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Vetmedia

Magazine

The Pulse of the Veterinary Profession

September – October 2024
Volume 1, Issue 1

Meet the
Ugandan Vet
NICKNAMED
Ms Rabies

Why Veterinary
professionals
numbers
should worry
EA govts

KVA Council
CHAIRMAN
Reflects

DOG BREEDING
Great Potential for East Africa





WORLD RABIES DAY CELEBRATIONS & SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE



SPECIAL INVITATION

26-28 SEPTEMBER 2024



WHERE?
DIAMONDS LEISURE BEACH
& GOLF RESORT, DIANI



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Time to take the pulse of the veterinary profession

I am very happy that we have now released the first issue of Vetmedia Magazine. I welcome all members of the veterinary and animal science professions to have a read, enjoy the articles, fellowship with their peers, and learn something new.

Vetmedia Magazine is meant to be the pulse of the veterinary magazine in the East African Community area, though of course other veterinary and animal science professionals in other parts of Africa and the world will no doubt find something to enjoy too.

Going forward, we will be publishing Vetmedia Magazine bimonthly and will distribute it as a free PDF which may be best enjoyed on a laptop, a tablet, or a desktop computer. In due course, we will produce an e-magazine at an affordable cost and this may be consumed on any gadget including on the phone.

The veterinary fraternity does not ordinarily publish that many magazines, preferring to exchange information through scientific conferences, scientific journals, and other veterinary related events. While these methods have gone a long way in informing and educating veterinarians and animal scientists about their profession, there remains a gap that needs filling.

That gap is the availability of a platform where the profession can exchange information without the rigor and rigidity of academia and scientific engagements, with a bit more informality and enjoyment of the veterinary and animal science professions, and yet without compromising the knowledge quality.

Anyone who works with animals can testify that they can be funny, entertaining, and that they do know how to play, and even how to tease their human companions. It is therefore not proper that veterinary and animal scientists should not have a fun outlet for the great joy that working with animals is.

Vetmedia Magazine will seek to play that role. Our cursory research indicates that approximately 7000 veterinary surgeons and 12,000 para-veterinary professionals work in the eight East African Community countries of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and Somalia.

That is a 19,000 strong veterinary workforce. When animal scientists are added on, one could be talking of many thousands more professionals who may benefit from a platform that allows them to engage and

network with each other sharing joys, challenges, opportunities, and growing in knowhow as they interact.

That is enough from me for now. Please welcome inside the Vetmedia Magazine and enjoy yourself. Feel free to write to us and share any feedback about the magazine, or tell us which topics you would like us to cover in future. You can write to: vetmediacompany@gmail.com.



Dr Simon P.A. Alubbe
Publisher & Editor In Chief



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VIV Africa 2024: A Must-Attend Event for the Poultry, Agriculture, and Dairy Industries

With the success of past editions serving as a foundation, the next VIV Africa 2024 is expected to be an event of the highest calibre for professionals working in the poultry, agricultural, and dairy industries. During the event, which is scheduled to take place at the Kigali Convention Centre (KCC) in Rwanda from October 1st to October 3rd, 2024, more than 130 exhibitors from thirty different countries will showcase cutting-edge technology and services over an exhibition area that is more than 1,500 square meters in area.

Agriculture and dairy are two new industries that will be included at this year's edition of the event. These additions broaden the scope of the event beyond poultry to include a wider variety of industry participants. The Horti Agri Next (HAN) Pavilion and the Dairy Pavilion will bring together a wide variety of exhibitors and attendees, which will contribute to the development of cooperation and innovation within these two essential industries.

VIV Africa 2024 is an unrivalled chance to expand one's professional network, acquire new knowledge, and develop one's skills. It is anticipated that more than 1,600 visitors will participate, including high-level delegates from all throughout Sub-Saharan Africa.

More than fifty speakers from across the world will be present at the event, which will provide high-quality material in the form of specific conferences and seminars on subjects such as animal health, feed production, farm management, and biosecurity.

Kigali, with its high level of development in terms of infrastructure and its strategic position, is an ideal entrance to the African market. The city's political and social stability, in addition to its openness to international investment, makes it a perfect location for this major event to take place.

When VIV Africa 2024 takes place, the tradition of integrating the complete feed to food supply chain will be carried on. This includes the production of meat and eggs, as well as the components used in feed. A complete program that tackles the present issues and possibilities confronting the agricultural and dairy sectors in Africa is going to be included in this year's event, which is going to be the biggest one that has ever been in existence.

The Leadership Conference will start off the event on October 1st, and then on October 2nd and 3rd, there will be two days of exhibits and seminars. Those who attend the conference

will get an understanding of the most recent developments in the sector, while those who visit the expo will have the opportunity to get their hands on the most recent goods and services.

Do not pass up the opportunity to be a part of VIV Africa 2024, which will take place in one of the most vibrant cities in Africa and will bring together innovation and heritage. This event provides you with essential opportunity to improve your company and broaden your network, regardless of whether you work in the poultry, agricultural, or dairy industries.

Mark your calendar for October 1-3, 2024, and join industry leaders from around the world at VIV Africa 2024 in Kigali, Rwanda.



Ben Nabutete (left) and Simon Alubbe at a past Poultry Africa Conference. It is now known as Viv Africa.

New Leadership at WOAH: Dr. Emmanuelle Soubeyran Begins Her Tenure



Paris Headquarters of the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH)

The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) recently appointed Dr. Emmanuelle Soubeyran's as the new Director General. Dr. Soubeyran, who has a wealth of expertise in veterinary public health and animal health, is going to lead the organisation through a time of strategic transformation and greater worldwide impact. She will be in charge of driving the organisation forward.

Over the course of her illustrious career, Dr. Soubeyran has held a number of prestigious positions, including those of Dean of the National Veterinary School of Lyon (VetAgro Sup) from 2016 to 2021, Deputy Director General for Food within the French Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, and Head of French Veterinary Services. She is proficient in navigating both national and international veterinary settings, and she has over fifteen years of experience in leadership roles. Her skills in this area have garnered recognition.

In her new role, Dr. Soubeyran has outlined three strategic pillars that will underpin WOAH's work over the next five years:

First, enhancing the visibility of WOAH: Dr. Soubeyran's objective is to elevate the voice of WOAH on the international stage, given that animal health plays a significant role in solving global concerns such as food security, economic stability, and public health. She plans to mobilize substantial resources to bolster the organization's objective, highlighting the importance of proactive preventative actions.

Considering that only seven percent of WOAH members now possess ideal veterinary capabilities, Dr. Soubeyran has made improving this workforce a top priority in order to strengthen veterinary services. She is of the opinion that strengthening veterinary services is necessary in order to guarantee the production of food that is both safe and sustainable on a global scale.

Modernising WOAH: In response to the fast-changing world, Dr. Soubeyran is devoted to modernising WOAH by encouraging inclusion, digitalisation, and data-driven initiatives. Her plan calls for the use of new technology and the processing of large amounts of data.

Dr. Soubeyran is well positioned

to steer the World of Allied Health (WOAH) into a new era as the organisation approaches its centenary. She stated her commitment to working closely with WOAH members, their delegates, the Council, regional commissions, and other international stakeholders as part of her commitment. Her goal is to establish WOAH as a leading organisation in solving the intricate problems associated with animal welfare and health, which are becoming more and more entangled with public health on a worldwide scale.

In her leadership, Dr. Soubeyran emphasized that "animal health is our health; it's everyone's health," highlighting the interdependence of human and animal health as a fundamental tenet that guides her decisions.

Global members and stakeholders of the Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) are eagerly anticipating Dr. Soubeyran's new direction. They anticipate significant global breakthroughs in animal health and welfare in the coming years.

WHO Director-General declares mpox outbreak a public health emergency of international concern

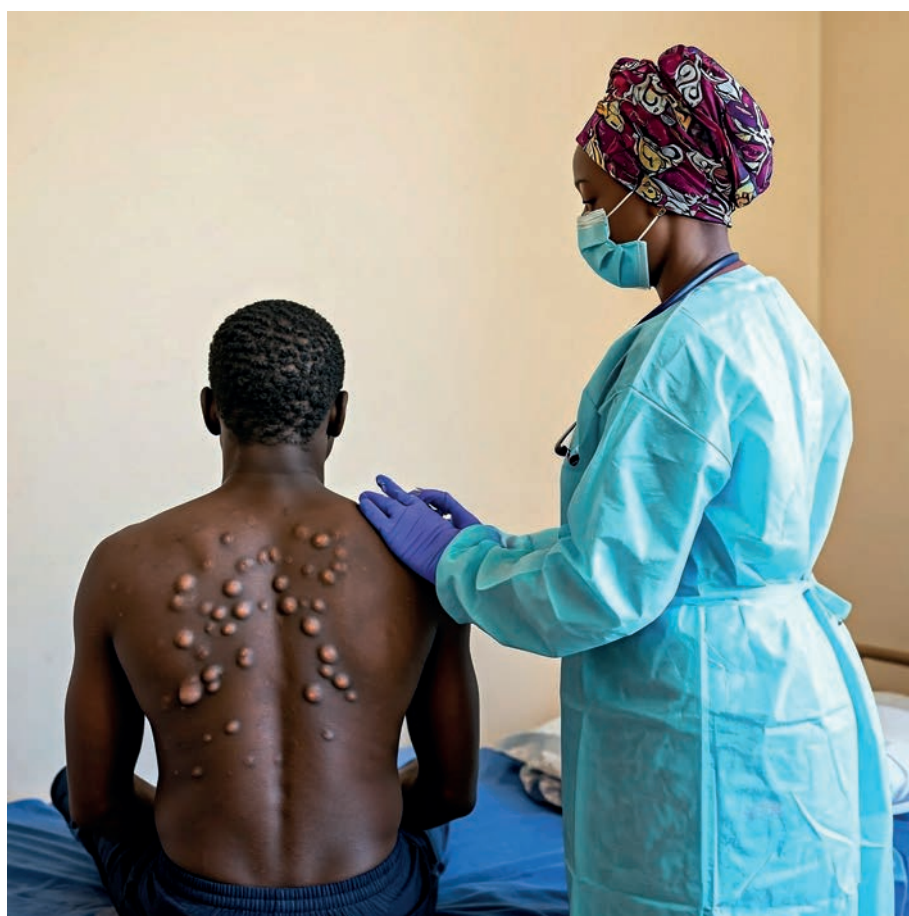
14 August 2024
News release

WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has determined that the upsurge of mpox in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and a growing number of countries in Africa constitutes a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) under the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR).

Dr Tedros's declaration came on the advice of an IHR Emergency Committee of independent experts who met earlier in the day to review data presented by experts from WHO and affected countries. The Committee informed the Director-General that it considers the upsurge of mpox to be a PHEIC, with potential to spread further across countries in Africa and possibly outside the continent.

The Director-General will share the report of the Committee's meeting and, based on the advice of the Committee, issue temporary recommendations to countries.

In declaring the PHEIC, Dr Tedros said, "The emergence of a new clade of mpox, its rapid spread in eastern DRC, and the reporting of cases in several neighbouring countries are very worrying. On top of outbreaks of



A medic attends to a patient suffering from suspected Mpox. The WHO has declared it a public health emergency.

other mpox clades in DRC and other countries in Africa, it's clear that a coordinated international response is needed to stop these outbreaks and save lives."

WHO Regional Director for Africa Dr Matshidiso Moeti said, "Significant efforts are already underway in close collaboration with communities and

governments, with our country teams working on the frontlines to help reinforce measures to curb mpox. With the growing spread of the virus, we're scaling up further through coordinated international action to support countries bring the outbreaks to an end."

Committee Chair Professor Dimie

Ogoina said, "The current upsurge of mpox in parts of Africa, along with the spread of a new sexually transmissible strain of the monkeypox virus, is an emergency, not only for Africa, but for the entire globe. Mpox, originating in Africa, was neglected there, and later caused a global outbreak in 2022. It is time to act decisively to prevent history from repeating itself."

This PHEIC determination is the second in two years relating to mpox. Caused by an Orthopoxvirus, mpox was first detected in humans in 1970, in the DRC. The disease is considered endemic to countries in central and west Africa.

In July 2022, the multi-country outbreak of mpox was declared a PHEIC as it spread rapidly via sexual contact across a range of countries where the virus had not been seen before. That PHEIC was declared over in May 2023 after there had been a sustained decline in global cases.

Mpox has been reported in the DRC for more than a decade, and the number of cases reported each year has increased steadily over that period. Last year, reported cases increased significantly, and already the number of cases reported so far this

year has exceeded last year's total, with more than 15 600 cases and 537 deaths.

The emergence last year and rapid spread of a new virus strain in DRC, clade 1b, which appears to be spreading mainly through sexual networks, and its detection in countries neighbouring the DRC is especially concerning, and one of the main reasons for the declaration of the PHEIC.

In the past month, over 100 laboratory-confirmed cases of clade 1b have been reported in four countries neighbouring the DRC that have not reported mpox before: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. Experts believe the true number of cases to be higher as a large proportion of clinically compatible cases have not been tested.

Several outbreaks of different clades of mpox have occurred in different countries, with different modes of transmission and different levels of risk.

