Dear Colleagues, the new Council took office on the 31st July 2013 and the day was used for our induction followed by the election of office bearers for the different committees of the South African Veterinary Council. The new Councillors also sat in attendance of the final meeting of the outgoing Council held on the 30th July 2013. The Registrar and her team continued the induction by introducing themselves and also outlining roles and responsibilities in relation to the various committees. We are grateful to the outgoing Council and the staff for the time spent over the two days.

The committees of the SAVC are very critical to operations as they handle various matters presented to Council for its consideration and then report to full Council for ratification. The efficient running of the committees backed by an efficient administration will ensure the smooth running of the SAVC. To this extent, we would like to point out to all members and stakeholders intending to put matters before Council to target specific meetings of the committee with a mandate to attend to such a matter. The Registrar and her team will review the website to ensure that it carries sufficient information on the committees and their responsibilities and thus giving guidance on which committee would be relevant for any matter that you might have to put before Council. The purpose is to ensure streamlining of the processing of work within Council and avoid matters being put before full Council without due consideration by the.

---

SAVC IS GOING GREEN!

This Newsletter is your final Newsletter in print

The Newsletter will in future only be available on the Internet

This Newsletter, NL 74 of September 2013 is your final Newsletter in print. Council resolved to no longer print and mail the Newsletter to members. Members will in future receive their Newsletters via email. The Newsletter will be published under the member’s area on the SAVC’s website at: www.savc.org.za. In the interim members have to login to access the Newsletter and will be alerted by sms. Members will be able to download and print their Newsletters from the internet. An index of Newsletters 14-74 is available on the website.
The induction alluded to above, proved crucial to ensure a seamless transition and handing over of the different issues that the outgoing transition and handing over of the specific committee.

The induction alluded to above, proved crucial to ensure a seamless transition and handing over of the different issues that the outgoing Council had been grappling with including those emanating from their strategic planning session of January 2012.

The WRSA court case: The SAVC has been taken to court over an amendment to Rule 10 by Wildlife Ranching South Africa (WRSA). This action, despite the rule being applicable only to veterinarians and not applying to members of the WRSA. The SAVC regulates veterinarians. It suffices to say that court papers served on the SAVC by the WRSA have been responded to and that the decision on the matter is now vested with the courts.

Relocation from current offices: The SAVC is set to relocate from the current address in Lisdogan Park, Arcadia to a new office park once all the acquisition processes have been completed. This is to ensure that staff can be accommodated in spaces that will allow them to be more productive, that Council itself is located in a building befitting its image and more conveniently accessible to members of the veterinary professions, but also to ensure that there is security and access control.

The new building will also be equipped to facilitate the accommodating of meetings of the Council. Council has been hosted over a number of years by various other organisations including the Nursing Council, Pharmacy Council and the South African Veterinary Association (SAVA). These organisations have been kind enough and availed their meeting rooms at the SAVC’s disposal. For that, we are grateful. Members are to be on the lookout for additional information on this important development.

DAFF/SAVC relations: The SAVC and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) continue to hold regular meetings to address issues of mutual interest including the finalisation of the amendment to the Veterinary and Para-Veterinary Act. Both parties also cooperated with the visitation by the team from the World Animal Health Organisation (OIE) which reviewed the status of veterinary services in the country. Whilst we are earnestly awaiting the release of the report, we are at the same time appreciative of the proactive steps that DAFF are taking to ensure that its release is accompanied by an action plan to ensure that corrective actions are being put in place where necessary.

The SAVC also attended the workshop of the 1st of August 2013 to consider the proposed published draft regulations regarding the performance of Compulsory Community Services (CCS). We are hoping that DAFF will heed the advice that many stakeholders put forward in the session towards ensuring a smoother implementation of CCS. We believe that CCS will be part of many contributions towards extending access to veterinary services, in particular, to the underserviced rural areas to the benefit of improved national herd health for better/improved production and enhancing food safety and security.

A number of challenges however remain. Of primary importance, the joint role played by DAFF and the Department of Health (DoH) in the regulation of veterinary medicines as well as the resolution of various related problems. Our request for both regulators to meet and determine a more effective regulatory environment that gives better guarantees for food safety related to the use of these products remains unmet. We shall be steadfast in further engaging both Act 101 of 1965 and Act 36 of 1947 to seek an alternative to the current system of regulation.

