-belief, the feeling of victory overwhelmed us all and the cup was ours, a victory for all who had donned the OP jersey in years past and for all of those who will, in the future, in this "hooligan's game played by gentlemen"!

OP rugby will sorely miss those who will continue the journey as esteemed veterinarians, but they surely laid a great foundation for years to come. The cup has a safe, new home now and OP can only look forward to future success on the rugby field, having taken care of the ghosts that have haunted us in the past.

clickUP training @ Onderstepoort

Fifteen lecturers attended the clickUP Basics training that was presented at Onderstepoort on 9 and 10 November 2010.

The course focused on a blended teaching and learning model and participants were introduced to the seven steps for getting started in clickUP. During the two morning sessions, there were opportunities for practising their newly acquired skills, while questions regarding specific needs in a module or programme were answered.

The main focus during the first morning was access to a clickUP module and how to make learning material web-friendly. Participants planned and built a course on the second day. Acting as students, they interacted using the clickUP communication tools, namely Chat and Discussions. The educational benefits and best uses of each were discussed.

Some of the feedback from participants included the following:

Most valuable thing they learned

“Practical application of clickUP for interacting with students, for example, Discussions.”

“I have always wanted to interact with my students online, using technology and anytime I/they have time to do so, and not only wait for the class to start.”

New knowledge and ideas they gathered

“Got lots of good ideas for presenting content and interacting online.”

Do you think that the ideas and information will improve your effectiveness and your results?

“Will be able to apply case discussions to smaller groups – will save me time.”

“Course has provided a good introduction to clickUP, which is a powerful platform to create a unique learning environment.”

“This will make the management of the course so much easier. I will be able to get information across to the students much more efficiently.”

The next clickUP Basics training opportunity at Onderstepoort is scheduled for 19 and 20 January 2011.



Some of the lecturers who attended the clickUP Basics training sessions.

Just in case • emergency numbers

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• Flying Squad	6022	10111
• Police Pretoria North	6022	10111
• Ambulance: - Rosslyn	6003	012 541 3421/6
- Pretoria	6002	012 326 0111
• Fire Brigade (Wonderboom)	6024	012 543 0335
• Tygerberg Poison Centre	6179	021 931 6129
• Emergency Medical Help: OP		
- Sr Amanda Hamman (VAH)	8064	083 269 8874
- Prof Frik Stegman (VAH)	8279	8148 (operating theatre)
- Mr Chris Neetling (Feed Store)	8004	8004 (roving phone)
- Prof Ken Pettey (Ethology/Physiology)	8449	082 882 7356
- Psychologist at OP (Wednesday), Voula Samouris	8243	083 754 5427
- Psychologist - Main Campus, Rina Buys	6127/6151	082 908 3688
• 24-hour University crisis line		0800 00 64 28
• Head of OP Residence:		
- Dr Jan Myburgh	8350	082 392 2534
- Mrs Susan Myburgh		083 235 6778

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