The two vaccines currently in use for mpox are recommended by WHO's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization, and are also

approved by WHO-listed national regulatory authorities, as well as by individual countries including Nigeria and the DRC.

Last week, the Director-General triggered the process for Emergency Use Listing for mpox vaccines, which will accelerate vaccine access for lower-income countries which have not yet issued their own national regulatory approval. Emergency Use Listing also enables partners including Gavi and UNICEF to procure vaccines for distribution.

WHO is working with countries and vaccine manufacturers on potential vaccine donations, and coordinating with partners through the interim Medical Countermeasures Network to facilitate equitable access to vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics and other tools.

WHO anticipates an immediate funding requirement of an initial US\$ 15 million to support surveillance, preparedness and response activities. A needs assessment is being undertaken across the three levels of the Organization.

To allow for an immediate scale up, WHO has released US\$ 1.45 million from the WHO Contingency Fund for Emergencies and may need to release more in the coming days. The Organization appeals to donors to fund the full extent of needs of the mpox response.



*WHO Director General,
Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus*

Leading the Charge: Meet the Ugandan Vet Nicknamed Ms Rabies

Dr. Flavia Maria Nakanjako's Crusade Against Rabies in Uganda bearing fruit.



Dr Nakanjako at a past World Rabies Day event.

A trailblazing veterinary surgeon, Dr. Flavia Maria Nakanjako, has played a pivotal role in Uganda's rabies campaign thanks to her persistent dedication to public health. Throughout her career, she has devoted herself to protecting the health of humans and animals as the Senior Veterinary Officer at the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries, and Fisheries (MAAIF), with a focus on animal and marine diseases. In 2020, the Commissioner of Animal Health assigned Dr. Nakanjako the duty of focal person for rabies in Uganda. Since then, her journey has been characterized by innovative accomplishments and unwavering advocacy.

"There wasn't even a strategic plan in place when I was appointed the focal person for rabies," Dr. Nakanjako recalls. "It was intimidating as well as a chance to have a significant influence." Realizing how urgent the situation was, she enlisted the assistance of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) and, in 2022, led the formation of a national stakeholders' conference that drew nationally significant parties together. At this historic occasion, which was attended by high-ranking officials such as the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health, the Commissioner of Animal Health, and the Commissioner from the Ministry of Health, Uganda's Rabies Elimination Strategy by 2030 was officially validated. "Our efforts took a significant turn when that strategy was confirmed," she recalls. "It seemed like we were at last on the right track."

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There wasn't even a strategic plan in place when I was appointed the focal person for rabies



A cat is vaccinated. Due to their close quarter living with people, cats can be a major loophole for rabies transmission.



Strategic planning is only a small part of Dr. Nakanjako's impact. She has spearheaded Uganda's World Rabies Day celebrations from 2020 to date, and in that capacity, she has become extensively active in community participation, education, and advocacy.

She carefully chooses the district to host the event each year in consultation with stakeholders; it's usually a rabies hotspot. These initiatives, which were once limited to awareness campaigns, have expanded to encompass practical interventions like dog castrations, spaying, and mass vaccination under her direction.

"World Rabies Day is a vital platform to raise awareness and encourage action; it's not just an event," she stresses. She has become known as the veterinary community's "Ms. Rabies" due to her ability to unite a

wide range of stakeholders, including international partners and local governments, which has been crucial to the success of these events.

She has accomplished many noteworthy things. Uganda's Rabies Elimination Strategy was validated in 2022 after a major milestone — the organization of the national stakeholders summit. Another noteworthy accomplishment was the smooth organization of a GIZ SEEG-sponsored stakeholders forum that took place in Entebbe, Uganda, in March 2024. Strong political backing for the anti-rabies agenda was provided by the Ministry of Health and MAAIF for this meeting, which produced an action plan for the year's rabies control efforts. "A strong signal that eliminating rabies is a national priority is sent when the Ministry of Health and MAAIF are on board," according to Dr. Nakanjako.

Numerous school outreach programs, rabies education initiatives, and extensive dog population control efforts have all been successfully organized by Dr. Nakanjako as part of the World Rabies Day festivities. These occasions have promoted community involvement in rabies control initiatives in addition to increasing awareness.

She was a consultant for the training needs assessment for rabies risk communication and community engagement for Uganda by the Africa One Health University Network (AFROHUN) in Arua and Kasese. This study cleared up important misconceptions about rabies in the public, like the idea that witchcraft could cause the disease or that it only goes away when a bite wound heals.

"The revelation of people's beliefs about rabies was one of the most enlightening experiences. It made

clear to us how much more needs to be done in the field of community education and risk communication," she says.

Though Dr. Nakanjako has achieved success, she is well aware of the obstacles still in her way. She frequently talks about how funding for rabies elimination is not prioritized, which leaves gaps in data and causes districts to provide information later than expected. Some groups still believe that rabies is caused by witchcraft, while others question if the elimination of the disease by 2030 is feasible. "You think you can genuinely eliminate rabies by 2030?" is something I've heard people ask. "It's discouraging, but it also serves as a reminder of the need for us to keep moving forward," she says. Her job is complicated, as evidenced by these obstacles as well as the practical problems of vaccinating 70% of Uganda's dog population. Unfazed, Dr. Nakanjako continues to promote a more comprehensive One Health strategy that incorporates all pertinent domains, including the local community and the commercial sector.

She feels these important lessons—which she has learned through her work—are essential to the success of efforts to eliminate rabies. Her point is that African nations must scale up their national anti-rabies programs in line with the global rabies elimination strategy. To effectively engage and involve all important stakeholders, their roles must be clearly defined. "A committed group with a rabies-only emphasis is required at the national and district levels. Without it, we'll be dispersed in our efforts," she suggests. Additionally, in order to concentrate on the rabies agenda, Dr. Nakanjako enlightened us that the NRES provides for the formation of One Health task forces at both national and district levels for effective

implementation of rabies control activities. She emphasizes the value of One Health partnerships, consistent data sharing, and the publication of research results in reputable journals. Moreover, she stresses the necessity of community involvement in rabies control efforts and the crucial role that the business sector can play in funding such activities.

During the October 2023 East and Central Africa Regional Rabies Coordination Meeting in Ethiopia, organized by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), among other gatherings, Dr. Nakanjako's efforts in the fight against rabies were acknowledged. In 2023, representatives from various regions in the region deliberated on ways to fulfill this goal of rabies elimination by 2030. She has demonstrated her dedication to national as well as continental efforts to eliminate rabies by taking part in such regional activities. "Beyond merely Uganda, we have to work together across boundaries to effectively combat the regional issue of rabies," she says.

She has had a very personal career journey. Dr. Nakanjako studied veterinary medicine at Makerere University, where she graduated in 2011 after being inspired by her mother, who depended on veterinary surgeons for the well-being of her animals. Her knowledge was further expanded upon when Edinburgh University awarded her a Master's degree in Wildlife and Ecosystem Health, providing an influential foundation for her approach to community-based rabies control. A loving wife and mother of two girls and two boys, Dr. Nakanjako balances a rigorous work life with active participation in the choir at Kamwokya's Full Gospel Church, maintaining a close-knit family life. She has several significant goals for

the future. She now intends to make a greater contribution to scholarly literature, and a small animal clinic in Kampala would be the ideal fit for her long-time passion for dogs. She also hopes to write a book about her experiences in rabies control. "I wish I could do so much more." All of these things are a part of her journey: writing, practicing, and continuing the rabies fight.

The narrative of Dr. Flavia Maria Nakanjako is one of passion, tenacity, and great impact. Her work has inspired a generation of veterinary experts and altered Uganda's approach to rabies control. Undoubtedly, as Uganda gets closer to its objective of eliminating rabies by 2030, Dr. Nakanjako will remain at the vanguard, spearheading the effort with the same commitment that has characterized her career.

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A committed group with a rabies-only emphasis is required at the national and district levels. Without it, we'll be dispersed in our efforts





Rabies

What is rabies?

Rabies is a zoonotic disease that infects the nervous system. It is caused by the Rabies virus. Currently there is no cure, but it is easily preventable with vaccination.



Rabies can be transmitted to humans by animal biting, scratching or licking an open wound.

Do you know...

what the symptoms of an infected animal are?



EARLY PHASE

Symptoms last for 2-3 days, change in behaviour and habits, such as hiding in silence, irritability, dilated pupils, eating less.

EXCITED PHASE

Neurological symptoms. Excited, restless, aggression, biting everything, salivation, eating non-food objects like stones or branches. Some animals never go through this phase, but enter the paralysis phase straight after early symptoms.



PARALYSIS PHASE



Limb weakness, salivation, unable to balance, falling down and unable to get up, paralysis progresses quickly all over body, death.

Wash the wound

with running clean water and mild soap for 10 minutes



Apply a disinfectant

Dry the wound and apply a disinfectant such as betadine

Quarantine the dog

to observe symptoms for 10 days



See a doctor

for treatment and vaccination plan

Stop rabies with 5 don'ts



DON'T TEASE the animal



DON'T STEP on the animal's tail, limbs – don't startle the animal



DON'T SPLIT dog fights with bare hands



DON'T TAKE AWAY dog's food or toy when in use



DON'T TOUCH puppies who are with their mom

Symptoms of Rabies in humans



EARLY PHASE



Fever, sore throat, headache, loss of appetite, body aches and chills, nausea, vomiting, restlessness.

NEUROLOGICAL PHASE



Confusion, restlessness, difficulty swallowing, fear of water, aggression. Patients may have seizures and paralysis.

FINAL PHASE



Respiratory failure, cardiac arrest, coma, death.



World Rabies Day theme 2024 is here!

Every year, September 28th marks World Rabies Day, a global initiative aimed at raising awareness and accelerating efforts towards rabies elimination. As we gear up for World Rabies Day 2024, the theme “Breaking Rabies Boundaries” takes center stage, underscoring the urgency to transcend limitations that are hindering our fight against this deadly disease.



World Rabies Day 2024 Theme banner

The chosen theme reflects the pressing need to move beyond the status quo, where rabies elimination remains elusive for many parts of the world, causing suffering and claiming both human and animal lives. Stakeholders worldwide encounter numerous boundaries impeding tangible progress, ranging from disease siloes to gaps in cooperation and access to essential resources.

World Rabies Day 2024 Theme banner explained

Breaking Rabies Boundaries encapsulates a dual meaning, acknowledging not only the barriers within our control but also the transboundary nature of rabies itself. To achieve our goal of rabies elimination, we must break a spectrum of boundaries that currently inhibit our progress, including:

Breaking Disease Siloes: Aligning efforts with the WHO NTD Roadmap to break through boundaries between diseases and foster integrated approaches.

Lack of One Health Collaboration: Breaking the boundaries between sectors and highlighting the vital role of the One Health approach, promoting joint action across sectors to tackle rabies comprehensively.

Insufficient cooperation: Breaking boundaries hindering cooperation and collaboration among stakeholders on local, national, and international levels.

Lack of innovation: Breaking the boundaries of our current thinking and encouraging the adoption of novel tools and technologies to enhance rabies prevention and control efforts.

Small-scale Programs: Breaking the boundaries that restrict programmatic scale up and targeted rabies elimination programs so that we can achieve broader impact.

Disease Awareness: Breaking the boundaries of limited public knowledge and disease perceptions so that we can correct misconceptions, change perceptions, and fostering a broader understanding of rabies to drive community engagement.

As we rally together to break these boundaries, World Rabies Day serves as a focal point for joining forces. From mass vaccination campaigns to educational events and policy advocacy, every effort counts. Individuals, organizations, and governments worldwide are invited to participate and make their voices heard.

Join the global movement by registering your event on our online platform, and access resources to amplify your impact. Together, let's break rabies boundaries and pave the way for a world free from this preventable disease.

**Prepare to make a difference this World Rabies Day...
because when we unite, we can achieve the extraordinary.**

Article contributed by: Kerenza Vlastou (Outreach Manager)

Tips for planning a dog vaccination campaign

Awareness

Make sure the community knows when and where the campaign will take place.



Partners

Engage with local partners. Make sure that the relevant authorities have approved the campaign.



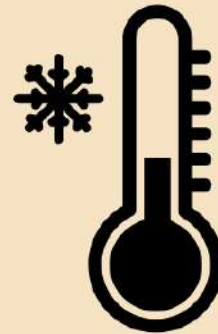
Animal Handling Equipment

Get or create equipment to make the experience better for you, your team, and the animals being vaccinated.



PrEP

All vaccinators and animal handlers must be vaccinated against rabies at least 1 month before the campaign.



Cold chain

Ensure that vaccines will be properly stored and kept cool during the campaign.



Disposal

Prepare a container to safely dispose of the needles used during the campaign.

DX Blues: A Difficult Calving



A breech presentation during calving is always an intricate occurrence requiring quick resolution.

Dr. Mwangi was no stranger to challenging veterinary cases. As a seasoned veterinarian, he had navigated numerous medical emergencies, from midnight colic surgeries to intricate orthopedic repairs. But nothing quite prepared him for the emotional and professional turmoil that awaited him on a cool March evening when his phone buzzed with an urgent call from his Uncle Macharia.

"Mwangi, I need you at the farm. It's Charo. She's having trouble calving, and I don't know what to do," Uncle Macharia's voice trembled on the other end.

