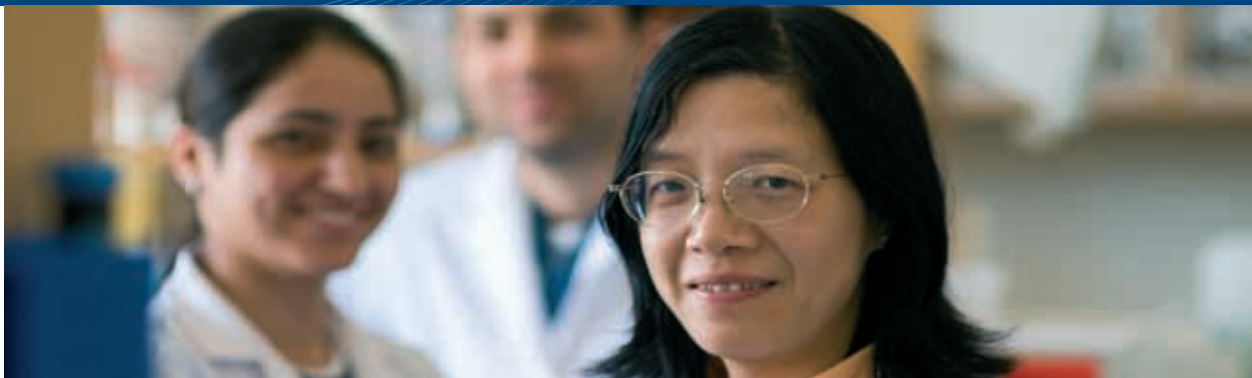




Melbourne University  
Veterinary Society



## ALUMNUS HONOURED FOR GLOBAL SERVICES IN VETERINARY SCIENCE

A former Veterinary Science student who was instrumental in introducing a new vaccine against a highly-contagious bird disease in Ghana, and who was jointly responsible for developing a reliable methodology to reduce cyanide levels in one of Mozambique's staple foods, has been recognised for his outstanding achievements by being awarded one of Australia's premier veterinary accolades.

Dr Stewart Routledge, 62, was presented with the Kesteven Medal at the Australian Veterinary Association's (AVA) Annual Conference awards ceremony in Perth on Thursday 29 May.

The prestigious award is jointly presented by the AVA and the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists to individuals who have contributed to international veterinary science through technical and scientific help to developing countries.

Dr Routledge graduated from the University of Melbourne with a Bachelor of Veterinary Science in 1973. He then practised for a number of years at the Maffra Veterinary Centre in Victoria, before joining the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB).

This is where his passion to help communities and individuals in developing countries emerged. He has since spent almost his entire veterinary career working on global veterinary and general poultry and livestock development projects to help people in need in countries such as Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

He said one of his proudest veterinary achievements was being the founder of the not-for-profit organisation – the Kyeema Foundation, which was created in 2003, and its subsidiary, the International Rural Poultry Centre. "In just five years, the Foundation has assisted international developing communities to help themselves, by



establishing successful activities such as chicken rearing and vaccination, providing assistance to AIDS orphans and undertaking research to reduce cyanide toxicity from eating the woody shrub cassava."

On receiving the award, he said: "My career as a veterinarian has provided me with a fortunate lifestyle and livelihood. I was honoured to receive the Kesteven Medal, not only for myself and for my family, but also for all the people that have supported me in my career both in Australia and internationally."

Dr Routledge is currently based in Dubai, where he is the Regional Director of a leading global development management company – GRM International. He also serves on the board of directors of the University of Wollongong's Illawarra Technology Corporation.

### IN THIS ISSUE

• Dean's message • Alumni update • Reunions • Awards & successes • Faculty news • Upcoming events

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The Melbourne University Veterinary Society (MUVS) is an alumni society for each and every graduate from the Veterinary School. Vetnews, our official newsletter, provides an ideal way of communicating information to you about the activities of your fellow graduates and the Veterinary School.

To assist in keeping you in touch, we have set up class secretaries from each graduating year. The role of the class secretaries is to act as a contact person between MUVS and the year graduates, to gather information of interest from you and to actively promote reunions.

Recently a very successful meeting of class secretaries was held. The strength of year groups was particularly highlighted. The minutes of this meeting have/are being sent to you.

I urge all of you to become an active part of your MUVS community.

**Dr Peter Cullen**

BVSc Melb 1970

President MUVS

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- 2007 TBC

## VETERINARY SCIENCE AND THE MELBOURNE MODEL

As you are aware, the University of Melbourne has introduced a model of tertiary education that involves students completing one of 6 undergraduate degrees before enrolling in courses leading to professional qualifications. The undergraduate degree is designed to provide the student with the opportunity for both focused learning in a particular area and breadth of education through completion of breadth subjects in each year of the undergraduate degree. Law, medicine, dentistry, and physiotherapy, among other programs, have all moved to this model of teaching. The Melbourne Model will ensure that students entering professional programs are mature, have a well developed sense of purpose for their studies, and are broadly educated.



The Faculty of Veterinary Science decided in February to adopt the Melbourne Model of teaching veterinary science. This decision was taken by the Faculty Board after a comprehensive and exhaustive review of options for teaching veterinary science. The review was conducted by a working party led by Dr Liz Tudor, and included extensive consultation with academic staff, students, and the profession. So what will this decision mean for the Faculty and our training of veterinarians?

While the details have yet to be finalised, the fundamental principle is that aspiring veterinarians will enter the professional course after completion of an undergraduate degree. The professional program, tentatively titled the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, will be of 3 years duration for graduates of the Bachelor of Science (veterinary bioscience) at the University of Melbourne. Students entering through this route will study veterinary subjects in the BSc and at the end of the second year will be offered entry to the DVM, provided that they successfully complete the third year of the BSc (veterinary bioscience). During the final year of the BSc, students accepted into the DVM will undertake veterinary subjects that will prepare them for the DVM. Graduates from the University of Melbourne who have not completed the BSc (veterinary bioscience) and graduates of other undergraduate programs will complete the DVM program in 4 years.

