

+ BCVA has a student membership providing full-time veterinary students with all the benefits of full membership. It also has a database of members willing to offer extramural studies to students.

+ This year, BCVA Congress moves closer to the practitioner with the theme of Progress in Practice, bringing clinical updates and opportunities to integrate new thinking back into veterinary practice.

# Representation and lifelong learning are the twin pillars of our association

**LOOKING back over 12 months and beyond is interesting because there is usually so little time to take stock in our rapidly changing profession.**

Harsh economic times continue and the attitude of government to livestock farming and food production is in a Treasury-driven transition. Threats to veterinary practice continue, with major income streams from official veterinarian work, in particular TB testing and income from medicines sales, under threat. However, new opportunities are also emerging as the challenges of sustainably feeding the world population without irreversible damage to our environment are recognised.

BCVA has recognised these changes and so our organisation has evolved rapidly to address the challenges of being a representative organisation in the 21st century. Being clear about the role of the association and to reassert what we do has been a priority.

Over the past year, our main overriding theme has been the role of BCVA in promoting the pivotal role of cattle veterinary surgeons in future food security.

This has taken many guises, but overall, BCVA aims to be an inclusive organisation and this year we have restructured with two main aims:

- representing the views of members in the wider livestock industry; and
- signposting lifelong learning for cattle practitioners.

## Representation

BCVA represents the views of cattle veterinary surgeons and lobbies actively on behalf



BCVA president Jonathan Statham reflects on his year in office and some of the highlights

of the profession on a daily basis. Our website has been developed this year and, alongside regular newsletters, describes our activity.

Key issues of 2013 have included lobbying for the pivotal role of independent practitioners in the delivery of Government veterinary services, including surveillance in 2014 and bTB control. A holistic model for endemic disease control similar to successful models in Ireland and Australia has significant support and Animal Health England/UK offers a positive opportunity for improving UK cattle health and welfare in a genuinely cost-effective format – with cattle vets at the hub.

This concept, as pitched to the Animal Health and Welfare Board of England as well as the Welsh Assembly, offers an opportunity for the profession to add genuine value to veterinary services and support actual progress in disease control – not just cut short-term costs.

Similarly, engagement with the Food Standards Agency and other parties has facilitated progress on what were escalating issues with emergency slaughter certification. Working closely with GB Cattle Health and Welfare group in national bovine viral diarrhoea control programmes, changes to Red Tractor farm assurance, welfare concerns at shows, review of exemption orders to the Veterinary Surgeons Act, practice standards, ongoing EU medicines legislation concerns and support for veterinary businesses under fresh economic pressure, are but a few more.

Looking ahead, we must assert our central role in the industry in which we work. A growing presence and recognition at Livestock Event reflects this. With all this activity, a team effort from the board has been vital.

## Lifelong learning and education

BCVA has a central role in engaging with learning for cattle vets, from a programme of undergraduate clinical clubs and student reps at the veterinary schools, right through a lifetime of working to retirement.

An increasing range of CPD is available on

the market, but little is genuinely independent and available to all and not all is of an appropriate quality. BCVA offers a range of inclusive education under our Development brand, with a recognised quality mark as well as signposts to some of the high quality CPD that is on offer to a wider audience. Our publication, *Cattle Practice*, now has a peer-reviewed section and is widely read.

Over the past 12 months, BCVA's education team

has successfully established an Advanced Practitioner education programme with RCVS recognition that links with the CertAVP C modules offered by the universities of Liverpool and Edinburgh. Practical workshops based at veterinary schools and farms will now complement online learning resources offered by the universities. These modules will be available to all cattle vets (regardless of enrolment on further qualifications) and five years of course

dates are now published. Discounts for multiple bookings are available.

The Advanced Practitioner programme builds on the success of the recent graduate programme, which is being repackaged as the Foundation element of BCVA education – supporting requirements for personal development programmes and earlier stages of CertAVP.

Not forgetting the specialist or experienced practitioner, our Masterclass programme is also rolling

out. International key opinion leaders are being lined up to share their



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## ◇ TWIN PILLARS continued from page 3

knowledge with us and follow up our initial run with Al Barth on bull fertility.

Webinars are now available as part of our collaboration with BSAVA, including “Dairy Nutrition” by James Husband of EBVC and “Bull Fertility” by Al Barth of University of Saskatchewan, Canada. Demand has been amazingly high with significant oversubscription – we are catering for this demand.

BCVA Congress has changed too, with massive teamwork in constructing new undergraduate and postgraduate streams opening up the value of

BCVA to a wider audience.

International and national speakers combine the newest research updates with practical tips for the practitioner alongside postgraduate research presentations. Industry partnership makes congress the forum for sharing ideas and networking opportunities both in business and socially.

BCVA is extremely active on your behalf – but we are always here to represent your views so please feed them in. The sheer amount of time spent in lobbying and educational activities is huge.

The BCVA board give their

time (as second or third jobs) often under major pressure and have been just amazing this year. Output has been enormous and all board members have contributed greatly in a real team effort.

However, none of the work of BCVA would happen without the infinite patience and support of the office team, who have survived the occasionally crazy work timetables and dysfunctional Yorkshire practice communications to guide me through this year.

I thank all the board and office teams at our new premises in Quedgeley and look forward, with your support, to the association thriving into the future.