Charo was a beloved cow on Uncle Macharia's farm, named after a dear friend. She was more than just livestock; she was part of the family. Dr. Mwangi felt a pang of anxiety. Family and professional obligations

Charo was a beloved cow on Uncle Macharia's farm, named after a dear friend.

were intertwining, and he knew the stakes were high.

He arrived at the farm to find his uncle pacing nervously. Charo was lying on her side, groaning in distress. Dr. Mwangi quickly assessed the situation. The calf was in a breech position—a complication that could be fatal without immediate intervention.

“Uncle Macharia, I need to act fast. This is serious,” Dr. Mwangi said, his voice steady despite the turmoil churning inside him.

For the next few hours, Dr. Mwangi worked tirelessly. He repositioned the calf, administered medication, and did everything in his power to save both Charo and her unborn calf. Sweat dripped from his brow as he fought against time and nature. Despite his best efforts, it became clear that Charo was losing strength.

As the night wore on, the inevitable happened. Charo let out a final, pained bellow and lay still. The calf, too, did not survive. Dr. Mwangi felt a crushing weight on his chest. He had failed.

Uncle Macharia’s eyes, once filled with hope, now bore into him with a mix of sorrow and unspoken accusation. The silence between them was heavy, filled with the unvoiced question: Why couldn’t you save her?

“I’m so sorry, Uncle Macharia,” Dr. Mwangi said, his voice barely a whisper.

Uncle Macharia turned away, his shoulders slumped. “I know you did your best, Mwangi. But Charo... she was special.”

The days that followed were strained. The once-warm relationship between Dr. Mwangi and his uncle was now

fraught with tension. Family gatherings became awkward, and conversations were clipped. Dr. Mwangi found himself grappling with guilt and frustration. How could he have failed so miserably? And how could he mend the rift that had formed between him and his uncle?

Reflecting on the experience, Dr. Mwangi realized the profound challenges of treating animals that belonged to family members. The emotional investment was far greater, and the potential for fallout was immense. As he navigated this difficult period, he developed a few strategies to shield himself from future fallout and to help others facing similar situations.

Establish Clear Boundaries

One of the first lessons Dr. Mwangi learned was the importance of establishing clear boundaries. When treating animals that belong to family members, it’s crucial to set expectations from the outset. Explain the risks involved, the possible outcomes, and ensure that they understand the complexity of the situation. Transparency can help mitigate unrealistic expectations and prepare everyone for all potential outcomes.

Seek a Second Opinion

When emotions are high, as they often are in family situations, seeking a second opinion can provide an additional layer of assurance. It shows that you’re committed to the best possible outcome and are willing to involve other professionals to ensure comprehensive care. This can also help diffuse tension if things don’t go as planned, as it demonstrates thoroughness and diligence.

“.....seeking a second opinion can provide an additional layer of assurance. It shows that you’re committed to the best possible outcome and are willing to involve other professionals to ensure comprehensive care.....”

Maintain Professionalism

It's essential to always maintain professionalism, even when dealing with family. This means documenting all procedures, communicating clearly and formally, and following the same protocols you would with any other client. Professionalism helps create a buffer that can protect both your emotional well-being and your professional integrity.

Offer Emotional Support

While maintaining professionalism, don't forget the importance of offering emotional support. Recognize the emotional bond your family members have with their animals and provide empathy and understanding. Sometimes, just knowing that you care deeply can help ease the pain of loss and soften the blow of a negative outcome.

Reflect and Learn

Every challenging case offers an opportunity for reflection and learning. Dr. Mwangi took time to analyze what happened with Charo, discussing it with colleagues and considering what, if anything, he could have

done differently. This not only helped him process his emotions but also improved his skills and approach for future cases.

Rebuild Relationships

Finally, Dr. Mwangi understood the need to actively work on rebuilding his relationship with Uncle Macharia. He reached out, shared his reflections, and acknowledged the pain of the loss. Over time, their relationship began to heal, built on a foundation of mutual respect and understanding.

Dr. Mwangi's experience with Charo's difficult calving was a painful reminder of the unique challenges veterinarians face when treating animals owned by family members. The emotional stakes are higher, and the potential for fallout is significant. But by establishing clear boundaries, seeking second opinions, maintaining professionalism, offering emotional support, reflecting on experiences, and working to rebuild relationships, veterinarians can navigate these difficult waters with greater resilience and grace.

In the end, Dr. Mwangi and Uncle Macharia found a new understanding, one forged in the crucible of shared

loss and the unyielding love for the animals that bring them together. Through this experience, Dr. Mwangi emerged not just as a better veterinarian, but also as a more empathetic and resilient human being.

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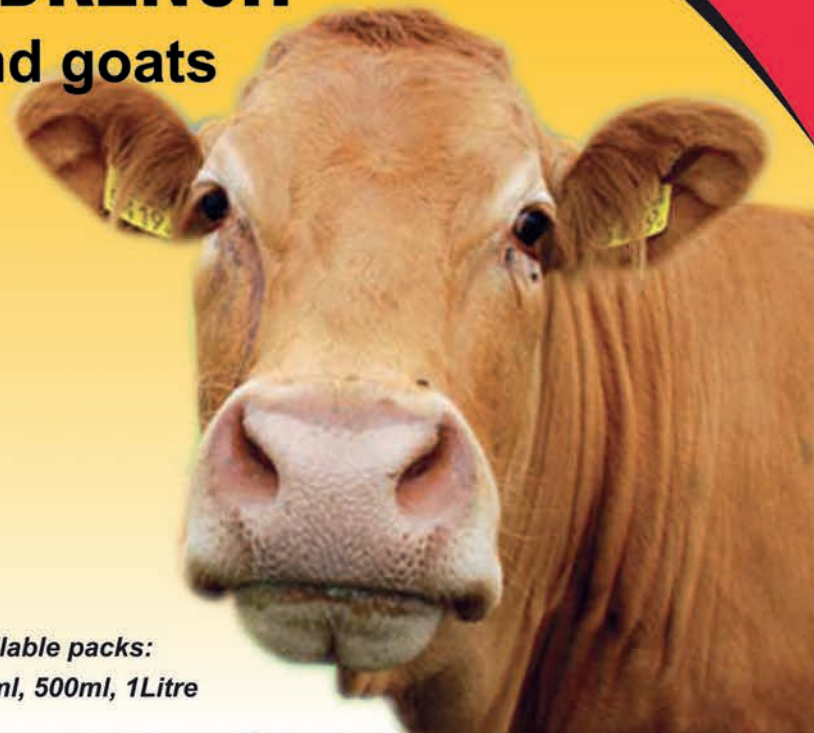
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By Dr. Isaiah Nchagwa Chacha
drnchagwa@gmail.com

A Hostile Patient: The Day I Encountered a Dog too Hot to Handle

"He looked at me with sharp eyes, roared, and barked with bared teeth. He took two steps back, then charged towards me, standing about two meters away. He pounced, aiming at my neck with a calculated athletic jump. I was shocked and horrified at the same time."

I encounter a wide variety of animals in my day-to-day practice at Mufasa Veterinary Clinic in Nairobi, Kenya. The species range from canines, felines, bovines, equines, avian, lagomorphs, reptiles, Pisces, and more.

One Friday mid-afternoon, the clinic phone rang. A masculine voice

answered from the other end. The voice was deep but terrified, clearly in need of urgent intervention.

"What seems to be the problem, Sir?" I asked with concern as I prepared for an emergency house visit. "My name is Genzi, the caretaker from Karen. Bill, our baby, is recumbent, with white foam frothing from his mouth and labored breathing. I don't know what he ate. Please hurry," Genzi urged, confirming my fears. I hurriedly assembled emergency medication and equipment and dashed out of the clinic.

Bill is a three-year-old male Belgian Malinois, trained and imported from

Dogs can be a handful. It is critical to follow best practice tips to stay safe.



Israel at six months old. I received Bill at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport when he arrived in Kenya, and I have been responsible for his health ever since. Over the years, we've developed a good friendship.

When I arrived, Bill was weak, lying flat on the ground with a sub-normal body temperature—36.3°C to be precise. His breathing was predominantly abdominal, with excessive salivation and hyperemic mucous membranes—a pathognomonic sign of poisoning.

Genzi explained that he had taken Bill for a walk earlier, along with two other dogs, Rex and Shad. As usual, he let them off-leash to run around, sniff things, and mark territory along the bushes by the roadside in the leafy, expansive Karen area of Nairobi. When it was time to gather them and return home, Bill was nowhere in sight. He was eventually spotted far from the roadside, chewing on something. When Genzi tried to see what it was, Bill hurriedly swallowed it in protest. They walked home anyway.

Moments after arriving home, Genzi realized Bill was in a comatose state, leading to his frantic phone call.

Upon my arrival, I administered first aid to address the clinical signs. Then, I rushed to the site where Bill was spotted with something in his mouth. It became apparent that someone had maliciously set out to poison stray dogs and other animals that threatened to invade a nearby poultry farm. I found pieces of bones and an acaricide container with organophosphate as the active ingredient—crucial information.

Fortunately, I had the antidote for organophosphate poisoning. I administered the appropriate dosage of atropine, and within about

ten minutes, Bill started breathing normally and returned to his usual self. But there was a problem—he didn't recognize me. What followed was completely unexpected.

Belgian Malinois dogs are often trained to be highly aggressive towards strangers within their territory, and Bill had received top-notch training. Suddenly, I was now a stranger to him, and he was ready to attack.

He looked at me with sharp eyes, roared, and barked with bared teeth. He took two steps back, then charged towards me, standing about two meters away. He pounced, aiming at my neck with a calculated athletic jump. I was shocked and horrified. "We had been good buddies for two and a half years; I had just saved him from a life-threatening condition, and now he's out to kill me?" I thought, incredulous.

I mustered all my strength and pushed him off. I escaped unscathed, but only just. Bill wasn't done; he was determined to finish what he started. Genzi yelled and scolded him to stop, and Bill ran towards him. Bill evaded Genzi's grasp and pounced again, this time with even more force and aggression.

I grabbed a leash from the ground, held it apart with both hands, and used it to protect my neck and face. I pushed him back again and nearly fell but managed to regain my stance. The caretaker momentarily grabbed Bill's left hind limb but then slipped off. I felt adrenaline surge through my bloodstream, my head swelled, and my eyes widened.

But Bill wasn't done. He jumped at me a third time. This time, I wasn't so lucky. I felt warm fluid splashing on my face, and when I looked, I saw blood



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gushing from my right hand. Bill lost his balance and fell to the ground. Genzi managed to grab him by the neck and quickly fastened a chain, restraining him as he continued to breathe fire, desperate to attack.

Finally, Genzi secured him and whisked him to his kennel, locking him up.

My hand felt numb, and the pain set in so quickly that I couldn't lift it. My upper hand was badly mauled, and blood flowed freely—the hunter had

become the hunted. First aid was necessary, and Genzi assisted under my guidance using the medication in my vet's drug kit.

Next, I rushed to a healthcare facility to treat the wound and receive Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) for rabies. I received a total of five PEP injections on days 0, 3, 7, 14, and 28 from the day of the bite. Needless to say, Bill left me with a lifetime scar that will always remind me of that fateful Friday.



When taking care of dogs, here are ten safety tips for vets:

1. Check out the dog's behaviour first - Before you approach a dog, you should always look at its body language. Dogs that growl, raise their fur, or pin their ears should be seen as dangerous if they are angry, scared, or stressed. Figure out what to do next based on this evaluation.
2. Use the right techniques for restraint - Make sure you have the right restraints on hand, like leads, muzzles, or even a soft towel wrapped around the dog, based on its size and personality. When you bind an animal properly, it is less likely to move or bite suddenly.
3. Approach calmly and with confidence. Dogs can tell when someone is hesitant or worried. Slowly and carefully walk up to the dog, and don't make direct eye contact with it because some dogs might find that aggressive.
4. Keep your personal protective equipment (PPE) in good shape - Wear the right PPE, like gloves, a protective gown, and sometimes safety masks, especially when you think a dog might be sick or acting aggressively.
5. Don't make sudden movements. Dogs can get scared and start to defend themselves when they see sudden movements. To keep things from getting worse, move slowly and talk in a relaxing way.
6. Use muzzles if needed—A muzzle can keep dogs from biting when they are scared, angry, or in pain. But make sure the dog can still breathe well, and never leave a dog with a collar alone.
7. Make sure you have an assistant with you - If you need to take care of a big or unstable dog, get help from a trained person. This person can help you hold the dog safely or deal with other things that might distract you while you do treatments or checks.
8. Don't let anything distract you - Make sure the area is quiet and stay away from loud noises, other animals, and people you don't know. A calm setting helps the dog stay calm and lessens the chance that it will act out.
9. Make sure you get your shots on time - Make sure your rabies and tetanus shots are up to date, especially if you often deal with lost or unknown dogs whose shots you can't be sure of.
10. Be aware of when to use chemical restraints - Sometimes, dogs are too scared or angry to be properly handled with their bodies restrained. Sedation may be needed to keep both the animal and the people working with it safe.

By Dr. Othieno Joseph

My Communication

Journey: The Ups and Downs



Dr Othieno Joseph in a reflective pose.