Adopting the Melbourne Model for teaching veterinary science provides the Faculty with a number of opportunities and some challenges. We have the opportunity to enhance the teaching program such that veterinary science at the University of Melbourne continues to be pre-eminent in Australasia and amongst the top tier veterinary schools in the world. This can be achieved by revising the course structure and the

curriculum taking advantage of recent advances in pedagogy and recognising the significant changes that have occurred in the profession and in the expectations of our students since the last review of the course. Our challenges are to maintain the extraordinary sense of cohort that characterises students of veterinary science at the University of Melbourne, and to maintain the integrity of our discipline, and our Faculty, in the more integrated teaching environment that accompanies teaching in the Melbourne Model.

An important part of the education of our students is "seeing practice" with experienced practitioners as part of the Academic Associates program. The importance of this aspect of our teaching will not diminish in the new teaching model. These placements enable the students to gain an understanding of veterinary practice, in its widest sense, that cannot be conveyed in lectures or teaching laboratories. In my opinion, the most important aspect of this experience for students is that they are exposed to, and thereby become part of, the culture of veterinary science and veterinary practice. This is when students gain first hand understanding of the social norms, expectations, and responsibilities of veterinarians in our society. Our students are taught this material during their course, but it is only when they see it being practised that they fully understand the diverse role of veterinarians in society.

The Faculty has long recognised the vital experience that these placements provide our students with and values its relationship with the Academic Associates and practices that offer these opportunities. Academic Associates are important members of our Faculty, and therefore I have formed an Academic Associates Advisory Board composed of 9 Academic Associates and 3 members of the academic staff. I will chair this board. The purpose of the Academic Associates Advisory Board is to provide a forum for discussion among Academic Associates and the Faculty of the Academic Associates program. I will be reporting back to you on the activities of the advisory board.

There is much that will happen in the Faculty during the next 6 months and I look forward to providing you with a further update at the end of the year. Should you have any comments or suggestions, or just want to visit the School again, please do not hesitate to contact me on 03 9731 2281.

**Professor Ken Hinchcliff**

## VETS BEYOND BORDERS OFFERS VETERINARY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

By Dr Beth McGennissen – BVSc 1997

Project Manager, S.A.R.A.H. (Sikkim Anti Rabies & Animal Health) Programme, Gangtok, India

Vets Beyond Borders (VBB), previously known as Vetcharity, is an Australian-based, not-for-profit organisation established by veterinary volunteers in 2003. VBB coordinates and runs veterinary based animal welfare and public health programs in developing communities of the Asia and Pacific region.



View of Khanchendzonga from Gangtok (3rd highest mountain in world)

VBB works with local governments and organisations to establish effective veterinary programmes. Clinical training is provided to indigenous veterinary personnel so that long term sustainability is ensured. Volunteer veterinarians and nurses work alongside local staff and help to develop their skills.

VBB currently has two projects in India requiring experienced veterinary volunteers: The Sikkim Anti-Rabies and Animal Health (SARAH) Programme, and the Ladakh Street Dog Project.

The Sikkim Anti-Rabies and Animal Health (SARAH) Programme is located in Gangtok (Sikkim) in the Himalaya region of north east India. VBB in collaboration with the Sikkimese state government is conducting a state wide animal birth control and anti-rabies project.

To date, more than 11,000 dogs have been sterilised and more than 20,000 rabies vaccinations administered. Volunteers are assured of a memorable and rewarding experience working with local staff in remote regions of Sikkim. This is a unique opportunity to experience Sikkimese culture and hospitality. For further information please contact program manager -

**[beth.mcgennissen@vetsbeyondborders.org](mailto:beth.mcgennissen@vetsbeyondborders.org)**

The Ladakh Street Dog Project is located at Leh (Ladakh) in the north west of India. This is a high altitude region of incredible beauty nestled between the Karrokoram range in the north and the Himalayan range to the south.



A variety of patients are treated in Sikkim. In this case a leopard caesarian at the Gangtok Zoo.

The area is very popular with international trekking and mountaineering enthusiasts. VBB works with local animal shelter 'Ladakh Animal Care Society' to provide veterinary volunteers for the animal birth control project. This project runs through the summer months from June to September. In two summers more than 1,500 dogs have been sterilised and this has helped to significantly reduce the population of stray dogs in the area. For further information please contact project coordinator -

**[jperry@vetsbeyondborders.org](mailto:jperry@vetsbeyondborders.org)**

Further information about Vets Beyond Borders can be found on the website at **[www.vetsbeyondborders.org](http://www.vetsbeyondborders.org)**. Please consider becoming a member or volunteering to assist these important projects.

## VETERINARY SCIENCE ALUMNA PENS FIRST NOVEL

Karen Viggers, who graduated with a Bachelor of Veterinary Science degree in 1987, has combined her life-long passion for words and love of animals to create an intriguing debut novel about a whale stranding that occurs near a small coastal village in New South Wales (NSW).



Karen Viggers

*'The Stranding'* is a poignant anatomy of loss, the deaths of two contemporary innocents, an infant and a whale. It is a memorable story of broken hearts trying to mend, of personal discovery and recovery.

The inspiration for the author's first novel came to her whilst staying in a house overlooking the NSW South Coast. "Every time I looked out the window there were whales," she said. "They were rolling and slapping their flippers. It was such an uplifting experience that it made me wonder what effect the whales would have on an individual, if they were at a really low point in their life."

After graduating from the University of Melbourne, Karen developed an interest in native wildlife. Her PhD focused on wildlife health, and she even went to Antarctica to pursue her love in this arena.

"As a wildlife veterinarian I was often faced with the ethics of whether things should live or die," said Viggers. "The climax of the novel comes when the male lead discovers a

stranded whale on a remote section of a beach. I thought this stranding scene was an interesting way to get people to think about different sides of the argument, and whether it's always the right thing to try to save an animal."

This isn't the first time author's initial attempt at writing, the seeds were sown at the tender age of eight when she won her very first writing prize. By the age of ten she had written her very first play about convicts, which was performed at her school. Her passion and determination to write are demonstrated by the fact that she completed *'The Stranding'* in just under two-and-a-half years, whilst juggling family responsibilities, she's married with two young children, and working part-time in a veterinary practice in Canberra.

Published by Allen & Unwin, the book is now widely available at most major book stores in the country. It is available in paperback and can be purchased at a price of \$32.95.