We are also working with the office of the Deputy Minister to ensure that we have him grace and address the next Council meeting of the 22nd October 2013. The meetings are necessary to ensure that Council also communicates both progress and in some instance the lack thereof to DAFF political principals. The Council does have the responsibility to give advice to the Ministry on matters relating to the veterinary professions and this responsibility is taken with the seriousness it deserves. Members of the professions are welcome to email us on issues that they believe should be addressed with the Deputy Minister.

IT transformation: The process to sharpen and enhance internal processes and communication through information technology continues. In that respect, a tender has been issued on the website of the SAVC and in print media. The ultimate intention is to ensure that you, as members, would be able to engage with your information (as regards registration) held by Council to update it as and when needed, giving real time resolution as opposed to current paper based systems and the concomitant delays and errors. This would be via remote login facility that is password protected. We’ll keep you up to speed of developments on this front.

Review committee: The SAVC has established a committee cutting across the different committees tasked with a
complete review of existing legislation, rules, regulations and Codes of Conduct. This new Committee met electronically (via teleconference) on the 12th of September 2013. Members are invited to give input to this process. (See page 9.)

67 minutes, SAVC staff: The Registrar and her team took time and heeded the call, as all of us should, of giving only 67 minutes of our time on the 18th of July every year, in celebration of former president Nelson Mandela’s birthday, to the benefit of others. More than anything, this presented the team a huge teambuilding opportunity which will take them forward to deliver a superior service to members of the professions.

Threatened or Protected Species (TOPS) regulations: The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) has published for comment a draft amendment to the regulation on the handling of TOPS species wherein an exemption is foreseen for certain veterinary services. We are thankful to the assistance offered by the Deputy Minister, Dr Pieter Mulder, DAFF, with the various interventions he has made with Minister of the DEA on this matter. The SAVC is, however, concerned that the current proposed amendment does not represent any useful progress as it anticipates giving exemption to veterinarians for "treatment" only of the TOPS species. We are collating comments and will submit substantive comments to the DEA in this regard. The collated comments and final submission will be placed on the SAVC’s website for your perusal. All members were requested by sms to send their comments directly to the DEA.

Consultation with DHET on a second Veterinary Faculty: Council received an invitation in August 2013 to attend a session with the Task Team appointed by the Minister of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to consider the establishment of a second faculty for the training of veterinary and para-veterinary professionals. The SAVC has compiled a document indicating reservations about the location of the second faculty as proposed at MEDUNSA given the close proximity to the Faculty of Veterinary Science, UP at Onderstepoort. We expressed the view that consideration be made to have a second faculty in a coastal location and with emphasis on emerging fields such as aquaculture. We are hopeful that the DHET will further consider inviting a veterinarian as member of the Task Team. The current team does not include a veterinarian and thus may not be better placed to consider all pertinent issues in this matter. We will keep you abreast as this matter develops further.

World Rabies Day: This year’s World Rabies Day took place on the 28th September 2013. Rabies continues to be a disease of huge public interest in South Africa. We’ve had outbreaks in KwaZulu Natal, Gauteng and the Free State. A number of human deaths continue to be attributed to this disease. All of us, in our respective professions and spaces, should consider how we can intervene to successfully banish rabies from our societies. Council has in previous years focussed on responsible pet ownership as a way of encouraging owners to ensure the routine vaccination of pets against rabies. Clearly, we need new ideas if we are going to make headway in the control of rabies.

World Food Day: Members of the professions are further invited to join the rest of the world and celebrate the World Food Day on the 16th of October 2013. The theme of this year is ‘Sustainable food safety systems for food security and nutrition’.

The professions: The veterinary and para-veterinary professions still do not enjoy the necessary prominence within societies in South Africa. Negative connotations derived from association with rhino poaching are not helping our cause. I am told that we now have newly qualified veterinarians battling to find employment. The number of unemployed para-veterinary professionals, most notably animal health technicians, remains very high. Yet, we remain with the challenge of lack of access to veterinary services. A number of initiatives were previously considered to improve the knowledge of the average South African on the role played by professions in society. Most notably the "I want to be a veterinarian" campaign was embarked upon all veterinarians to be of assistance in the event that they are called to attend emergency cases and to save the rhino. Two sessions are planned for 4-5 October 2013 in Mpumalanga and 17-18 October 2013 in the Cape. Please support and participate in these initiatives at no cost!
For the FAST acting treatment and prevention of respiratory tract infections in cattle.