My two decades in communication have been a rollercoaster. What started as a mere stress reliever from the tough veterinary medicine studies has evolved into my daily duty and main source of income. Looking back, I have no regrets—only gratitude to God for guiding me through a path traveled by few vets,

one with challenges but also many opportunities waiting at the end.

My journey began as a writer for the *Vet. Digest*, the magazine managed by the Veterinary Studies Association, which served as an income-generating activity. Memorable bylines like “Death on a Surgical Table” and “The Old Woman with a Lone Sick Cow” still resonate with me. During this period, the establishment of a computer lab at the 8.4.4 Building fueled my passion for writing.

I began writing stories, mostly on veterinary topics, and would pin them on the noticeboard, then hide nearby to observe the crowds that gathered to read. It was then that I realized I had a talent for writing. Although I initially wrote to aid in recalling the heavy medical jargon we were bombarded with—pharmacology, toxicology, medicine, theriogenology, and the foundational subjects of anatomy, biochemistry, physiology, pathology, and microbiology—this unconventional method proved effective. I credit this storytelling skill to my grandmother, Okolwe, who shared carefully articulated stories that I remember vividly to this day.

One day, during a surgery practical class, a lecturer—now a professor—asked my group what we planned to do after the five-year program. Everyone except me mentioned something related to veterinary practice. When I said I wanted to become a vet journalist, the group ridiculed me, laughing it off. But their reaction only strengthened my resolve to pursue this dream, if only to prove them wrong.

After the five years, we gathered in a city hotel, sponsored by pharmaceutical companies that saw future market opportunities in us or were simply engaging in corporate social responsibility. Our class wasn't large, so I volunteered to do some trivia, describing characters for the class to identify. It was during this event that Dr. Joseph Mugachia, now a columnist in a local daily, pulled me aside.

"Are you planning to do something in communication?" he inquired.

"I would love to pursue a master's in Veterinary Anatomy or Pharmacology," I replied, hoping the university might grant me a scholarship.

"Why those subjects?" he asked in a soft, fatherly tone.

"I loved them and scored credits in both," I responded.

"That's precisely why you shouldn't," he replied, sarcastically. "Life is about value addition. From what I've heard, you'd do better in communication.

Why study something you've already mastered? Do you know how many are already lining up for those with PhDs?"

That conversation marked a pivotal moment in my career. Dr. Mugachia, who was then the national Kenya Veterinary Association Chairman, offered me a short-term job to assist with, among other things, developing the maiden KVA website. This engagement deepened my love for

communications.

Thanks to the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi Fund, I joined the School of Journalism at the University of Nairobi. My classmates viewed my transition as absurd, and I was often ridiculed whenever I mentioned my veterinary background. But every day was a learning opportunity for me. Where veterinary medicine was objective, here they used theories and subjectivity. I was fortunate to see synergies between social arts and sciences that no one else in the class could.

I'll never forget Magayu Magayu's class on technical writing, where my story was featured as the best. His teaching, especially on science communication, had a cathartic effect on me and deepened my love for the field. Magayu, a legend in his own right, having written *We Are Going Home* in *The Winner and Other Stories*, inspired me profoundly.

After completing my coursework, I quickly embarked on my project, focusing on Avian Influenza Communication. At the time, Kenya and the region were facing a zoonotic disease threat, and communication efforts were heightened. My collection of veterinary drugs and paraphernalia, which we had accumulated in preparation for ambulatory work, lay neglected.

One Saturday, I took stock and was surprised to find many had expired. I had lost my small client base as I gained new knowledge, but communication paid better. It was during President Kibaki's regime, the economy was good, newspapers paid well, and writers like me thrived—especially those specializing in science topics like biofuels, climate change, and diseases.

Then, a windfall came my way—I was hired as a Communication Consultant by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). My role involved developing an avian influenza communication strategy and training vets in communication.

As I approach the word limit assigned to me, I'll conclude by saying that I have soared beyond the horizons in the communication realm. I've worked with the World Organization for Animal Health, UNICEF, AU-IBAR, the University of Nairobi, local dailies, and many others. I currently serve as the Head of the Communication Division at FAO, a position that represents the culmination of my journey but also one that still offers room for further exploration.

To the young vets out there, I encourage you to join me in this rich specialization. The path may be unconventional, but it is one filled with rewarding opportunities.

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By Dr. Agnes Maina

A slithery case

It was a lazy Thursday afternoon, and the sun had chosen this very day to blaze. I was sitting in front of my desktop computer in the clinic, staring unseeingly at the screen. A man in jungle green overall and black gumboots strode in and broke my stare.

He greeted me with a gummy smile and said, "Habari daktari." "Niko salama. How may I be of assistance to you?" I responded gleefully. At least the afternoon was beginning to look promising. "Chiloba is my name, and I am from the World Greens Herpetology Centre in Nairobi. We have a sick animal." He explained. "Herpetology... reptiles.. hmmm.."

My mind was racing fast. "Sick animal.. Lizard? Tortoise? Snake? Or perhaps a croc..wow.." My mind was now on overdrive. "Yes, exactly as I was saying," Chiloba continued. "We have a particularly queasy snake, a puff adder. Can you help?" "Of course. We are a clinic for all animals, wonderful and small." I responded, perhaps a bit unsure of that very statement. "What's the matter with the snake?" I enquired with utmost curiosity. "He hasn't been eating well for the past few days. He is definitely not in hibernation. We weighed him today, and he has certainly lost some grams." Chiloba explained. "Yes, that loss of appetite, coupled with anorexia, is never a good sign." I stated that as I was racking my mind over tentative diagnoses. "Can



A puffadder in its natural habitat.

you come with me? I believe it would be beneficial if you took a closer look at Puff Addy, as we call him. I collected my trade tools and called my loyal assistant Mutuma to join us as we set out for World Greens.

The drive to the herpetology centre took us all of 15 minutes. In the middle of a forested patch, the World Greens Herpetology Centre stood in a massive, self-imposing building. The building was crescent-shaped and had five stories. The building boasted a smooth exterior finish, complemented by a forestscape painting that engulfed the entire structure. It was a definite work of art. One giant mural of a building. Mutuma and I could not help but stare in pure amazement; we were dumbfounded. "Has this place always been here?" I asked after I found my voice. "Yep, for about 13 years." Chiloba quipped nonchalantly. "I must say I am impressed, to say the least. But back to business; where is Puff Addy?" I stated.

Chiloba led us into the building, into the elevator, and out onto the third floor. "The snake section is on this floor, and Puff is right here," he said as he opened a door into a room with several large glass cases. "That's Puff." Pointing to a still yellow-creamy snake. "Ok," I said, my mind racing with ideas about how we should proceed with the snake's examination.

Fortunately, the centre had trained snake handlers. Chiloba called the two people assigned to the snake section. They got Puff out of the glass case and gently placed him on the stainless steel examination table. "Mutuma, bring out a pair of gloves and a torch for me, will you?" I instructed. With one handler holding the distal part of the snake and the other holding the head with the mouth open, I was able to visualise the interior aspect of the mouth. "I see them, do you?" I asked Chiloba,

pointing to several ulcerative lesions on the floor and roof of the mouth.

"I believe that is the cause of the anorexia—the loss in appetite, that is," I explained. "We will clean them daily for five days with a solution of diluted betadine." We will also administer daily antibiotic injections and provide supportive therapy in the form of fluids, such as a drip if necessary.

Mutuma, who was listening to my explanation, swung into action and brought out the therapeutic items I had mentioned. I began by cleaning the mouth with cotton wool wrapped around mosquito forceps, then dipped in the dilute betadine solution. I repeated this several times. In the middle third of the snake's abdominal cavity, I administered the antibiotic and part of the 500-ml drip. "We've finished with him for today. We shall return tomorrow," I notified Chiloba and the team.

The snake handlers carefully picked up Puff and returned him to his glassy abode. They then placed the heavy lid onto the glass case, securing the snake inside. The snake recoiled slowly, as if summoning all of his energy. "At least he is moving now." Chiloba expressed excitement. "That's a definite good sign." "We hope for the best," I replied, removing my gloves in preparation for the journey back.

Mutuma packed our work items in a brown leather bag. Chiloba then returned us to the clinic in a rickety World Greens-branded jalopy. It was a complete turnaround in just five days of daily treatment. Puff had fully regained his appetite and began to gain weight.

"Thank you, Daktari. Puff is certainly back to himself," Chiloba thanked us gleefully on our last day of Puff's

treatment. "We weighed him today, and there has been an addition of some grams to his kilos since last week. We couldn't be happier."

"All in a day's work, all in a day's work," I replied, looking at Puff with great contentment. I was satisfied with his recovery. Our efforts had not been in vain. Mutuma collected our now-famous brown leather bag, and we walked out of the snake section, accompanied by Chiloba. He saw us heading to the exit of World Greens. "It was great working with you," he said, tightly grasping my hand in a handshake. "You are welcome to visit the facility anytime."

"Thank you for the invitation; we shall definitely visit. We shall be on our way now; good-bye," I responded by releasing my hand from its tight grip. He bid us farewell as we walked to our clinic van. We gave World Greens a final look and drove off to the clinic, hoping for yet another unique, mind-boggling case.





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My Journey as the Kenya Veterinary Association Chairman: Reflections and Lessons

The Kenya Veterinary Association (KVA) is a professional membership organization that brings together veterinary surgeons from both the public and private sectors in Kenya. Its mission is to promote socio-economic development, ensure member welfare, and safeguard the health and welfare of animals. Since its establishment in 1966, KVA has seen notable leaders whose contributions have transformed the organization into what it is today. Every two years, elections are held for the National Executive Committee (NEC), with the incumbent Chairman having the opportunity to serve two terms if re-elected.

My decision to contest for KVA chairmanship in 2020 stemmed from a personal conviction driven by the pressing issues the KVA leadership had failed to address. For a decade, I was vocal about governance challenges within the veterinary profession. Additionally, the Association was losing trust with both partners and members. Dissatisfaction with the leadership was widespread, with clear divisions within the leadership team. These factors inspired me to run for the chairmanship position.



A media engagement session.



Flagging off the 2021 Malindi World Rabies Day.

At the time of my campaign and the subsequent elections, the COVID-19 pandemic was affecting the globe. The April elections, which are typically held through physical meetings, had to be postponed. In response to government directives on meetings, KVA was among the organizations that successfully adapted by holding online annual general meetings and elections. This change worked in my favor, as it allowed equal opportunity for all Association members to participate in voting.

While my candidacy did raise concerns from the Kenya Veterinary Board (KVB), the Association's leadership carefully reviewed the situation and ultimately allowed me to run. I assumed leadership of the Association for the next one and a half years, joined by an energetic and focused team.

Although I faced challenges related to my ability to sit on the KVB board due to ongoing proceedings, I remained focused on building consensus and working towards common objectives. Despite the circumstances, I prioritized restoring partner trust, increasing membership, and raising funds to support the Association's activities. We achieved this through active partner engagement, cost-cutting measures, offering members relevant programs, and waiving membership arrears where necessary.

Our first physical activity in 2021 was held in Malindi at Sandies Tropical Paradise, a scientific conference, and World Rabies Day celebration. Throughout my term, we conducted numerous online executive committee meetings and limited physical meetings, which turned out to be cost-saving measures courtesy of the pandemic.

Overcoming Challenges and Building on Success

In April 2022, we held a scientific conference, a World Veterinary Day celebration, an annual general meeting, and elections in Naivasha. I offered my candidacy for the Chairman position once again. The campaigns were just as aggressive as the previous ones.

Although I won the election, my opponent exercised his right to appeal the outcome. Given that a good number of NEC members shared my opponent's views, I initially faced challenges regarding legitimacy. This led to a second term that lacked the initial momentum and camaraderie often seen in newly elected offices, and building team spirit proved difficult. Despite genuine efforts to promote unity, there was some loss in unity of purpose, which affected the intended continuity from the previous team. However, I eventually won the appeal, and while the path was not without obstacles, it was clear that much effort would be needed to fulfill even a portion of



Chairing a surgery?: Two former KVA Chairmen, Dr Sam Kahariri and Dr Nicholas Muyale collaborate on a surgery.

the campaign promises.

My leadership journey has been one of self-reflection, through which I've realized strengths that contributed to remarkable successes over my two terms. These accomplishments were largely a result of focused leadership despite the disruptions we faced. While many organizations struggled during the COVID-19 pandemic, KVA managed to perform exceptionally well. Financial performance improved, membership grew, and partnerships were revitalized. Even during my second term, where team alignment was a challenge, KVA's progress in finances, membership, and partnerships continued on an upward trajectory.

Key Reflections: Personal Growth

Leadership is a journey of self-discovery and personal growth. It tests your personality and demands improvement in how you conduct yourself. Dr. Sasha Heinz, in her podcast *'How to Live'*, emphasizes that one can learn from others

but must fully own their principles for living. She states that adulthood begins "the moment you start living from your self-defined principles, values, beliefs, and identity." These statements resonate with my leadership journey. By the time I contested for national leadership, I had spent a decade engaging veterinary surgeons on critical issues facing the profession. I had become a household name in veterinary circles, known for advocating what was right and good for the profession. Although I may have been perceived as abrasive and unreasonable at times, I remained steadfast in my principles and values..