## THE BVSC OPENS UP A DIVERSE ARRAY OF EXCITING CAREERS

By Pamela White - BVSc 1984

Pamela White is currently employed as a project director, and coordinator of the Environment and Rural Development Group at FCG International Ltd, based in Finland. We caught up with her recently to find out a bit more about her exciting career and life in Finland.



Pamela in South Africa

"I'm afraid I'm a great disappointment to Professor Blood, having veered away from the straight and narrow of veterinary work! On leaving veterinary school my main career goal was to be a 'gun equine surgeon', but I scarcely touch a horse these days. I do still use my veterinary training to some extent, and it was important as a route for me to get into the career I'm in today.

"I'm currently employed by a private company specialising in international development projects (or to put it more crudely, aid work), with financing from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, the European Commission, and the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank. We work in a wide variety of areas, including rural development, environmental management, water and sanitation, forestry, education, health, IT, small and medium enterprise development, and social sectors.

"A typical day varies a lot, depending on what country I'm in. In Helsinki I work on project management, mainly administrative issues, dealing with advisers working in the field in developing countries and the clients – both the financiers and the local governments. My other main task in Helsinki is to work on tenders, to try to win more assignments. This part of the work is stressful as you inevitably lose more than you win. On the other hand it stretches your intellect, I have written tenders on subjects as varied as human blood transfusion, sustainable forest management and Information Technology management.

"The other part of my work involves carrying out assignments myself, be they desk studies in Helsinki or fieldwork in developing countries. This is perhaps the most stressful but also the most rewarding part of the job, as I'm learning all the time. I also travel to support projects that are underway.

"Some of the fieldwork I do might involve animal health issues. For instance in a dairy cattle project in Kenya, I was training veterinary assistants and developing an animal health extension manual. In other cases I have been evaluating projects, for instance a sexual and reproductive health project for women in Nicaragua; or collecting and disseminating the stories of farmers supported by our rural development program in Vietnam; and working to establish a participatory monitoring and evaluation system with herders and rural dwellers in Mongolia (and drinking lots of fermented mare's milk!).

"There are many aspects of the job that I love, particularly leaving Helsinki in late November, in the dark and sleet, to travel to the Solomon Islands and travel around in a small boat visiting project sites on tropical islands.

"However what is really rewarding is that I feel I am 'doing good' and helping people develop their own lives and expand their opportunities. I also enjoy the fact that my job is so varied, I do something different almost every day and am constantly challenged. I have been able to travel a lot and to get to know many different cultures. I don't get to see many tourist sites, but I get a unique perspective to local lives."



Pamela in Mongolia

## DIARY OF A VETERINARY VOLUNTEER IN SAMOA

By Skye Turner – BVSc 2004

Over a year ago I was working as a veterinarian in a mixed dairy practice in rural Victoria. All I knew about Samoa was that it was a little country somewhere in the South Pacific and Samoans played rugby. But after chancing upon an advert for volunteers in one veterinary journal and a feature on a vet who had volunteered in Samoa for 2 years in another veterinary journal, I became intrigued. That intrigue led me to find myself on a plane to Samoa a couple of months later.



*Me Operating*

I began a 6 week stint as a volunteer with the Animal Protection Society (APS) of Samoa a couple of days later. From my background research, I knew that the APS provided the only companion animal veterinary care to the entire population of Samoa (approximately 180 000), which is spread over 2 main islands and several smaller ones. I also knew that Samoa had a huge problem with stray and feral dogs, with most people keeping dogs not for companionship but instead to guard their property.

The APS was founded by New Zealander, Joan Welch, in 1994. She was concerned at the lack of veterinary care available for dogs and cats in Samoa, and was equally concerned with the feral dog problem. After initially being run largely by palagi (white people), 13 years later, the APS has evolved into a semi-sustainable non-governmental organisation – staffed by Samoans, but still reliant on international aid and overseas volunteer vets. Their main objectives are to:

- Decrease the stray dog population through a desexing program, with euthanasia being the very last resort
- Provide community education on animal welfare and responsible dog ownership
- Provide a professional low-cost, affordable veterinary service to the dogs and cats of Samoa,
- and lobby the Samoan Government to enforce their animal welfare and dog control laws.

As my 6 week stint with the APS was drawing to a close, I felt a sense of hopelessness, and knew that if I was to have any real impact here in Samoa, I would have to stay much longer than 6 weeks! With the relatively small ex-pat

community in Samoa, I managed to meet half the palagi in Samoa in my 6 weeks. One of these ex-pats was Karin Moore, who happened to be the in-country manager for the Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development (AYAD) program. After a quick talk with Karin, I was on my way to becoming an AYAD volunteer, and after a fairly lengthy application process, found myself back at the APS in Samoa in September 2007.

Most of my working days are spent at our tiny little clinic on the outskirts of Apia, the capital. The workload is very variable, but our skills are most commonly called on for desexing operations, vaccinations, sick and malnourished puppies, dog attacks, motor vehicle accidents and other malicious attacks on dogs (machete wounds and poisoning with weed killer are all too common).

We also regularly undertake house calls around the Apia area for people without transport, and about once a month we will travel to remote village areas and carry out desexing clinics. Fees charged at the clinic are minimal – all drugs are charged at or below cost and our most expensive operation, a dog spey, costs just \$40WST (equivalent to less than \$20AUD). However, to put things in perspective, the minimum wage in Samoa is around \$1.50AUD/hour, so \$40WST may actually be a quarter to half of an average Samoan's weekly wage.

My clinic itself is well equipped to carry out basic operations, but with diagnostic facilities such as radiology and laboratory testing either unavailable or unaffordable, you quickly learn how to make compromises and think outside the box.

Living in a developing country, you also have to learn to cope without things that you would take for granted in Australia. It is only in the last couple of weeks that my clinic could afford to get a tank to ensure regular running water (we would often go for a week at a time without water), and as a result, we can now finally use our washing machine instead of washing all our drapes, blankets and towels by hand.

I love my work here and the people I work with so much, that I am looking into transferring to a longer-term volunteer position once, my 12 month AYAD contract expires in September 2008. If I ever get back to Australia, you are more likely to find me in an animal shelter somewhere than in another dairy practice!