- FAST ACTING: MIC and MBC reached within 0.5 and 2 hours, respectively
- Kills the 3 major BRD pathogens after one administration within 24 hours - lasts up to 96 hours
- Proven efficacy against Mycoplasma bovis: MIC₉₀ and MIC₅₀ is 1.0 and 4.0 mcg/g of lung tissue, respectively
- No BRD resistance in Europe and the USA after more than 10 years of use
- Administration either by intramuscular or subcutaneous injection
- High dose volume minimizes risk of percentage error where bovine body mass is not known

NUFLOR - ONCE TRIED, ALWAYS TRUSTED

References

Intervet (Pty) Ltd.
Reg.No.1991/006580/07
Private Bag X2026, Isando, RSA
Head Office Tel: +27 (0) 11 923 9300
Fax: +27 (0) 11 974 9320
Sales Fax: +27 (0) 11 974 1393

MSD Animal Health
with partners. One would say that mixed results were achieved. Was it directed at the right audience and was distribution and reach broad enough? Shouldn’t we make such material available on our websites across the spectrum and even go further to give to the DHET and the Department of Education, the SABC, Carte Blanche and 50/50? Those are some of the questions that come to mind.

Our contributions to food safety and security remain an untold story. The contributions made to stem the tide of rhino poaching do not make headline news. Many people do not associate us with food and its safety but rather with sick animals, disease outbreaks, especially foot and mouth disease and the resultant closure of export markets - a very negative picture! One could argue that our communication machinery is much more effective at this stage focussing on what we as professions want to achieve and not on bringing societies into partnership with us to protect the national herd, our aim. The end of such campaigns remains a quiet affair and is never brought to the public!

So what are we to do? Ongoing efforts should be maintained working with all stakeholders to put veterinary successes and advancements in the public space and focussing on social media. The Sunday Times mentioned that we’ve reached 25% penetration of social media referring to facebook membership, I am certain that the Twitter numbers would follow the same route.

Perhaps we need a focussed approach: using experts in such campaigns might bear more fruit. Can we work with people in the broadcasting industry (radio and television) to tell these stories better? Everybody in this country knows the story of Dr Christiaan Barnard. Most people have never heard of Jotello Soga and/or Arnold Theiler, except those in association with us. As individuals, we need to remain ambassadors of the professions and learn to tell our stories, lest others write about us and in ways that we might not prefer.

Engagement with members of the professions: We invite members to engage their Councillors on issues/topics of concern affecting them or the profession at large. There are a number of issues that are frustrating to members of the professions and Council remains at your disposal to seek resolution to these. It is through members’ participation that a stronger Council and veterinary profession will emerge. We have ensured that we put faces to the names of the incoming Councillors as well as their contact information. As far as possible, they will attend congresses and meetings of your formations to address and update you on developments within Council. Please use these opportunities maximally. Only through such engagements will Council be able to know of members’ concerns and to then address those concerns. We remain of service to you for the betterment of veterinary services in South Africa!

Boitshoko Ntshabele

GUIDELINES OF TARIFFS

1 January to 31 December 2014

The Fees Committee will recommend to Council to no longer print and mail the Guideline of Tariffs. The Guideline is available on the SAVC’s website at: www.savc.org.za under “Publications” on the Home Page. Members can download the new Guideline of Tariffs (1 January-31 December 2014) from the website as from the end of November 2013. The Fees Committee will recommend to Council in October 2013 a 9% increase on the minimum and maximum bands for 2014. The Guideline of Tariffs is a recommendation and members are reminded that price fixing is not permitted.

NEW APPOINTMENT

Mrs Dinamarie Stoltz

We welcome Mrs Dinamarie Stoltz, the newly appointed Director Legal Affairs. Dinamarie can be contacted at legaldirector@savc.org.za.