These moments marked the beginning of my 'professional adulthood,' where I embraced clear principles, values, beliefs, and identity, necessitating a change in how I conducted myself as a leader.

Leadership Strengths

Tom Rath, in his book *StrengthsFinder 2.0*, discusses executing, influencing, relationship building, and strategic thinking as the four domains of leadership strengths. As a leader, you

are expected to execute tasks and achieve goals.

At the time I assumed office, KVA faced three major challenges: a weak financial base, low membership, and trust issues with partners. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these issues by making it impossible to hold in-person activities, which were a significant revenue stream. I was tasked with keeping the Association afloat despite these challenges. We shifted all meetings online, which turned out to be a cost-cutting measure. When the government relaxed meeting requirements in 2021, we organized a physical scientific conference and WRD celebration in Malindi. The event was a success, as it provided an opportunity for members to reconnect after months of confinement due to pandemic restrictions.

To effectively lead, a chairman must inspire and motivate others. I focused on key result areas as priorities, actively participating in resource mobilization by developing concept notes and contacting partners. Despite delegating responsibilities,

I took on some tasks myself, which inspired the team and helped us meet our targets.

During my tenure, I cultivated strong partnerships that consistently supported KVA's financial needs. Building trust with partners is essential for successful leadership. Connecting with members, maintaining constant communication, and responding promptly are crucial in fostering a positive and inclusive environment. Most of the decisions made during my tenure were consultative and team-driven, ensuring that the successes and failures were shared.

Strategic Thinking

A leader must be visionary, innovative, and skilled at anticipating and adapting to change. As part of my strategic leadership activities, I organized annual planning meetings with the team, supported by Brooke East Africa. These meetings allowed us to plan upcoming activities and strategize on achieving our goals. For example, the WRD activity in Kitui in 2022 did not attract many partnerships, resulting in a financial loss. Based on this experience, we partnered with the Nairobi branch for the 2023 WRD activity, which proved to be a better strategy. While some members questioned why the NEC was not directly executing the WRD, the leadership team agreed that it was best to delegate certain activities to specialized branches, with NEC providing support.

Key Takeaways

Collaboration Matters

Working collaboratively with fellow veterinarians, government agencies, and NGOs is essential for addressing complex challenges, sharing knowledge, and strengthening the veterinary community. Throughout my leadership, it became evident

that division among leaders hinders progress. To address this, we formed a stakeholder engagement forum to foster unity within the profession and address issues related to the veterinary profession. Although the forum was still in its formative stages, there was goodwill among stakeholders to foster unity.

Continuous Learning

Staying updated on advancements in veterinary medicine is crucial. Regular training, conferences, and networking opportunities contribute to professional growth and better service delivery. KVA is structured to ensure members continually advance their knowledge through CPD activities offered by the branches. I encourage members to plan and budget for scientific conferences, as they provide opportunities for learning and networking.

Advocacy and Animal Welfare

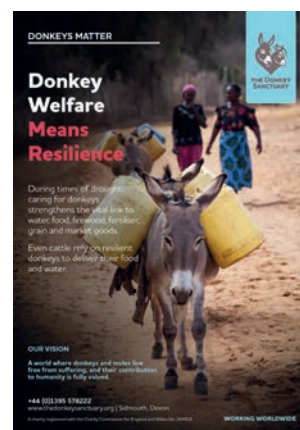
As veterinarians, we are advocates for animals, promoting their welfare, ethical treatment, and responsible ownership. The veterinary profession operates under a social license, where society expects us to act in the best interests of people, animals, and the environment. To remain relevant, we must embrace sustainable practices, including animal welfare and responsible antimicrobial use. During my tenure, I introduced spay and neuter programs as part of WRD and WVD celebrations to reduce the dog population and control rabies. Besides surgeries, other field activities included media engagements and community outreach.

Conclusion

My journey as the KVA Chairman has been both rewarding and enlightening. It reaffirms the

importance of collaboration, continuous learning, and unwavering commitment to our profession. For those aspiring to leadership positions, I encourage you to hone your strengths in execution, influence, relationship building, and strategic thinking. Lead with authenticity and purpose, stay true to your values, and set a clear vision for the future. Serving as the KVA Chairman allowed me to engage in policy discussions, collaborate with stakeholders, and champion the interests of our members. Leadership within the KVA provided a platform to influence positive change and inspire others to take action.

While leading a professional association comes with challenges, these challenges also foster personal growth and strengthen leadership skills. Through KVA initiatives, we enhanced veterinary education, promoted animal welfare, and advocated for public health. As we move forward, let us continue to uphold the highest standards and contribute to a healthier, more compassionate world for animals and humans alike. Our collective efforts will shape the future of veterinary practice in Kenya.



Larry, the Downing Street cat, is the power behind the crown

In the halls of power, where the smell of newly made tea mixes with the thick air of political manoeuvring, a powerful being has slowly but surely taken over. It doesn't matter that he's not a peer of the realm or an elected figure. Larry holds significant power at No. 10 Downing Street. He is the Cabinet Office's Chief Mouser.

Larry's tenure began in 2011 when he was recruited from Battersea Dogs & Cats Home to address a rat problem. The political elite didn't know he was coming, but they were about to meet a cat power with enough charm, intelligence, and strategic sleep to outlive many prime ministers. Larry has seen Cameron, May, Johnson, and Sunak come and go, and he has often thought less of them. He is now checking out Sir Keir Starmer.

A Chief Mouser's Life

Larry kicks off his day by stretching and yawning so hard that it sounds like one of the hottest political debates ever. You don't have to rush when you're in charge. Larry is calm and knows where to find the best light, so even when everyone else is busy, he is still in charge. Larry looks out over his territory from his perch, which could be a window sill or the top of what looks like a stack of papers. He is confident in himself, like

a king who knows his country can't run without him.

He often cares more about keeping the people who work for him on their toes than his official job, which is to keep the mice away. Being in the same room as Larry can alter the course of any conversation, especially one about rustling a box of sweets. Every significant decision in Downing Street is believed to require Larry's silent endorsement (or, more precisely, his tail-flicking gesture of disapproval).

Being adept at diplomacy

Larry is more than just a house cat; he's a politician. It is well known that he has met many important people. He reportedly averted an international crisis by snubbing an ambassador from another country. Some say that his spot-on purrs have cooled down even the most tense heads of state. When you have Larry, you don't need to be polite.

It may look like Larry is a king, but he and Palmerston, the Foreign Office cat, have been known to fight over territory. Even though they sometimes have pretty intense fights, Larry has always come out on top, both literally and figuratively. The prime minister's office is his, after all, and he won't let anyone else in—well, maybe the odd



Larry takes a vantage spot in front of No 10 Downing Street.

mouse that sneaks around.

The Power They Can't See

People may think Larry is charming because he is a quiet figure in the halls of power, but the savvy know how important he really is. Several prime ministers have reportedly sought Larry's assistance during challenging times. I don't see a reason not to. Larry's unwavering gaze can pierce through the chaos and uncover the essence of the issue. If you hold a tuna can, he will listen well. However, Larry's greatest contributions may have come from his ability to

maintain stability during uncertain political times. Larry always keeps things real by focussing on what's important: food, warmth, and the occasional game of mouse. This is true even when prime ministers change the government. He is so good at managing the dangerous waters of British politics—all while wearing a perfectly clean coat—that he is still staying at Number 10.

Effects of Larry

When Larry goes around Downing Street with his tail moving, he shows that he is more than just a cat. As

a constant in a world that is always changing, he stands for dependability and security. Larry is really in charge of Downing Street and keeps the customs alive, even though he lets normal people steal the show every once in a while.

Please remember that Larry is the one who makes all the important choices the next time you see a picture of the prime minister outside of Number 10. Even though officials get all the attention, a country's real boss is a cat, whose sleep, purr, and snide look are all important parts of its job.



The Secret Language of Cows: How They Communicate with People



Cows form a communicative relationship with their owners.

For thousands of years, cows have been an important part of human life. They are more than animals in Kenya—they are a source of income, a symbol of wealth, and a cultural symbol. But the connection between people and cows is more than just useful. Animal behaviour and veterinary science research has shown that cows have a complex way of communicating. This is becoming more and more recognised as an important way to improve animal care and management.

How Moo Talks

The sound a cow makes when it “moos” is not simple. Studies described in “Animal Communication Networks” by P.K. McGregor (2005) show that cows use different sounds to show different feelings and needs. The sound, length, and frequency of their calls can show a lot of different emotions, from food to fear to happiness. The result of this study supports the idea that cows’ sounds are special and stay that way over time, just like human voices. “The Social

Lives of Animals” by Ashley Ward and Mike Webster (2016) shows how this helps them keep their individual identities within their groups.

More than just body language

Cows communicate not only with their voices, but also with their bodies. For instance, the placement of a cow’s ears can indicate its level of interest, attention, upset, or discomfort. “Understanding Animal Welfare: The Science in its Cultural Context” by D.J. Fraser talks about how important these nonverbal cues are for understanding and meeting the animals’ needs. Cows also perform cleaning behaviors, such as licking each other, to strengthen their social bonds within the group. Physical touch is an important part of building trust between cows and the people who work with them.

What Expressions on the Face Mean

Cows exhibit certain signs that can provide insight into their mood and overall health. For example, a cow that is calm usually has soft, almost sleepy eyes, while a cow that is upset might have wide eyes and flared nostrils. To figure out how they’re doing, you need to be able to read these small changes. A breakthrough study by Weary and Fraser (2009), called “Assessing Animal Welfare with Behavioural Indicators,” used facial recognition technology to look at these emotions and found that cows have a “pain face” where the muscles around their eyes and mouth are tense. This discovery has changed the way veterinarians work by allowing them to make more accurate decisions and provide better care.

People and cows interact

People and cows have a very close relationship in Kenya that goes back a long time. Some groups, like the Maasai, have formed a special bond with their animals and treat them like family. They use a mix of voice orders, whistles, and even songs to guide and calm their cattle, demonstrating that they have a connection to these animals. “Pastoralists and Cattle Keepers in East Africa: A Comparative Study” by K. Homewood (1990) has a lot of information about these cultural practices. It talks about how well Maasai farmers know their cattle and what they need.

Modern technology and talking to cows

As technology advances, we have better ways to understand and improve cow communication. “Precision Livestock Farming: Applications, Challenges, and Opportunities” by Berckmans explains how wearable sensors can track a cow’s vital signs, activity levels, and even sounds it makes. This information enables early

identification of sick or stressed individuals, enabling immediate assistance. Projects like the Smart Cow program in Kenya are utilizing these technologies to enhance dairy farming and establish a more comprehensive approach to animal care.

How to get along with cows in real life

In the real world, farmers can use what they learn about cow communication. Based on what we know from different studies, here are some tips:

1. Watch and listen: Pay attention to sounds and body language as early warning signs of health problems.
2. Gain their trust: Gentle handling, regular grooming, and adherence to a schedule all contribute to reducing stress and enhancing fellowship.
3. Use vocal orders: Giving cows consistent vocal commands helps them connect certain sounds with actions or events.
4. Use technology: Wearable tech or tracking systems can provide managers with useful information for better decision-making.
5. Learn: Workshops, seminars, and online tools can help you stay up to date on the latest studies in cow communication and animal care.

In conclusion

Cows are more than just silent recipients of care; they are also involved members of a complex network of communication. We can connect more deeply with these amazing animals if we understand their sounds, body language, and facial emotions. According to the study, when we pay attention to what our cows say, we improve both their lives and our own. Being aware of this can help farmers in Africa, where cows are essential to many cultures, use more efficient and kind methods of farming.

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Kenyan President Dr William Ruto (L) and Former Prime Minister Rt Hon Raila Odinga (R) join Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni on his farm, in an image evoking the mystique of the African Kings or Chiefs of yore watching over their prized cattle. (Source: <https://www.the-star.co.ke/in-pictures/2024-02-26-photos-ruto-museveni-and-raila-hold-talks-in-uganda/>)

The Golden Horns: President Museveni's Treasure in Ankole Cattle

President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda is well-known not just for political career but also for his enthusiasm for cattle rearing, especially for his treasured Ankole cows. This devotion has earned him a tremendous amount of respect. In particular, among the Banyankole people of Uganda, these cattle are not only ordinary animals; rather, they represent a sign of cultural legacy, riches, and rank.

Long, thick horns that can reach up to six feet in length are one of the distinguishing characteristics of Ankole cattle, which are noted for their magnificent look. These animals, can adapt to a variety of challenging environments. President Museveni himself has highlighted the resilience of these cattle, demonstrating their ability to thrive even in arid conditions. He previously commented on social media

that his Ankole cows are able to thrive in such settings, despite the fact that exotic breeds could have a difficult time surviving in such situations. This exemplifies the toughness and flexibility of the Ankole breed.

The Ankole also value the quality of the meat and milk these cows produce. Ankole cattle's distinctive yellow fat, low in cholesterol compared to other breeds' white fat, contributes significantly to their production of meat considered among the safest in the world. Because of this, Ankole beef has become popular not just in Uganda but also in other countries, notably Kenya. An additional factor that contributes to the breed's value is the richness and creaminess of the milk produced by these cows.