For more information on the Animal Protection Society of Samoa visit [www.apssamoa.org](http://www.apssamoa.org)

For more information on becoming an Australian volunteer visit [www.ayad.com.au](http://www.ayad.com.au) or [www.vidavolunteers.com.au](http://www.vidavolunteers.com.au)

## STUART RECEIVES RESIDENCY AT UC DAVIS

Dr Stuart Vallance, who graduated with First Class Honours in 2005 has been awarded a residency at one of the largest veterinary schools in America - UC Davis. He will commence his residency in equine surgery at the beginning of August.



Dr Stuart Vallance

Stuart has always had a passion for animals, having grown up on his family's farm in Ballarat. He held a number of scholarships as an undergraduate student, including the Commonwealth Learning Scholarship, the Queen's College Fellow's Scholarship for potential in leadership and service, and a Rural Finance Corporation Scholarship. He was also President of Kendall Hall's Student Committee. In 2003 he was the third year representative of the Veterinary Students Society of Victoria (VSSV), and also editor of the VSSV's newsletter, Femoral Pulse.

After he graduated he worked as an intern in equine medicine and surgery at Randwick Equine Centre in Sydney. He then went to work in the UK for a year, and was employed as an associate veterinarian at Shotter & Byers Equine Veterinary Services in Surrey.

Stuart said: "My residency will be largely clinical in nature and will include performing surgery, clinical instruction of veterinary students in the hospital, as well as some instruction in basic surgical, lameness and equine practice techniques. I will be part of a team made up of a senior clinician, one to two residents and a group of senior veterinary students. We are also expected to spend some time in equine medicine, imaging, critical care and pathology.

"I'm really looking forward to developing my surgical skills and knowledge so that I will be well prepared to sit the American College of Veterinary Surgeons' exams. Seeing some Californian sunshine will also be nice after spending the last year and a half in the UK."

## CONGRATULATIONS TO:

**Robin Condron**, BVSc 1969, who received a silver University of Melbourne medal in recognition of his outstanding service to the University.

**Jim Parsons**, BVSc 1975, who has gone to work for CSIRO Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL) in South East Asia for a year. He has taken on the position of Veterinary Investigation Leader as part of their regional program and will be managing CSIRO's portfolio of overseas aid projects, with an emphasis on bird flu.

**David Maggs**, BVSc 1988, from the University of California, Davis, was awarded the 2007 Carl J. Norden-Pfizer Distinguished Teaching Award.

**Diccon Westworth**, BVSc 1995, Diplomate, American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (Neurology).

## THIRTY YEARS ON FOR VETERINARY SCIENCE CLASS OF '77

A thirty-year 'belated' reunion of the University of Melbourne's veterinary science class of 1977 was held over the weekend of the 26 and 27 April 2008 at Werribee.



*Veterinary Science class of 77*

In a stroke of serendipity, the reunion coincided with the celebration of World Veterinary Day, the theme of which was the diversity of the veterinary profession. Diversity is strongly reflected in the career paths forged by the 44 graduates who are working across the areas of farming, academia, state and federal government, animal welfare, consultancy, research, racing and industry and private practice. Those attending the reunion flew in from around Australia as well as from the United States, New Zealand and Hong Kong.

As the nominated 1977 year representative, Jack Winterbottom, now a veterinary officer with the Victorian Department of Primary Industries, put his hand up to be on the organising committee for the event.

"Our year has only had one previous reunion, twenty years ago, so there's a lot of water gone under the bridge, or fat laid down. It's a turn of phrase that seems particularly apt for a veterinarian."

The weekend's events began with a tour of the Werribee Vet School on Saturday afternoon followed by afternoon tea. Dinner on Saturday evening was held at Kendall Hall,

where most of the graduates resided in the last two years of their course. During dinner, the current Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, Professor Ken Hinchcliff, gave an address on the developments in the Faculty in the intervening years and its future directions.

Each of the 26 attending graduates was invited to give a brief account of their careers and the paths they have taken. A significant proportion of graduates have spent several years to decades in private practice overseas, mainly in the United Kingdom, before returning to Australia. Some of the more unusual journeys include Bob Jones' appointment at the Melbourne Aquarium, Alison Turner's transition from animal health to human health as the CEO of the National Blood Authority and Alex Tinson's years spent working with camels in the Middle East.

Many of the attendees spent the evening at Werribee Mansion and on Sunday morning they were taken for a behind the scenes look at Werribee Zoo. The weekend concluded with lunch at Werribee Mansion, where, we can only hope, not too much more fat was laid down.

## VETERINARY ALUMNI REUNITE IN SINGAPORE

A group of Veterinary Science students, who graduated from the University of Melbourne from 2002 through to 2007, recently gathered in Singapore to attend a lively alumni reception dinner.

The event was held on Sunday 24 February 2008 at the Copthorne King's Hotel, and provided the group with the opportunity to meet up with old friends, network and catch up on the latest news.

Honorary senior fellow and former international student mentor, Mike Harrison, who hosted the event on behalf of the Faculty of Veterinary Science, said: "It was great to see friendly faces, and to find out how successful our graduates are in developing their veterinary careers.

"Some are employed in private practice, one graduate is currently working with the Agency for Science, Technology and Research, and four are employed by the Agri-food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) Singapore."

Cheryl Goh, who graduated in 2005, and is currently the Deputy Head of the Emergency Planning Unit of the AVA, commented: "It was a wonderful evening, providing the ideal opportunity for both old and new graduates to revitalise and forge new friendships.

"These events are extremely important as they provide opportunities to share knowledge and experiences, which is especially helpful for newly qualified veterinarians practising in Singapore. We want to build a strong veterinary alumni network here in Singapore."



Photo from left:  
Tan Qing Hui (2002), Wong Su Yen (Sarah) (2004), Jassia Pang (2007), Audrey Chen (2007), Song V-lynn (2004) partly obscured, Mike Harrison, Yan Yuan (Grace) (2004), Dervla Lim (2004), Chan Mun Ling (2004), Cheryl Goh (2005), Tong Boon Yew Kenneth (2006).

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## 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS FOR VETERINARY GRADUATES

It was the year when Prime Minister Harold Holt went missing while swimming at Portsea on 17 December; indigenous Australians obtained the right to vote in a national referendum; the Beatles released their top-selling single 'All You Need Is Love', and a historical occasion for the University of Melbourne, which saw 38 Veterinary Science students graduate after the reopening of the Veterinary School in 1963 – it was 1967.