The Fees Committee will recommend to Council to no longer print and mail the Guideline of Tariffs. The Guideline is available on the SAVC’s website at: www.savc.org.za under “Publications” on the Home Page. Members can download the new Guideline of Tariffs (1 January-31 December 2014) from the website as from the end of November 2013. The Fees Committee will recommend to Council in October 2013 a 9% increase on the minimum and maximum bands for 2014. The Guideline of Tariffs is a recommendation and members are reminded that price fixing is not permitted.

New Appointment

Mrs Dinamarie Stoltz

We welcome Mrs Dinamarie Stoltz, the newly appointed Director Legal Affairs. Dinamarie can be contacted at legaldirector@savc.org.za.

The Code Company offers the unique combination of software programming, graphic design, multimedia, practice management, marketing and finance expertise tailored by a wealth of experience in the veterinary industry.

Let the Code Company be your preferred IT partner.

- website design
- bulk marketing
- IT support
- e-commerce
- social media

0861 CODECO (26 33 26)
New term of office 2013-2016

Council Members

ELECTED VETERINARIANS

Dr John Adam
Chairperson: Committee on Fees and Committee on Food Safety and Security

Dr Glen Carlisle
Chairperson: Investigation Committee

Dr Anne de Vos
Chairperson: Committee on Veterinary Specialisation, Review Committee and Portfolio Stress

Dr Clive Marwick
Chairperson: Finance Committee and Member of the Executive Committee

Dr Peter Oberem
Member of the IT Committee

Dr Jana Pretorius
Vice-president

MEMBER WITH KNOWLEDGE OF LAW
Adv Derick Block

NON-VETERINARY PROFESSIONAL
Dr Lipalesa Motjope is a Natural Scientist and Stress Portfolio

FACULTY OF VETERINARY SCIENCE REPRESENTATIVE
Prof Vinnie Naidoo
Chairperson: Education Committee

SAVA REPRESENTATIVE
Dr Joseph van Heerden
Chairperson: CPD Accreditation Committee
FULLY INTEGRATED E-COMMERCE SYSTEM FOR VETS

- Sell veterinary products online 24/7
- Industry helps maintain and update product information
- Extend your product offering as you do not need to keep the stock
- Offer your clients the convenience of online shopping

Proudly developed by The Code Company Trading (PTY) Ltd | 0861 888 VET (838) | info@vetweb.co.za
SAVC Stand at the SAVA Congress in Port Elizabeth

Dr Jana Pretorius addressed the SAVA AGM at the Veterinary and Para-veterinary Congress. Dr Pretorius spoke about the challenges for the profession and Council which included:

• Threatened and Protected Species (TOPS) permits
• Chemical immobilisation: Wildlife Ranching South Africa (WRSA) vs SAVC and others: current litigation and high costs
• Autogenous vaccines, what control is exercised?
• Food safety, indiscriminate use of medicines
• Reputation damage - rhino saga
• IT transformation – current tender process underway
• Increasing interest among black youth: Can supply and demand be balanced? Are we training too many veterinarians in the current economic circumstances?
• There is a lack of production animal and veterinary public health specialists
• Veterinary science is not considered a priority for government.

Dr Pretorius emphasised the importance of the professions’ involvement with Council. The profession should respond and give inputs to issues in the Newsletter and most importantly, with the review of the rules and regulations.
THE NEW

Standing Review Committee

Are you part of the future or do you just go with the flow?

Council established a Standing Review Committee. Dr Anne de Vos leads the Committee. The Committee consists of the Chairpersons of the CPD Accreditation Committee, Dr Joseph Van Heerden, Fees Committee, Dr John Adam, Inspections Committee, Sr Theresa Lötter and Investigation Committee, Dr Glen Carlisle and Dr Clive Marwick serves as co-opted member. Expertise will be co-opted and a young veterinarian will be sourced to deal with social media aspects.

The aim of this Committee is to on an ongoing basis review ALL Legislation affecting the veterinary and para-veterinary professions. These include the Act as amended, the regulations, the rules for ALL the professions and the Code of Conduct and Practice. The Inspections Committee will deal with minimum standards for facilities and your inputs were requested in Newsletters 72 and 73. The Review Committee will include the minimum standards for facilities in its review.