The economic potential of Ankole cattle has been a topic that President Museveni has discussed on several occasions. On one occasion, he recounted his astonishment upon realizing he was “sitting on gold” with his herd of Ankole cows. For example, he pointed to the fact that he sold 43 Ankole cows to South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa, who then went on to sell a bull to fellow South African, Dr Patrick Motsepe. Dr. Motsepe is the Chairman of the Confederation of African Football (CAF), a post he has held since March 2021. He is a wealthy and well-known businessman in Africa, has a lot of power in both the business and sports worlds.

The cultural and economic significance of Ankole cattle extends beyond the practicality of their use in agriculture. A significant number of East African communities consider these cows to be status symbols and employ them extensively in ceremonial activities across the region. The social prestige that comes with having Ankole cattle is enormous.

Ankole cattle are not only significant in terms of their cultural and economic significance, but they also play a significant role in President Museveni’s emotional and political identity. His engagement in cattle ranching is not only a pastime for him; rather, it is a vital component of his life that he often discusses with other influential people. In a recent gathering that took place at President Museveni’s farm in Kisozi, which is situated in the Buzaaya

region of Uganda’s Kamuli District, he invited Kenya’s President William Ruto and former prime minister Raila Odinga. The three leaders participated in herding Museveni’s Ankole cows. This not only served as a symbol of their friendship, but it also highlighted the importance of agriculture and animals in the area.

President Museveni’s involvement in cattle ranching extends beyond the act of growing and selling cows by themselves. President Museveni devotes a significant amount of his time and energy to the protection and advancement of the Ankole breed. In a world where agricultural techniques are rapidly changing and many indigenous breeds are in danger of extinction, Museveni’s attempts to preserve and promote Ankole cattle are necessary for the preservation of cultural heritage.

In conclusion, President Yoweri Museveni’s connection with his Ankole cattle is a complex one that encompasses several aspects, including the preservation of cultural traditions, the pursuit of economic opportunities, and the pursuit of personal passion. The success that he has had as a cow farmer serves as an example to many people in the area, and his efforts to promote the Ankole breed highlight the significance of livestock in East Africa’s culture and economy. President Museveni has shown, through his efforts, that engaging in cattle rearing, particularly with indigenous breeds like the Ankole, can be a pursuit that is both financially rewarding and culturally gratifying.



Feeding time for the majestic Ankole cows.

Union of Veterinary Practitioners, Kenya

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Who are we: The Union of Veterinary Practitioners, Kenya (UVPK) is a duly registered trade union No. TU/181 under the Labour Relations Act, 2007 to legally represent and champion the labour interests of qualified and registered **Veterinary Surgeons** and **Veterinary Para professionals** drawn from the public and the private sector.

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The Great Diaphragm Debate

In a prestigious veterinary school somewhere in Eastern Africa, where the smell of formaldehyde mixes with that of the cafeteria's mystery meat, stories are made not just out of intellectual brilliance but also out of the complete and utter foolishness of human nature. This story takes place in the anatomy lab, where two veterinary education heavy hitters got into an oddly heated argument over a seemingly innocuous question: does a chicken have a diaphragm?

Professor Chris, a rock in the field of avian anatomy, steps forward, his voice belying anything but his immense expertise. Professor Titus, whose cynicism was as keen as his knife, stood opposite. The students were secretly hoping for some excitement to liven up their otherwise dull Monday as the stage was set and the challenge was thrown.

At first, it was rather harmless. Professor Chris made the following statement during a regular class: "And of course, the chicken's diaphragm plays a crucial role in respiration." At the far end of the room, a hand shot up. Coming straight from his own class, Professor Titus was all set to stir things up.



Chickens do not possess a diaphragm. Instead they rely on a system of air sacs and lungs for respiration.

Chris, I'm sorry, but I think you're wrong. "Chickens don't have a diaphragm," he remarked, his tone betraying the disdain that can only be produced by years of academic rivalry.

The entire lecture hall resounded with gasps. May it be so? Had the ornithology prophet Professor Chris erred? The air was thick with tension.

Chris, who never backs down, straightened his back. "You had to be kidding, Titus. Obviously, a diaphragm is present in chickens. Without air, how can they survive?"

The discussion swiftly became heated, with people hurling insulting Latin phrases and anatomical diagrams at each other. They were finally at a standstill. The only way to resolve this was to bring in a chicken and dissect it to settle the matter.

A group of students and teachers quickly amassed, creating an impromptu arena, and a perplexed bird was quickly acquired. The chicken, oblivious to the scholarly whirlwind it had stumbled into, was soon and compassionately prepared for dissection. Professor Chris cautiously made the initial incision with a scalpel, his gaze nervously shifting to his adversary.

The only sounds in the room were the infrequent coughs and the subtle buzz of the fluorescent lights. After several layers of skin, feathers, and muscle were peeled back, the

time had come for the truth to be revealed. With eager expectation in his eyes, Professor Titus leaned in.

"Well, Chris, show us the diaphragm," he continued, a proud smile growing across his face.

In an effort to catch a glimpse of the enigmatic structure, the pupils craned their necks. Still, not a single thing. Missing diaphragm. Professor Chris's certainty was mocked by a mound of organs and tissues.

Time seems to stand still for an instant. Suddenly, Professor Chris turned around and swung his fists at Professor Titus, threatening to protect his honour with violence rather than evidence. Students and teachers alike were in a state of panic as they rushed to separate the two professors. After what felt like an eternity, calmer heads won out.

With the crowds thinned out and the dust finally settled, Professor Titus glanced over at his students and grinned. "Always make sure you have your facts correct, folks. Or else you could wind up explaining to us that a chicken's diaphragm is an anatomical feature.

Veterinary school folklore now includes the great diaphragm dispute as an example that even the most learned among us are fallible and that life's most surprising experiences can teach us the most.

(Editor's Note: The events described in Vet Confidential are fictionalised and any resemblance to actual events is coincidental.)

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Dog Breeding: A Survey of a Growing Business in East Africa

East Africa is quickly becoming a lucrative location for dog breeding, especially in Kenya, where the need for guard dogs and pets has grown a lot. People are becoming more interested in owning dogs because more people are moving to cities, the middle class is growing, and people are learning more about modern ways of life. But this growth comes with big problems when it comes to rules, ethics, and the long-term health of the market.

Dog Breeding in Kenya

Kenya's dog breeding business has grown by leaps and bounds, and common breeds include German Shepherds, Rottweilers, and Golden Retrievers. In Kenya, the market is shaped by the high demand for well-bred dogs, which is driven by a growing middle class that wants to buy pets as both pets and guard dogs. Kenyan small-scale breeders who sell about 60 puppies a year can make a turnover of about KSh 1.8 million (\$12,000.00), assuming that each dog sells for about KSh 30,000 (\$200.00). However, the costs of breeding, like food, housing, and medical care, can take up almost half of this income, leaving a net profit of about KSh 900,000 (\$6,000) a year.

Even though the field is profitable, it is very difficult to work

in because the government doesn't keep an eye on it. In Kenya's dog breeding business, the government doesn't get involved as much as it does in more controlled areas like Europe or the US. K.M. Kaberia observed in *The Status of Animal Welfare in Kenya*, that the lack of strict rules has led to problems like overbreeding and inbreeding, which are bad for the dogs' health and welfare (Kaberia, 2015). This shows that the business needs stronger rules to make sure it stays sustainable and follows ethical standards.

Breeding dogs in Uganda

Kenya's dog breeding business is similar to Uganda's, and more people are getting dogs in cities like Kampala. Boerboels, German Shepherds, and other native breeds that do well in Uganda's temperature are popular choices. But the problems in Uganda are the same as those in Kenya: there aren't enough rules, there aren't enough medical services, and people don't know much about how to breed animals in a scientific way. The informal nature of the breeding business makes these problems worse, according to the *Uganda Animal Welfare Report 2020* (Uganda Society for the Protection of Animals, 2020). This makes it hard to implement standards. Still, there is a lot of room for growth, especially since more Ugandans are willing to spend

money on well-bred dogs that meet strict health and moral standards.

A look at Tanzania

The business of breeding dogs is still very new in Tanzania, but it is slowly taking off, especially in places like Dar es Salaam. People want dogs like the Boerboel, Rottweilers, and the Rhodesian Ridgeback for both protection and company. There are problems like those in Kenya and Uganda because there aren't any written rules. However, the breeding business might be more profitable in Tanzania because of the lower cost of living and medical care there. *'Animal Welfare and Dog Breeding in Tanzania'* (Mtambo et al., 2017) noted that Tanzania's dog breeding industry has a lot of room to grow, especially as the market for healthy, well-bred dogs grows.

Dog breeding in Rwanda

Rwanda is becoming a bigger place to breed dogs, especially in Kigali, where people want types like the Labrador Retriever and Belgian Malinois more and more.

The Rwandan government wants to regulate the business, mostly through its rules on animal care. Breeders can now make sure their methods are in line with government rules, which is good for the dogs' health and well-being. There are still problems, though, like a smaller market and harder access to good breeding stock, which are discussed in the *'Rwanda Animal Welfare Policy Framework'* (Rwanda Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, 2019).

Burundi dog breeding

The dog breeding business in Burundi is still very new, and most of the work is being done in the city, Bujumbura. The types of dogs people want are similar to those in nearby countries, with German Shepherds and Rottweilers being the most popular. Because the market is small and there isn't much infrastructure, the problems are even worse here. But there is room for growth for those who can get past these problems. The main problems, according to a study from the Burundi Animal Welfare Organisation, are not having enough medical services and market access. However, there are big chances for growth if

GERMAN SHEPHERDS:



these problems can be fixed (*Burundi Animal Welfare Organisation, 2020*).

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), people breed dogs

In the DRC, dog breeding is becoming more popular in cities like Kinshasa and Lubumbashi. Large groups of people want guard dogs. The most popular types are German Shepherds, Belgian Malinois, and dogs from the area. However, the country's political and economic uncertainty makes things very hard for everyone. Even with these problems, there is still a chance to make a lot of money, especially among rich Congolese who see breed dogs as status symbols. The 2018 *DRC Veterinary Services Report* (FAO) delved into the difficulties of working in that kind of setting.

Problems that come up when breeding dogs in East Africa

There are a lot of problems with raising dogs in East Africa, mostly because there aren't any official rules, and where

they exist, enforcement is patchy at best. Because there aren't any rules in place, illegal breeding techniques like overbreeding and inbreeding can thrive, which is bad for the dogs' health. Breeders also have a hard time keeping standards high because they can't get enough medical care and good breeding stock. The market is also small and mostly centred in cities, which makes it hard for breeders to grow their businesses.

East Africa has lots of chances to breed dogs

Even with these problems, the East African dog breeding business has a lot of great possibilities. More people moving to cities and a bigger middle class in the area are likely to make more people want both guard dogs and pets. This market is growing, and breeders who can build a name for quality and doing the right thing will do well. Well-bred dogs could also be sent to other countries, as long as trainers can meet foreign standards. The market for specialised breeds like service dogs and therapy dogs also has room for growth.

Important Animals in East Africa

EAST AFRICA'S FAVOURITE DOGS





A Maasai man gets his dogs vaccinated against rabies. The love for dogs is widespread with local breeds being the most common due to their hardy nature and low maintenance costs. (Photo source: KVA.)

In East Africa, German Shepherds, Rottweilers, Boerboels, and Labrador Retrievers are the most popular dog types. People like these breeds because they can be both guard dogs and pets. In some places, like Tanzania and Rwanda, people also like to keep local breeds that do well in their conditions. But there is a rising trend towards bringing in foreign breeds because people think they have better looks and personalities.

The rules and the costs

Dog breeding laws in East Africa are generally not very strict, and they change a lot from place to place. Kenya and Uganda have the most developed markets, but their law systems aren't very strong. Burundi and the DRC are behind Rwanda when it comes to formalising rules, but Rwanda is making progress. Veterinary care, food, housing, and advertising are the main costs for producers. Costs like these can add up to about KSh 900,000 (\$6,000) a year for a small business that sells about 60 puppies.

In conclusion

In East Africa, the dog breeding business is set to grow because more people want pets and guard dogs. There are problems in the sector with rules, ethics, and the size of the market, but there are also big chances for farmers who

care about quality, health, and doing things the right way. Breeders can help make sure that the growing number of people who own dogs is good for both the dogs and their owners by solving these problems and taking advantage of these possibilities.

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East African Veterinary Surgeons: The Unsung Heroes Deserving of Better Remuneration

Eastern Africa's livestock industry significantly impacts their countries' GDP, creating jobs and ensuring food security. Livestock in Kenya contributes to about 12% of the country's GDP and 42% of agriculture GDP, particularly in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs). This sector creates 90–95% of jobs and more than 95% of family income in these areas. Kenya's wildlife industry, which includes wildlife tourism, makes up about 10% of the country's GDP. Wildlife tourism attracts tourists from other countries, helping to protect animals, national parks, and nearby towns.

Uganda's livestock industry is a significant part of its GDP, accounting for 9% of it while the wildlife sector plays a significant role in the economy, contributing approximately 9% to the country's GDP. Tourists come to Uganda to see diverse wildlife and natural sites like the mountain gorillas, making this a main source of income. Tanzania's livestock industry makes up about 7.4% of the country's GDP, with wildlife tourism accounting for 17.5%. This industry is crucial for the economy, jobs, wildlife protection, and maintaining biodiversity. The Serengeti and Ngorongoro Craters are two of the world's most famous wildlife parks in Tanzania.