*Back: Chris Bunn, Rick Walduck, Peter Gleeson, Wendy Wood, Ian Fairnie, Stan Alkemade, Janan Iswaran, Fred Funston, Susan Bate, Derek Gooley, Ian Carmichael, Igor Radwyl, Liam Morrisroe, David Mira-Batemen, David Pass, Patrick Mornane and Richard Morton*

*Front: Kevin Bell, Wayne Robinson, Jo Hawkes, Janet Nevill, Lindsay Hooper and Martin Haynes*

*Inset: John Hyland*

Over forty years later, on Saturday 22 December 2007, twenty-four of the original group of 1967 veterinary graduates were reunited, many for the first time in four decades, at a memorable reunion dinner held at Werribee Park Mansion.

The class of '67 travelled from all over the globe to reminisce about the good old days, with Dr Stan Alkemade, flying over 16,000 kilometres, from Ontario, Canada to meet up with his old classmates.

Many of the graduates have had exciting, successful careers from setting up their own veterinary practices, to being experts in the academic arena, with one alumnus even starting up a leading international project management company for the pharmaceutical industry.

Jo Bell née Hawkes, who grew up in country Victoria said: "Many things have changed in relation to the veterinary degree since the sixties. One of the major changes is that forty years ago along with myself, there were only five other female students who graduated with a degree in Veterinary Science (sixteen percent). However, in 2007, the majority of the graduates were female (eighty-three percent).

"Although many of us travelled abroad once we had graduated, most of the class of '67 were from Victoria, but today, students on the course are from all over the world. This is testament to the Veterinary School's outstanding international reputation.

"It was great to catch up with all my old classmates, and to see Professor Jubb again, who was Professor of Pathology when we graduated. He later became the Dean for the next 21 years."



*1967 veterinary graduates tour the University of Melbourne's Veterinary Clinic and Hospital located in Werribee.*

Dr Stan Alkemade, who was alphabetically the first official graduate of the class of '67 commented: "At the reunion dinner it was great to discover the fantastic life stories of many of my colleagues. Six of them enjoyed their time together on the course so much that they decided to make a permanent commitment to each other by tying the knot!

"It was also great to hear how seven of my colleagues' children ended up following in their parents' footsteps by undertaking a rewarding career in the veterinary arena."

Other highlights of the reunion included a tour of the redeveloped Veterinary Clinic and Hospital based in Werribee, which was undertaken by recently retired and former Dean, Professor Ivan Caple; and lunch in Kendall Hall where the 1967 graduates recalled many memorable events.

## SENIOR LECTURER RECEIVES AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN POULTRY DISEASE RESEARCH

Dr Amir Noormohammadi, a senior lecturer in poultry diseases in the Faculty of Veterinary Science, has been awarded the Houghton Lecture Award for major contributions in poultry disease research by a scientist under the age of 45.



Dr Amir Noormohammadi

The Houghton Lecture is presented every two years at the World Veterinary Poultry Association (WVPA) Congress, and is sponsored by the Houghton Trust Ltd in conjunction with the WVPA.

Dr Amir's lecture entitled 'Who is Smarter, Mycoplasma or the Host?' was presented at the WVPA in Beijing, China towards the end of last year. It featured highlights of his ground-breaking research on the bacterial species – *Mycoplasma synoviae*.

The research looks at the surface proteins and the molecular mechanisms used by this organism to generate antigenic variation and induce chronic diseases in chickens and turkeys. Amir's work has influenced scientific thought into the intriguing biological phenomenon of phase variation and elucidated a unique mechanism about how it is achieved in *Mycoplasma synoviae*.

The senior lecturer said: "I was delighted to have been given the enormous privilege of presenting the lecture. The recognition is greatly appreciated and makes all the hard work that went into my research even more satisfying. I know this award would not have materialised without the help of many others, particularly Kevin Whithear and Glenn Browning."

Dr Noormohammadi is a key researcher in several poultry disease projects including molecular pathogenesis and epidemiology of infectious laryngotracheitis, infectious bronchitis and chicken anaemia viruses and of pathogenic avian *Escherichia coli*.

As part of the award, the senior lecturer received an all expenses paid trip to attend the WVPA congress in Beijing, and was also presented with an engraved vase.

## VETERINARY LECTURER SCOOPS TOP AWARD



Dr James Gilkerson

Dr James Gilkerson, a senior lecturer in veterinary microbiology and head of the Equine Infectious Disease Laboratory at the Faculty of Veterinary Science has been awarded the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) President award.

The accolade is awarded to a veterinarian in recognition of their services to the veterinary profession, and outstanding commitment to veterinary science.

AVA President, Dr Diane Sheehan, presented Dr Gilkerson with his award at the annual AVA Conference Annual General Meeting held in Perth on Wednesday 28 May. He said: "It is a great honour to receive this award, and I have to say for once in my life I was totally lost for words."

## AUSTRALIA'S FIRST UNIVERSITY EDUCATED FEMALE VETERINARIAN HONOURED

**Margaret Keats MBE, BVSc, Australia's first-ever woman to officially graduate with a Bachelor of Veterinary Science degree from the University of Melbourne in 1923, has been honoured by the Victorian community by having her name added to the Victorian Honour Roll of Women.**

The Victorian Honour Roll of Women recognises and celebrates the achievements of women from all walks of life. It honours Victorian women who have made a significant contribution in a particular field, or a lasting contribution that benefits the lives of other women and/or their communities in Victoria, Australia and internationally.

The announcement was made by the Victorian Minister for Women's Affairs, Maxine Morand at a lunch held on Saturday 8 March 2008 to mark International Women's Day. The prestigious event was attended by leading Australian women including Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Victoria's Police Commissioner Christine Nixon.

Ms Morand said: "This year marks 100 years since Victorian women won the right to vote and it is great that Australia has its first female Deputy Prime Minister.

"Today, we note the achievements of 30 Victorian women, who have been nominated by the community, for their passion, vision, leadership and commitment to improve the lives of others. This will bring to 386 the number of women selected for the Victorian Honour Roll of Women since the Roll was introduced in 2001 to raise the public status of women."

Miss Keats was nominated for the award due to her dedication, leadership and inspiring achievements in the veterinary arena. From 1923 through to the 1950s she single handedly ran a rural practice in north-west Victoria.