Your opportunity to comment will be communicated as the Review Committee will formally meet on Monday, 21 October 2013 to decide how best to solicit your input.

In the meantime please study the Act and the Rules of your profession so that you can make balanced and valuable input when requested, keeping in mind that any and all changes made, will need to benefit the whole profession, the public and the patients.

The documents are available on the website: www.savc.org.za, on the front page under "Laws Policies and Forms", or login and look in the Members Area for "Review".
Old Council/New Council Dinner
Groenkloof: 30 July 2013

After two days of endless Council meetings, the Old and New Council members spent some time relaxing and getting to know each other. Certificates were handed out to the Councillors for service. They had the privilege of having Dr Elaine Bing, psychologist (below), as a guest speaker who spoke about stress management.

Outgoing councillors Drs Quixi Sonntag and Danie Odendaal with Dr Jana Pretorius.

Drs Joseph van Heerden and Boitshoko Ntshabele sharing a moment.
Now bringing you
MORE THAN EVER BEFORE
Introducing VetDirectory Mobile - Veterinary Information ON THE GO!

The VetDirectory mobile application is available in addition to www.vetdirectory.co.za and the VetDirectory physical publication. Your port of call for veterinary role player information. Find it fast, first time.

LATEST MEETING DATES

Full Council:
22 - 23 October 2013
Agenda closed

Investigation Committee:
23 January 2014
Agenda will be closed
3 January 2014

Education Committee:
27 January 2014
Agenda will be closed
13 January 2014

Registration & Authorisation Committee:
23 January 2013
Submission of applications will be closed
22 November 2013

Finance Committee:
29 January 2014
Agenda will be closed
13 January 2014

Committee on Fees:
2014
Ongoing comment invited

Inspections Committee:
15 October 2013
Agenda closed

Committee on Food Safety:
7 February 2014
Agenda will be closed
15 January 2014

WHERE TO MEET YOUR COUNCILLOR

Northern Natal and Midlands Branch: Dundee
9 - 10 November 2013
Dr Clive Marwick
COME AND GET YOUR CPD POINTS
Treatments are condition-specific and defined by animal type, weight, coat color, skin color, body type and hair length.

Protocols designed by laser therapy experts are pre-set and ready to administer. Dosages and wavelengths are set for optimal penetration to assure positive outcomes.

Interchangeable application-specific hand piece heads.

The new CTC features innovative Smart Coat Plus™ technology. This pioneering software automatically custom-tailors appropriate doses by taking into account your patient’s:

- Body Type
- Coat Length
- Coat Color
- Skin Color

This comprehensive patient characteristic consideration results in customized protocols designed specifically to meet the needs of each individual patient.

Speed Healing. Reduce Pain.
The SAVC is relocating!

We reported in 2012 and March 2013 that the SAVC administration is expanding and that new accommodation had to be found. The administration will in all probability relocate to new premises in December 2013 or January 2014. The SAVC is in the process to procure office space and the new premises are located at Route 21 Office Park (Victoria Link, Route 21 Office Park, Nelmapius Drive, Irene).
Your partner in practice
Twenty two (22) candidates enrolled to sit the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC) Full Registration Examination in 2013 as follows: Veterinarians: 15 candidates, Veterinary Nurses: 5, Animal Health Technicians: 2.

The first component of the examination, the Computer Based Examination (CBE) was held on 2 and 3 September 2013.

A new template for the CBE for veterinarians was approved by Council (October 2012) and used this year.

The CBE was changed and now consists of two papers:

**Paper One** – Non-clinical (Section A: Veterinary Ethology and Welfare; Section B: Nutrition; Section C: General Pathology; Section D: Regulatory (State-) Veterinary Medicine; Section E: Veterinary Public Health; Section F: Zoonoses; Section G: Epidemiology and Section H: Laws and Ethics)

**Paper Two** – Clinical (Section A: Small Animal Medicine, Surgery and Reproduction; Section B: Equine Medicine, Surgery and Reproduction; Section C: Ruminant Medicine, Surgery and Reproduction; Section D: Bovine and Small Stock Health and Production; Section E: Porcine Health and Production; Section F: Poultry Health and Production and Section G: Exotic Animals and Wildlife Veterinary Medicine).