Despite the importance of the livestock and wildlife industries to East African countries' economies, veterinary professionals who are key enablers in these industries may not make a decent living. After 10 years of work, an experienced veterinary surgeon in Kenya earns between USD 800 and 1500 per month, whereas in Uganda, the pay is slightly lower, at USD 675 to USD 1350 per month. In Tanzania, veterinarians with similar training and experience can earn anywhere from USD 700 to USD 1470 a month. These figures vary depending on location, job, and specialisation level. How did things get to this?

Context Concerning the Economy and History

Governments supplied the majority of veterinary care in East Africa's history after independence. The World Bank published a study in 2020 that attributed the general public's expectation of free veterinarian services or significant financial support to this model. Around 20-30 years ago, as governments began to reduce their involvement in veterinary care and transitioned to a privatized model, many livestock owners found it difficult to adapt to the new veterinary care system. Their familiarity with government financial aid left them unprepared for the costs associated

with veterinary services. Because of this unwillingness to pay market prices for veterinary services, it has become difficult for veterinarians to make a livelihood that is commensurate with the significance of their profession (The State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, FAO, 2015).

Challenges Facing Those Who Work in the Veterinary Profession

Furthermore, the economic climate in East Africa makes these difficulties much harder to deal with. Many pastoralists and smallholder farmers in East Africa work on very narrow margins, which makes it impossible for them to afford normal veterinary treatment, according to the study that the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) published in 2019 on the livestock industry in East Africa. As a result, veterinarians are sometimes only called upon in the event of an emergency, which leads to a vicious cycle of low fees and financial instability for practitioners (FAO, 2019). In addition, the absence of financial resources for livestock farmers, such as insurance or credit facilities, makes this problem even more severe. Farmers are unable to make investments in preventative care, which would eventually lead to an increase in production and a reduction in losses.

The Influence on the Field of Veterinary Medicine

The veterinary profession has also suffered in terms of its reputation and the value that people consider it to possess. Veterinary science struggles to attract the best students due to its lower financial benefits compared to other fields like medicine, law, or engineering. The Association of African Veterinary Education Establishments (AAVE, 2017) conducted a survey that revealed students often perceive the veterinary profession as less prestigious and financially lucrative, thereby discouraging them from choosing it as a career path. This is a big problem since the discipline of veterinary medicine is crucial for public health, food security, and the economy as a whole, especially in areas that are highly reliant on livestock.

The future holds promising solutions

This article offers several suggestions that could enhance the appeal and financial viability of the veterinary profession in East Africa. Public awareness efforts are very important for educating livestock owners about the long-term advantages of regular veterinarian care. These ads may frame the cost of veterinary care as an investment rather than an expenditure. The World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS, 2021) of the Organisation for Animal Industry (OIE) supports this approach by emphasising the need for preventative treatment to boost production and reduce illness-related losses. The government's support is also very important. Policies that provide tax exemptions or other financial incentives to veterinarians who operate in disadvantaged regions may be an effective way to ensure that these professionals generate a sustainable income while also helping populations with high needs.

Furthermore, the creation of insurance and credit facilities specifically designed for livestock producers could enable them to invest in animal health, thereby offering veterinarians a reliable and consistent revenue stream (FAO, 2020).

Other ways to increase one's income in the veterinary sector include specializing in one's specialty and continuing one's professional growth. According to research published in the journal *Veterinary Record* in 2020, veterinarians who specialize in disciplines such as animal nutrition, genetics, or veterinary pharmaceuticals tend to have better earning potential. The World Bank (2018) published research suggesting that veterinarians could potentially access new markets and income streams through the integration of veterinary medicine with other industries like public health, food safety, and agriculture.

Innovation and entrepreneurialism present additional opportunities for the veterinary profession to undergo transformation. It is possible that the implementation of community-based health initiatives, telemedicine services, and mobile clinics might make veterinary care more accessible and cheap, hence lowering costs and increasing efficiency (*Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*, 2020).

Reforms in the Educational System

It is important to emphasize the significance of educational changes. Incorporating business management, entrepreneurial skills, and communication abilities into veterinary school would achieve a more comprehensive preparation of graduates for market realities. According to the Office of International Education (OIE), strengthening linkages between universities and business stakeholders

might also give students useful real-world experience.

Conclusion

It is not impossible for veterinary professionals in East Africa to overcome the considerable financial constraints they encounter; nonetheless, these obstacles are not insurmountable. The veterinary profession has the potential to become more attractive and financially rewarding via the implementation of a comprehensive strategy that incorporates public education, legislative change, financial instruments, specialisation, integration, innovation, and educational changes. The FAO's 2021 assessment on the future of veterinary medicine suggests that implementing appropriate steps now could ensure veterinary science remains a prominent and lucrative career option for years to come.

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The Uganda Veterinary Association: A Pillar of Veterinary Excellence

The Uganda Veterinary Association (UVA) stands as a beacon of professionalism and dedication in the veterinary field in Uganda. Legally registered and boasting a robust membership, the UVA is among the most organized professional associations in the country. With over 1,200 veterinarians, including 800 men and 200 women, the UVA has a widespread presence, with many members holding key decision-making positions in government and various institutions.

Organizational Structure and Vision

The UVA operates through a fully-fledged secretariat and five operational regional branches, ensuring a comprehensive reach across Uganda. The association's vision is to be a dynamic body that advances the professionalism, welfare, and interests of its members. Its mission centers on fostering socio-economic development and improved livelihoods through the optimization of animal resources.

Leadership and Governance

For the term 2022-2024, the UVA is led by:

President: Dr. Daniel Kasibule

Vice-President: Dr. Nabadda Sitenda Madrine

General Secretary: Dr. Bonifance Obbo

Deputy Secretary General: Dr. Geoffrey Mukama

Treasurer: Dr. Ben Ssenkeera

Deputy Treasurer: Dr. Justine Wobusobozi

Committee Members: Dr. Maureen Mayanja, Dr. Merab Acam, Dr. Amanya Joseph

CVA Councillor: Dr. William Blatter Ssendaula

Core Activities and Services

The UVA is actively engaged in community development programs, animal welfare, policy advocacy, and the

promotion of professional standards and welfare for its members. Collaboration with the government, local, and international NGOs and institutions is a cornerstone of their operations.

One of the key activities is the Small Animal Clinic, which offers advanced diagnostic, treatment, and rehabilitation services for small animals. The clinic operates from 7 AM to 10 PM daily, providing critical care services for acutely sick and injured animals. The clinic's specialties include:

- Acupuncture
- Anesthesia & Pain Management
- Dermatology
- Diagnostic Imaging
- Emergency & Critical Care
- Image-Guided Interventional Service (IGIS)
- Nutrition
- Rehabilitation & Fitness Center
- Reproduction (spaying and neutering)
- Surgery
- Veterinary Community Outreach Program (VCOP)

Membership and Eligibility

The UVA offers various types of memberships including Full, Associate, Honorary, Corporate, and Life Memberships. Eligibility criteria vary, but all applicants must meet specific professional standards and fulfill financial obligations to the association. The process involves application submission, review by the Executive Committee, and potential approval by the general meeting if initially rejected.

Full Membership: Open to holders of a Veterinary Medicine Degree or any equivalent Veterinary Qualification



Collaborating is akin to putting together a puzzle, and finding which piece fits in which slot best.

recognizable by the Uganda Veterinary Board. Full members have voting rights and can hold office.

Associate Membership: Available to students pursuing veterinary studies. Associate members have the privileges of membership except voting and holding office.

Honorary Membership: Bestowed upon individuals who have rendered outstanding service to the veterinary profession in Uganda. Honorary members may participate in activities but non-veterinarians cannot vote or hold office.

Corporate Membership: Offered to organizations dealing with veterinary-related aspects. Corporate members can participate in activities but do not have voting rights or hold office.

Life Membership: Granted to individuals who have provided long-term service to the association or practicing veterinarians opting to pay a one-time fee. Life members enjoy full privileges of the association.

Community Engagement and Recognition

The UVA is highly regarded by the government and international bodies, holding memberships in the World Veterinary Association, the Commonwealth Veterinary Association, and the Private Sector Foundation Uganda. This recognition allows the UVA to represent the veterinary profession on several national committees for policy development, reflecting the important socio-economic role of the animal industry in Uganda.

Special Initiatives

Among its various initiatives, the UVA runs the Veterinary Wealth Sacco Limited, aiming to be the leading and most

respected savings cooperative society in Uganda. This Sacco mobilizes resources to create a capital base for individual and group investments, catering to veterinarians and para-veterinarians.

Celebrating World Veterinary Day

The UVA also takes pride in celebrating World Veterinary Day, highlighting the critical role of veterinarians as essential health workers. In 2023, the celebrations in Rakai underscored the theme, "Veterinarians are essential health workers," with activities such as PPR and rabies vaccinations, one health training, surgical camps for dogs and cats, and farmers training in dairy, poultry, piggery, and goats.

Chief Guest Under Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries Ssegawa Gyavira planted a tree to mark the occasion. UVA President Dr. Daniel Kasibule praised the government for amending outdated laws to improve the veterinary sector and the One Health approach. The recently passed Veterinary Practitioners Bill provides an institutional framework for the regulation of veterinary practice, including the registration and licensing of all veterinary professionals and para-professionals, addressing the needs of the over 3,700 unregistered veterinary para-professionals in Uganda.

Conclusion

The Uganda Veterinary Association remains committed to advancing the veterinary profession, improving animal health, and contributing to socio-economic development in Uganda. Through its dedicated leadership, comprehensive services, and community engagement, the UVA continues to set standards of excellence in veterinary care, reflecting its unwavering commitment to its vision and mission.

Why East African Governments Should Be Concerned About the Inadequate Veterinary Professionals

The health and welfare of people as well as animals depends critically on veterinary experts. Veterinarians are not only important for animal care but also for food security, public health, and economic stability in East Africa, where many nations' backbone is agriculture and livestock rearing. But a declining number of veterinary professionals raises major issues for public safety, animal health, and the general economy across the area. Governments cannot afford to overlook the shortfall of veterinarians in East Africa any more.

Veterinarians' Critical Function in East Africa

A major economic activity, livestock farming drives most of East Africa's GDP for nations like Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimates that in Africa, livestock make around forty percent of all agricultural production. For millions of rural homes, animals provide not just a means of income but also a survival tool. For societies mostly dependent on animal farming, cattle, sheep, goats, and poultry provide food, jobs, and financial stability.

Veterinarians are at the heart of this industry. They are responsible for maintaining animal health, illness



Veterinary practice is often a labour of love. However, there aren't enough veterinary professionals to spread it around East Africa.

diagnosis, treatment prescription, and best practice advice on cattle management. Veterinarians also protect public health by helping to lessen the effects of zoonotic diseases—those that transfer from animals to people include rabies, anthrax, and Rift Valley fever, among others. Their job guarantees food safety by means of appropriate animal health management, thereby lowering the risk of foodborne diseases associated with contaminated meat, milk, and other animal products.

The growing shortage of veterinary professionals

Though their importance is great, East Africa has a shockingly low veterinarian count. Many nations have considerably below-recommended ratios of veterinarians to livestock. The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) says that one veterinarian should be for every 5,000 animals

COMPARISON OF VETERINARY SURGEON NUMBERS TO POPULATION IN THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY AND IN SIX OTHER COUNTRIES

| No | Country | Popn (Millions) | CountryArea kmsq | Vets | Popn/Vet | Cattle (Millions) | Cattle/vet | Dogs (millions) | Dogs/vet | Chicken (millions) | Chickens /vet | Total of three species/vet |
|----|---------------|-----------------|------------------|---------|----------|-------------------|------------|-----------------|----------|--------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | USA | 341.8 | 9,834,000 | 127,131 | 2,689 | 89.3 | 371 | 90 | 374 | 518 | 2,154 | 2,899 |
| 2 | Germany | 84 | 357,022 | 30,000 | 2,800 | 12 | 400 | 10 | 334 | 180 | 6,000 | 6,734 |
| 3 | Great Britain | 67 | 244,376 | 20,000 | 3,350 | 10 | 500 | 12 | 600 | 140 | 7,000 | 8,100 |
| 4 | Netherlands | 17.8 | 41,543 | 4,000 | 4,450 | 4 | 1000 | 2 | 500 | 100 | 25,000 | 26,500 |
| 5 | China | 1,410 | 9,597,000 | 300,000 | 4,700 | 100 | 334 | 60 | 200 | 5,000 | 16,667 | 17,201 |
| 6 | India | 1,420 | 3,287,000 | 80,000 | 17,750 | 300 | 3,750 | 30 | 375 | 1,000 | 12,500 | 16,625 |
| 7 | Kenya | 56.3 | 582,646 | 3,000 | 18,767 | 17.5 | 2,188 | 9.3 | 1,163 | 31.8 | 3,975 | 7,325 |
| 8 | Rwanda | 14.4 | 26,338 | 600 | 24,000 | 1.5 | 1,071 | 1 | 714 | 12 | 8,571 | 10,357 |
| 9 | Uganda | 49.9 | 241,038 | 1,223 | 40,801 | 14.5 | 4,002 | 3 | 828 | 57.8 | 15,954 | 20,784 |
| 10 | Tanzania | 69.4 | 945,087 | 1,200 | 57,833 | 35.3 | 11,031 | 5 | 1,563 | 72 | 22,500 | 35,094 |
| 11 | Burundi | 13.6 | 27,830 | 150 | 90,667 | 0.6 | 1,091 | 1 | 1,818 | 10.2 | 18,545 | 21,455 |
| 12 | South Sudan | 11.3 | 644,329 | 50 | 226,000 | 12 | 23,211 | 1 | 1,934 | 0.15 | 0 | 25,145 |
| 13 | Somalia | 18.7 | 637,657 | 60 | 311,667 | 4.6 | 8,214 | 2 | 3,571 | 5 | 8,929 | 20,714 |
| 14 | DRC | 105.6 | 2,345,000 | 300 | 352,000 | 1.58 | 1,756 | 2 | 2,222 | 30 | 33,333 | 37,311 |