She was appointed as a Border Inspector of Stock in 1925 to maintain the health of stock crossing the Murray River at Gonn's Crossing. To provide the necessary legal authority to inspect stock, she was appointed as a Commissioner of the High Court as women were then not able to hold posts as Justices of the Peace.

In addition to her devotion to caring for animals she was a successful owner and breeder of racehorses, three times winning the Kerang Cup with 'Fight On' – a horse she had bred. In January, 1959, she was awarded an OBE, Member of The Order of the British Empire.

She is remembered by the profession as one who was utterly dedicated to it, becoming a role model for men and women entering rural practice and showing that there could be a long-term future for women in the profession.

## SCHOLARSHIP TO ENHANCE PHD STUDENT'S KNOWLEDGE OF MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY

**A second-year PhD student from the Faculty of Veterinary Science has been awarded a prestigious \$5,000 travelling scholarship, which will enable him to expand his knowledge of a group of genetic muscle diseases that cause progressive muscle weakness – muscular dystrophies (MDs).**

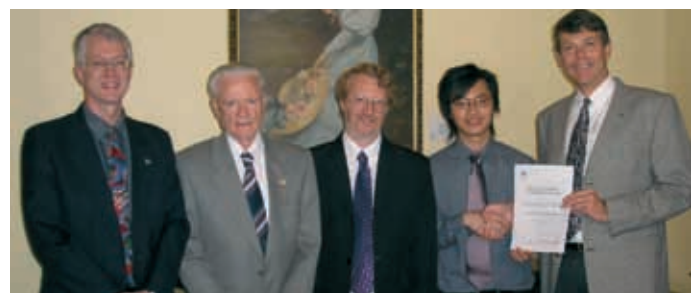
Kitipong Uaesoontrachoon, 25, originally from Thailand, is the third student to receive the Dr Sue Newton Travelling Scholarship, which celebrates the life and work of Dr Sue Newton, who was a visiting research fellow at the Faculty of Veterinary Science, and a highly respected and internationally recognised research scientist.

The scholarship recognises scientific excellence in the research arena, and is awarded on an annual basis to a PhD student in the Faculty of Veterinary Science.

Kitipong's research project is centred around Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD), which is the most common form of MD, and primarily affects boys. He is trying to understand the function of the structural protein, osteopontin, and the role it plays in repairing damaged skeletal muscle.

"Being awarded such a prestigious scholarship has provided me with the fantastic opportunity to visit the Wellstone Muscular Dystrophy Center in Washington, DC, where I had access to fresh frozen muscle biopsies from muscular dystrophy patients," said the PhD student.

"Access to these samples enabled me to relate my in vivo mouse model results to the human disease, enabling me to



*Photo from left: Adrian Newton, Gordon Edwards, Geoff Edwards, Kitipong Uaesoontrachoon, receiver of the Sue Newton travelling scholarship, and Professor Ken Hinchliff, Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Science*

further my knowledge and understanding of the pathology of DMD.

"I also presented my research at the 'New Directions in Biology and Disease of Skeletal Muscle' conference in New Orleans in April, which was a great networking opportunity."

Professor Ken Hinchliff, Dean of the Faculty presented Kitipong with his award, at a special presentation lunch held on Wednesday 16 January at the University of Melbourne.

## NEW RURAL SCHOLARSHIP WILL HELP VET STUDENTS FULFIL THEIR DREAMS

Four students from the Faculty of Veterinary Science are the recipients of a new rural scholarship, which has been established to assist students from regional and remote areas of Australia.



*Paula Bennett (final year), Kate Gordon (3rd year), Katherine Adams (1st year) and Melissa Whitehead (2nd year).*

The Noble Stewart-Hamilton scholarship, named in honour of Joyce Agnes Stewart-Hamilton (née Noble), who had always aspired to be a vet, will help to reduce the financial burden on students during the course.

Recipients will be awarded \$5,000 per annum for the duration of their enrolment in the Bachelor of Veterinary Science (BVSc) degree.

This year, the scholarship was provided to a student in each year of the four-year BVSc program. The students awarded scholarships were: Katherine Adams, Melissa Whitehead, Kate Gordon, and Paula Bennell.

Scholarship winner, Katherine Adams commented: "The grant will make a huge difference in helping to fulfil my dream to become a veterinarian. It will allow me to

participate in a wider range of work placements, and to concentrate on studying rather than having to take up a full-time job during the holidays."

Dean of the Faculty, Professor Ken Hinchcliff said: "We are indebted to Mrs Stewart-Hamilton, who donated generously through her estate, so that this vital scholarship could be created. Rural students face considerable barriers in taking up tertiary education, and the scholarship will assist students with accommodation, living and travel costs whilst they gain a world-class veterinary education."

As from 2009, the newly created scholarship will be awarded annually to a first-year Veterinary Science student for the duration of the four-year course. Full details can be viewed at [www.vet.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.vet.unimelb.edu.au).

## PRACTITIONER IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

The idea of the Practitioner in Residence (PIR) arose from the Melbourne University Veterinary Society (MUVS) in 1989 to promote interaction between the Veterinary Profession, the University and its students. Principal sponsors of the program are the Melbourne Metropolitan Practitioners Branch, Animal Emergency Centre, Melbourne Veterinary Referral Centre, Australian Small Animal Veterinary Association and MUVS.



Dr Greg McIntyre, BVSc 1974

Objectives of the program are to provide students with an insight into the world of practice; to teach them some survival and coping skills; and to be a resource to the Faculty by assisting students to learn professional practice attributes that augment material provided in lectures, clinics and hospital rotations in the Bachelor of Veterinary Science course.

The PIR is a role model and mentor to the students, and a mentor to younger members of clinical staff who participate in teaching. Importantly, the PIR reinforces an appreciation of professional ethics and responsibility to contribute to both community and the profession and an understanding of the role of the AVA and its special interest groups.

The program has been running very successfully since 1991. Each year a new practitioner is selected. This year Dr Greg McIntyre was appointed.

Dr McIntyre graduated from the Faculty of Veterinary Science in 1974. Greg has owned and operated a mixed practice at Kyneton in Central Victoria since 1983. He has a lot of experience with new graduates from Melbourne, and is passionate about helping students to believe in themselves and what they can achieve.