Candidates who passed the CBE proceeded to take part in the Oral and Oral/Practical Examination on 11 September 2013 (veterinarians) and 13 September 2013 (para-veterinarians).

After Dr D Holm, Examination Officer for the SAVC 2013 Examinations, attended the Namibian Council Examination on 18 February 2013, a Council decision was taken that the Computer Based Examination (CBE) of the SAVC and Namibia can be combined in 2014. The combination of the practical examinations would follow in 2015. The SAVC is awaiting a final decision from the Namibian Veterinary Council. Plans are under way to possibly introduce national examinations.

Council wishes to express its gratitude to the examination officials as follows:

**Examination Officer:**
Dr D Holm

**CBE Moderators:**
Dr J Williams and Prof K Pettey

**Oral and Oral/Practical Moderator (Veterinarians):**
Prof K Pettey

**Oral and Oral/Practical Moderator (Veterinary Nurses):**
Sr E Botha

**Oral and Oral/Practical Moderator (Animal Health Technicians):**
Mr J Oosthuizen

**VETERINARIANS**

**Panel 1:** (Companion animals):
Dr M Peck and Dr M Meyer

**Panel 2:** (Pathology and VPH):
Dr H Nel and Dr J Williams

**Panel 3:** (Production animals):
Dr E du Preez and Dr G Rautenbach

**Panel 4:** (Equines):
Dr G Hudson and Dr S Higgerty

**VETERINARY NURSES**

**Panel 1:** (Theatre practice):
Sr R Fourie

**Panel 2:** (Anaesthesia):
Prof F Stegman

**Panel 3:** (Surgical nursing):
Dr J Venter

**Panel 4:** (Medical nursing):
Dr E Scheepers

**Panel 5:** (Radiography):
Sr M McLean

**Panel 6:** (Reproductive nursing):
Dr K May

**Panel 7:** (General nursing):
Sr E Botha

**ANIMAL HEALTH TECHNICIANS**

**Panel 1:** Mr P Lourens

**Panel 2:** Dr C Cele

Final results will be made available after approval by Council on 23 October 2013.
Integrating Animal Physical Rehabilitation* into Veterinary Medicine in South Africa

Sr Dawn Jones

Googling ‘animal/veterinary physiotherapy’, ‘animal/veterinary physical rehabilitation’, ‘animal/veterinary physical therapy’, ‘animal/veterinary therapy’ or ‘canine hydrotherapy’ yields lists and lists of facilities available and the animal owning public have a large choice of where they can take their animal for treatment and what therapy they can choose. This is an international phenomenon and it is on the increase, growing exponentially every year.

In 1993 a report was published by Elsevier with the title, “Veterinary Surgeons’ Perceptions of Animal Physiotherapy”. The report investigated the awareness of animal physiotherapy among Veterinarians practising in the United Kingdom and results indicated that only 37% of the 105 veterinarians who answered the questionnaires were aware of animal physiotherapy although their awareness came from informal sources and not through their formal training.

In 2006 a report was published by Biomed with the title, “Perceptions of Animal Physiotherapy amongst Irish Veterinary Surgeons”. Of the 97 respondents, 79% indicated that they were aware of animal physiotherapy and awareness was greatest among those working in equine practice. Only 26% of the Veterinarians who were aware of animal physiotherapy had referred a case to an animal physiotherapist.

In 2012 a dissertation as part of a Master’s Degree was published by the Durban University of Technology with the title, “An Exploration of the Current status quo of Animal Chiropractic in South Africa”. The objective of the study was to identify the current status of animal chiropractic in South Africa and to explore ways to integrate animal chiropractic into animal healthcare in South Africa. The conclusion of the study was that there is a perceived need for animal chiropractic in South Africa and that the profession needs to be integrated with mainstream animal healthcare. The study recognised the need to define the profession better so that the scope of practice of animal chiropractic can be properly understood. It also referred to the need for inter-professional collaboration, regulation, legislation, competence and appropriate education pathways.