The Faculty would like to thank the direct sponsors and other companies and organisations who contribute to the educational program, and who provide the catering for the lunch-time seminar series.

**Help us make  
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### Complete our alumni preferences survey

Do you want to hear about alumni activities happening in London or Sydney?  
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Provide your preferences to these and other questions via our new online tool and we will deliver information about the news, opportunities and services that interest you.

Complete the survey by 14 July 2008 and you could win your choice of MTC tickets, University fitness centre membership or bookshop vouchers worth \$300.

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## VET STUDENT TACKLES HALF IRONMAN FOR INTERNATIONAL ANIMAL CHARITY

A third-year veterinary student is set to undertake a gruelling 1.9km swim, a 90km bike ride and a half marathon, in an attempt to raise much needed funds for one of India's largest animal charities.



Matt Pascall

Matt Pascall will battle against some of the fittest athletes in the country in the 'Rydges Capricorn Half Ironman' on Sunday 17 August in Yeppoon, Queensland.

He'll be raising monies for the Visakha Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (VSPCA), whose main aim is to prevent cruelty, and alleviate suffering of animals in India.

Matt, 23, hopes to raise \$5,260, which is the exact amount needed to employ a qualified Indian veterinarian to work full-time in the VSPCA clinic for one full year. The animal-lover and fitness fanatic said: "The monies raised will go a long way towards saving and helping the lives of hundreds of animals. The VSPCA currently provides shelter to over 1050 animals, including cows, cats, dogs, monkeys, horses, parrots and other animals in need. They also run a lot of amazing programs including an animal birth control and sea turtle protection program, an adoption program for stray animals, and cow sanctuaries.

"The animal charity relies heavily on generous donations, and I'm hoping that all my friends, family and the wider community will support me with this worthy cause. I will travel to India in December for a two-week placement with the VSPCA, and it would be great to present them with a cheque so that they can employ a full-time veterinarian."

**The veterinary science student has raised over \$800 so far, if you are interested in sponsoring him, donations can be made online at [www.blognow.com/ironman4sps](http://www.blognow.com/ironman4sps), or he can be contacted via email - [m.pascall@ugrad.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:m.pascall@ugrad.unimelb.edu.au).**

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS MANAGER RETIRES AFTER THREE DECADES OF SERVICE

Elizabeth (Liz) Lightfoot, Academic Programs Manager in the Faculty of Veterinary Science, has retired, ending a long and successful career that has spanned over three decades at the University of Melbourne.



Elizabeth (Liz) Lightfoot

For twenty-two of these years she worked at the Faculty of Veterinary Science, serving three deans, which makes her one of the longest serving professional members of staff.

In her role as Academic Programs Manager she undertook many different roles from being the principal guide of selection processes in the Faculty; overseeing the management of the Parkville campus, and managing the path of our students from their very first enquiry to graduation.

Associate Dean, Professor Glenn Browning said: "Throughout her career her contributions have been marked by a combination of commitment, loyalty, passion, efficiency, accuracy, attention to detail, and respect and care for individuals, for the Faculty and for the University as an important public institution.

"Liz will be greatly missed by all of us who have known her as a colleague, and we all hope she remains in contact with the Faculty and the profession that she has helped shape in the years ahead."

## HORSE OWNERS MISSING OUT ON THE DIAGNOSTIC TOOL OF SCINTIGRAPHY

Horse owners may be missing out on the valuable diagnostic tool of scintigraphy, which can help with identifying the causes of lameness, says Dr Chris Whitton, coordinator of the equine scintigraphy service at the Equine Centre.



Many veterinarians are unaware of the quality and sophistication of the imaging provided by the University of Melbourne's Scintigraphy Service, he says, and may not think to recommend it to their clients.

Scintigraphy, also known as bone scanning, can provide an indication of the physiological change occurring within the bone often before the injury would be detected using the more traditional methods of radiography or ultrasound.

Dr Gareth Trope, resident in equine surgery at the University's Werribee Veterinary Clinic and Hospital is also a fan of the imaging tool.

"It is particularly useful in examining causes of upper limb lameness such as pelvic fractures, sacro-iliac pain and back pain. These areas are difficult to image with radiographs.

"Other advantages include the ability to scan the entire skeleton easily and in a relatively short time while the horse is standing and sedated; the fact that it can provide information about active bone remodeling; and its usefulness in the diagnosis of stress fractures in racehorses."

Dr Trope describes the process: "The horse is usually sedated but remains standing for the procedure (on rare occasions we would perform the scan on a horse under general anaesthesia). A radioactive compound attached to a bone tracer is injected into a vein. The tracer 'sticks' in areas of increased bone activity (hotspots) and three hours later a gamma camera records the amount and location of radiation. This information is processed by a computer into a picture of the horse's skeleton where hotspots can be seen at sites of injury.

"Despite sedation, small movements and swaying are a common cause of poor image quality. Blurry pictures can result in incorrect diagnoses and this is especially a problem with back and upper limb scans. The University of Melbourne's Equine Centre has installed an advanced digital processing system and motion correction software which produces high quality images that have been the envy of visiting specialists from all over the world."

Dr Whitton agrees. The Equine Centre has been offering a scintigraphy service for the last five years and he believes it is one of the best in the country.

"It is the combination of the sophistication of our equipment, the incorporation of the movement correction software and the fact that we have a dedicated nuclear medicine technician, Tanya Puksmann, that makes the Equine Centre's Scintigraphy Service so outstanding.

"The equipment is very sensitive," says Dr Whitton, "and it requires a lot of tweaking to keep it producing accurate, repeatable information. We're very fortunate to have Tanya, who is highly qualified and widely admired for her skills in the area of nuclear medicine."

With over 700 scintigraphy scans performed over the last five years, the Equine Centre is accumulating vast amounts of data that is being utilised in many ongoing research projects within the University.

Dr Whitton hopes more vets will soon be recommending scintigraphy for those nagging lameness cases that have no obvious cause.



## VETERINARY SCIENCE TEAM TRIUMPH AT TRIATHLON

On Sunday 6 April twenty-seven adventurous veterinary science staff and students gathered together on the beautiful Geelong Waterfront to take part in the annual Harwood Andrews Corporate Triathlon.