The question is, will animal physical rehabilitation grow in South Africa as it has in other countries? It is happening already. There are many more education pathways now than there were 20 years ago. There is currently a core working group following the guidelines set out by the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC) to promulgate the new para-veterinary profession of Animal Physical Rehabilitation. In the absence of an Animal Physical Rehabilitation association, some practitioners have joined the Complementary Veterinary Medicine Group (CVMG) and/or are members of the International Association for Veterinary Rehabilitation and Physical Therapy (IAVPT). Some human trained physiotherapists are members of the South African Society of Physiotherapists’ special interest group; Animal Physiotherapy Group of South Africa (APGSA).

The South African Animal Physical Rehabilitation Association (SAAPRA) will be launched in 2014. Owners are demanding physical rehabilitation services for their animals and many animal owners are dissatisfied that the Veterinarian has not suggested physical rehabilitation as a treatment option for their animal.

As a veterinarian or veterinary Nurse, you should ask yourself what you know about the potential of animal physical rehabilitation as a treatment option. Do you know what is possible? Do you know if there is anyone in your area who is able to offer this service? Do you know the credentials of the person/people in your area offering animal physical rehabilitation services? Do you know what conditions are suitable for referral? Do you understand the full scope of animal physical rehabilitation? Are you in a position to...
advise your client about what physical rehabilitation can do for their animal? When the owner makes a decision about surgery, are they making a fully informed decision? Are they aware of how the outcome of surgery can be vastly improved with physical rehabilitation? Are they aware that in some circumstances, physical rehabilitation may negate the need for surgery? Are you aware that the well-developed palpation skills of an experienced animal therapist may enhance the veterinarian’s diagnosis?

According to the Veterinary Code of Conduct and the SAVC Register of Decisions, a veterinarian may choose to refer a case to an animal therapist if he or she sees the need. The reality is that much of the work is still owner-driven and only the ethical animal therapists initiate and maintain communication with the treatment veterinarian. In order to refer a case appropriately, the veterinarian needs to know what conditions are appropriate and would benefit from physical rehabilitation. Veterinarians should be the first port of call for animal health, but owners...
are often choosing to go to an animal therapist first if they deem the problem to be a "muscle issue" because they have little faith in the veterinary profession in this regard. This is the wrong way around. The client should be going to the Veterinarian first and the veterinarian should be giving the owner the option to use physical modalities as a treatment. Ideally this would be in conjunction with appropriate medical or surgical treatment, pain medication and nutritional guidance, if necessary. This behoves the veterinarian to educate themselves about the field. If veterinarians gained knowledge in this area, this situation could be turned around.

Veterinarians and veterinary Nurses have a solid foundation from which to enter an education in animal physical rehabilitation. Human physiotherapists have a lot of value to add in terms of their experience in palpation and restoration and maintenance of normal function in the musculo-skeletal and neuro-muscular systems. Historically, interested people have endured the cost of training overseas to obtain suitable qualifications. Training is becoming more accessible. As an example, we now have the opportunity to attend the University of Tennessee’s Certified Canine Rehab (CCRP) Fast Track Course here in South Africa.

It is the responsibility of the veterinarian to stay up to date with emerging animal health care. Although animal physical rehabilitation/physiotherapy has been around for years, it has been underutilised and sometimes marginalised through lack of awareness. Integration of physical rehabilitation into veterinary practice would be the answer to giving the animal the best treatment options and the best outcome. Owners are demanding it and seeking it out.

If you stop and pause for a minute, you will recognise the wonderful opportunity that physical rehabilitation is if you want to enhance your service delivery to your clients. The future is bright in Animal Physical Rehabilitation!

The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author, who is passionate about raising awareness of the benefits of animal physical rehabilitation and encourages veterinarians and Veterinary Nurses to educate themselves in this field.

References

*Interim term being used by Prospective Para-Veterinary Profession Working Group until legal resolution is obtained regarding use of terminology to describe the prospective para-veterinary profession.

Please give your feedback to Ms Leonie Westcott at education@savc.org.za

Need an effective Antibiotic?

• small-sized for easy dosing
• doesn’t cause nausea
• reaches very high tissue levels in skin, prostate and lungs

Contains Doxycycline Hyclate 50mg / 100 mg / 300 mg

Reg. No. CJ/098 • 50mg / CJ/016 • 100mg / CJ/017 • 300mg Act 56 of 1947