*Back: Charlie El Hage (staff), Matt Pascall, Peter Bradbrook, Tom Gilheany, James White, Stuart Barber (staff), Ben Mielke, Marcus Berstrael, Ken Hinchliff (Dean), Ari Xipolitas and Jeremy McDonnell*

*Middle: Andrea Jones (marketing), Alison Every (staff), Leonie Richards (staff), Sarah White, Anna Curry, Melati Laksito (staff), Eleanor Mackie (staff), Natalie Krekeler (staff) and Brynley Cooper*

*Front: Ben Kay, Christie Jennings, Kat McDonough, Emma Crosser (staff) and Sarah Robson*

The nine veterinary science triathlon teams competed either in the team single leg or whole course team events, scooping two first places in this year's competition. In the women's whole course team competition, Emma Croser, Laura Fennell and Natali Krekeler won first place in a competitive time of 2:51.15.

The veterinary science whole course mixed team entry also came in first with an impressive time of 2:45.20. Matt Pascall, a third-year veterinary science student and winning mixed team member said: "It was a great event with perfect conditions for a fast race. We all had a lot of fun, went through a lot of pain, and were really happy to have performed so well as a team."

Dr Stuart Barber, who organised the University's participation in the triathlon said: "It was great to see so many people from the Faculty of Veterinary Science encouraging and supporting each other and enjoying some friendly rivalry in this fun team event. Congratulations to everyone who took part, and did so well, we'll have to go back again next year to defend our titles!"

This year's event included a 500 metre swim, a 10 kilometre cycle and a 5 kilometre run.

## WERRIBEE VETERINARY CLINIC WELCOMES EXOTIC PET CONSULTANT

The increased boom in ownership of 'pocket pets' is resulting in a growing demand for the quality of veterinary care of these animals, but often exotic animal owners find it difficult to locate a veterinarian in their area who has specialised experience with exotic animals.



*Dr Brendan Carmel, BVSc 1987, performs an ultrasound on one of Melbourne Museum's chameleons to determine whether to perform surgery to remove its stomach full of eggs.*

The Veterinary Clinic and Hospital in Werribee is catering for this need by welcoming unusual and exotic animal consultant, Dr Brendan Carmel to its team of veterinary experts.

Dr Carmel is the past president of the Unusual & Exotic Pet Veterinarians special interest group of the Australian Veterinary Association; a founding member of the Association of Exotic Mammal Veterinarians and the Association of Reptilian and Amphibian Veterinarians. He is the veterinary consultant to Melbourne Museum, and a lecturer in wildlife and unusual and exotic pet medicine at the University of Melbourne.

"Over the years, I have worked on many unusual cases, from treating an anorexic spider for not eating, undertaking a health check on a 40kg snake to trimming the beak on a 30kg land tortoise," said Dr Carmel. "I will be undertaking clinics at the Werribee Veterinary Clinic and Hospital every

Wednesday morning. On weekdays, clients can consult with resident veterinarian Tina Knight who also has a special interest in exotic pets, and has worked alongside me in the past."



## UPCOMING EVENTS AND REUNIONS

### Class of 1998 - 10 Year Reunion

Amy Kay, Megan Scott and Louisa Taylor are starting to think about a 10 year reunion. More details will appear on the MUVS website as they finalise everything – [www.muvs.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.muvs.unimelb.edu.au)

### Class of 1988 - 20 Year Reunion

Class Secretary Jane Vaughan has planned the big event for the weekend of Friday 17 October - Sunday 19 October at Beach Golf Links in Barwon Heads. There will be time for golf, swimming, walking and talking before the reunion dinner on Saturday. Contact Jane on 03 5254 3365 or [vaughan@ava.com.au](mailto:vaughan@ava.com.au) for more details.

### University of Melbourne's Open Day

Saturday 17 August 2008

The Faculty of Veterinary Science will be located in the foyer area of Wilson Hall.

**Alumni lounge:** building on the success of the inaugural Alumni Lounge in 2007, the University will again be opening an Alumni Lounge.

Alumni are invited to relax and enjoy coffee and refreshments in the Alumni Lounge. They can also complete the Alumni Preferences Survey, join the Alumni Web Community, meet fellow alumni and find out about upcoming events and activities. The Alumni Lounge will be open all day in the Moot Court Room in the Old Quad.

Please feel free to use any, or all of the above as a meet and greet point for any alumni that you may be wanting to connect with during the course of the day.

### White Coat Ceremony

Sunday 20 July 2008

Wyndham Leisure and Events Centre

This ceremony celebrates the significant transition that students make to clinical training and intensive practical veterinary work as they commence the second semester of the third year of the course.

## UVET SEMINAR SERIES FOR 2008

**Tuesday 12 August 2008**

**What do you expect when the surgeon says "Oops"**

**Tuesday 14 October 2008**

**Transfusion therapy- indications, applications and troubleshooting**

This year's seminars are offered as continuing education for veterinarians at no cost. Topics have been carefully selected on basis of usefulness to veterinarians in practice, and a short (5 to 10 minute) update on a topic/area from a recent conference attended by uVet staff will also be included in each seminar. While the seminars are free, donations (tax deductible) from attendees towards equipment upgrades are most welcome.

For further enquiries, contact Dr Wing Tip Wong on (03) 9731 2000 Monday - Thursday. To book a place, contact Mrs Gerry Hardie on (03) 9731 2000.

All seminars will be held in the Large Lecture Theatre, Veterinary Clinic & Hospital, The University of Melbourne, 250 Princes Highway, Werribee 3030. Light snacks will be served at 6.30pm, followed by the seminar at 7.00pm.

## STAY IN TOUCH

### We are committed to staying in touch with you

We would be pleased to hear about your life's milestones and successes. To update your information, stay connected, or to learn more about how you can support the Faculty of Veterinary Science please email us on [vet-alumni@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:vet-alumni@unimelb.edu.au).

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Vetnews published by the Faculty of Veterinary Science with the authorisation of the Dean.

Disclaimer: the information in this publication was correct at the time of printing. The University reserves the right to make changes as appropriate.

Printed on Sovereign Offset



Fibre sourced from pulp suppliers who use responsible forestry techniques. FSC PEFC.



Manufactured using elemental chlorine free (ECF) pulps