Approximate Veterinary Surgeon numbers in the East African Community as compared to six leading agricultural nations of the World. The Table provides ratio of vets/human population and per three popular species of domestic animals. The table is sorted as per the population/vet column to show which country has the best veterinary surgeon coverage. The USA has great numbers and leads the pack. In the EAC, Kenya outperforms her neighbors in having the best veterinary surgeon coverage. Veterinary paraprofessional numbers were not taken into account because of missing data for some countries online. (Data Source: Online Research)

in an optimum ratio. But in certain areas of East Africa, there is only one veterinarian for every 100,000 animals—a startling discrepancy that greatly reduces the capacity to provide timely and sufficient animal healthcare treatments. For example, Kenya has a large disparity in veterinary care, especially in the rural regions. Although the nation has 3,000 licensed veterinarians, this is not enough to service the large rural regions where livestock rearing predominates. Uganda and Tanzania have about 1200 veterinary surgeons each, while Rwanda and Burundi have 600 and 150 veterinary surgeons respectively. Thus all EAC countries are struggling with even fewer numbers of veterinary surgeons than the optimum recommended by WOA.

Shortage Consequences

The dearth of veterinary specialists in East Africa has far-reaching effects on public health, national economies, human livelihoods, animal health, and animal welfare. The following are some of the main issues that East African nations need to be mindful of:

1: Animal Health and Productivity

When there are fewer veterinarians offering prompt and

expert care, livestock become more susceptible to diseases that can decimate herds and reduce productivity. Diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease, brucellosis, and African swine fever may spread quickly and cause animal deaths, as well as a significant drop in output without appropriate veterinary control. Farmers’ revenues suffer directly as a result, which reduces their capacity to support their families and make investments in improved agricultural methods. Inadequate veterinary care also results in insufficient access to appropriate vaccination campaigns and disease control techniques. Governments find it challenging to manage epidemics because animals not only run the risk of contracting illnesses, but they also disseminate them to other herds and areas.

2. Food Security

Guaranteeing the safety of the food supply depends on veterinary experts. Healthy animals produce meat, milk, and eggs, among other safe and wholesome foods. Disease or inappropriate animal treatment reduces food quality and increases contamination risk. Foodborne diseases such as salmonella or E. coli infections can seriously affect public health, cause financial losses in terms of medical expenses, and lower agricultural production.

The scarcity of veterinarians also negatively impacts the sustainability of East Africa's food systems. Small-scale farmers, who make up a sizable share of the agricultural market, rely heavily on veterinary advice and services to increase production and use modern farming methods. Farmers would find it difficult to satisfy the rising demand for food without enough veterinary help, therefore endangering regional food security.

3: Zoonotic Disease Management

Because people and animals commonly coexist in close proximity in East Africa, zoonotic illnesses represent a major public health concern. Deadly outbreaks of diseases such as rabies, Rift Valley fever, and Ebola may originate from animals but then spread to people. Monitoring, diagnosing, and treating these illnesses at the animal level falls mostly on veterinarians, who also help to stop their transmission to people.

However, the current shortage of veterinarians significantly hinders the detection and management of zoonotic diseases. Zoonotic illnesses may readily traverse boundaries

and cause regional or even worldwide health crises, therefore endangering both rural and urban populations.

4: Economic Influence

The veterinarian shortage has significant financial implications as well. East African country economies depend mostly on livestock husbandry; hence, any change in the condition of these animals influences the whole agricultural value chain. Diseases reduce animal output, affecting meat, milk, and other animal products. This influences commerce and export possibilities in turn, especially for nations like Kenya and Ethiopia, whose Middle Eastern and other markets have developed for livestock products.

Furthermore, the absence of veterinary care raises animal treatment costs. Farmers must rely on unofficial or unskilled service providers, leading to incorrect treatment and increased death rates. Long-term, this reduces the profitability of cattle farming and discourages industry investment.



The Wildebeest migration is a wonder of nature. Tourists come from all over the world to witness it in East Africa. Behind the scenes, veterinary professionals make superhuman sacrifices to ensure EA wildlife is healthy and in good shape.



Animals like cows and others play a critical role in agriculture and general transport. Veterinary professionals who ensure their continued health therefore find themselves at the very heart of rural economies in East Africa.

What are Govts To Do?

East African states have to act immediately and in unison to solve the depletion of veterinary experts. These are a few ideas meant to help stop this trend:

1. Governments should increase funding for veterinary schools and training facilities so that they can generate highly educated veterinarians. Offering scholarships and incentives would help more students—especially in rural regions where the need is highest—to seek professions in veterinary medicine.
2. Improve Rural Veterinary Services: We must pay special attention, particularly in rural and underprivileged regions where the shortage of veterinarians is most severe. To reach these areas, one might look at mobile veterinary clinics, telemedicine, and public-private alliances.
3. Clear laws developed by governments should control the veterinary profession and guarantee that practitioners meet the highest treatment criteria. This covers vets' appropriate licensing and ongoing professional development.
4. Public campaigns stressing the value of veterinarians in society help to increase the profession's prominence and draw more young people into it. Governments should also cooperate with veterinary groups to highlight the key role veterinarians play in public health, food safety, and economic growth.

Final Thought

The dearth of veterinary specialists in East Africa is a public health, food security, and financial concern, as well as an industry issue that demands immediate

attention. Governments have to act immediately to make sure veterinarians are qualified to carry out their critical responsibilities in maintaining human and animal health. Funding the veterinary field means financing East Africa's future security and prosperity.

An advertisement for CYPERDIP 55EC acaricide. The top part features the product name in large, bold letters with a red and blue background. Below the name is the slogan 'Kupe Kwisha !!! Faida Kwako...'. The text describes the product as an acaricide for veterinary use as a stock spray for the control of ticks and flies on cattle. It lists the composition as Cypermethrin 5% + Chlorpyrifos 50%. There are two circular icons with red 'X' marks over them, showing a tick and a fly. The bottom part of the ad shows a black and white cow, a brown cow, a white sheep, and a brown goat in a grassy field. At the bottom, there is the Animix Limited logo and contact information: 'Off Mombasa Rd, Behind Nice & Lovely P.O. Box 1-00515 Nairobi Kenya Tel: +254 712 756 692 Email: info@animixltd.com Website: www.animixltd.com'.

THE VSVP ACT:

ENHANCING VETERINARY PROFESSIONALISM

The Veterinary Surgeons and Veterinary Para-Professionals Act (VSVP Act) in Kenya is a comprehensive piece of legislation that governs the practice of veterinary medicine and the activities of veterinary para-professionals in the country. Enacted in 2011, the Act's primary objective is to ensure that veterinary services in Kenya are provided by qualified and competent professionals. This, in turn, helps protect public health, animal welfare, and food safety.

Background and Justification

Before the enactment of the VSVP Act, the veterinary profession in Kenya faced several challenges, including a lack of clear regulations and oversight. This situation led to an increase in unqualified practitioners, which threatened the quality of veterinary services, public health, and animal welfare. Kenya, an agricultural economy with livestock playing a crucial role, needed a formal legislative framework to address issues such as zoonotic diseases, food safety, and animal welfare. The VSVP Act was introduced to fill this regulatory gap and improve the standards of veterinary practice in the country.

Objectives of the VSVP Act

The VSVP Act has several key objectives:

- **Regulation of Training, Registration, and Licensing:** The Act sets standards for the training, registration, and licensing of veterinary surgeons and veterinary para-professionals in Kenya. It ensures that only those who meet the required qualifications are allowed to practice.
- **Protection of Animal Health and Welfare:** The Act aims to ensure that animals receive appropriate care from qualified professionals, which helps prevent the spread of diseases and promotes animal welfare.
- **Promotion of Public Health and Food Safety:** By

regulating veterinary practices, the Act seeks to minimize the risk of zoonotic diseases and ensure that animal-derived food products are safe for human consumption.

- **Ethical Conduct and Professional Accountability:** The Act establishes a code of conduct for veterinary professionals, promoting ethical practice and holding practitioners accountable for their actions.

Structure of the VSVP Act

The VSVP Act is structured into several key sections, each addressing different aspects of veterinary practice in Kenya.

The Kenya Veterinary Board (KVB)

The Kenya Veterinary Board (KVB) is established as the primary regulatory authority for veterinary practitioners in Kenya under the VSVP Act. The KVB's responsibilities include:

- **Registration and Licensing:** The KVB is responsible for registering veterinary surgeons and para-professionals and issuing licenses to those who meet the required qualifications.
- **Accreditation of Training Institutions:** The Board grants accreditation to institutions offering veterinary training programs, ensuring they meet the necessary standards.
- **Disciplinary Action:** The KVB has the authority to take disciplinary action against practitioners who violate the Act's provisions or engage in unethical conduct.
- **Continuing Professional Development (CPD):** The Board promotes the continuous professional development of veterinary practitioners to ensure they stay updated with the latest advancements in veterinary medicine.

Registration and Licensing

The VSVP Act outlines the qualifications and requirements for the registration and licensing of veterinary surgeons and para-professionals. Key points include:

- **Qualifications:** Veterinary surgeons must hold a degree in veterinary medicine from a recognized institution. Para-professionals must have a diploma or certificate relevant to their specific role.
- **Application Process:** Applicants must submit their qualifications to the KVB for verification. Once approved, they are registered and issued a license to practice.
- **License Renewal:** Licensed veterinary practitioners must periodically renew their licenses, often requiring participation in continuing professional development programs.

Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards

The VSVP Act includes a code of conduct that registered veterinary practitioners must adhere to. This code emphasizes:

- **Professional Integrity:** Practitioners must conduct themselves with honesty and integrity, avoiding any actions that could harm their clients, animals, or the public.
- **Confidentiality:** Veterinary practitioners are required to protect the confidentiality of their clients' information, except when disclosure is necessary for public safety or legal reasons.
- **Competence:** The Act stipulates that practitioners should only perform procedures or offer services within their areas of competence.

Veterinary Para-Professionals

The Act recognizes the role of veterinary para-professionals in supporting the work of veterinary surgeons. Para-professionals include veterinary technologists, technicians, and animal health assistants.

- **The Act: Defines Roles and Responsibilities:** The Act clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of veterinary para-professionals, ensuring they work within the limits of their training and qualifications.
- **Regulates Training and Certification:** Para-professionals must complete accredited training programs and receive certification from the KVB.

Oversight and Compliance

The KVB is tasked with overseeing compliance with the VSVP Act. The Board conducts inspections of veterinary practices, training institutions, and other facilities where veterinary services are provided to ensure compliance.

The KVB can:

- **Investigate Complaints:** The Board has the authority to investigate complaints against veterinary professionals and take appropriate action, including imposing fines, suspending licenses, or revoking licenses.
- **Enforce Standards:** The Board ensures that all veterinary practices adhere to the standards set out in the Act, particularly concerning ethical practices, safety, and hygiene.

Challenges and Impact

Since its implementation, the VSVP Act has significantly improved the regulation and oversight of the veterinary profession in Kenya. Some of the positive impacts include:

- **Improved Professional Standards:** The Act has raised the standards of veterinary education and practice in Kenya, ensuring that only qualified individuals provide veterinary services.
- **Enhanced Animal Welfare:** Stricter regulations and oversight have led to improved animal welfare, particularly in disease prevention, proper animal husbandry, and humane treatment.
- **Increased Public Trust:** The Act has helped build public trust in the veterinary profession by ensuring practitioners adhere to ethical standards and are held accountable for their actions.

However, the Act also faces challenges:

- **Enforcement Difficulties:** Enforcing the Act's provisions has been challenging in some areas, particularly in rural regions where unlicensed practitioners and limited resources are more common.
- **Public Awareness:** There is still a need for greater public awareness about the importance of seeking veterinary services from licensed professionals. Many livestock owners continue to rely on unqualified individuals, often due to financial constraints.

Conclusion

The Veterinary Surgeons and Veterinary Para-Professionals Act marks a significant milestone in the regulation of veterinary practice in Kenya. By establishing clear guidelines for training, registration, and professional conduct, the Act has contributed to improving the quality of veterinary services across the country. Moving forward, continued efforts to enforce the Act, raise public awareness, and support the professional development of veterinary practitioners will be crucial to ensuring that the full benefits of the Act are realized.

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Meet the
Ugandan Vet
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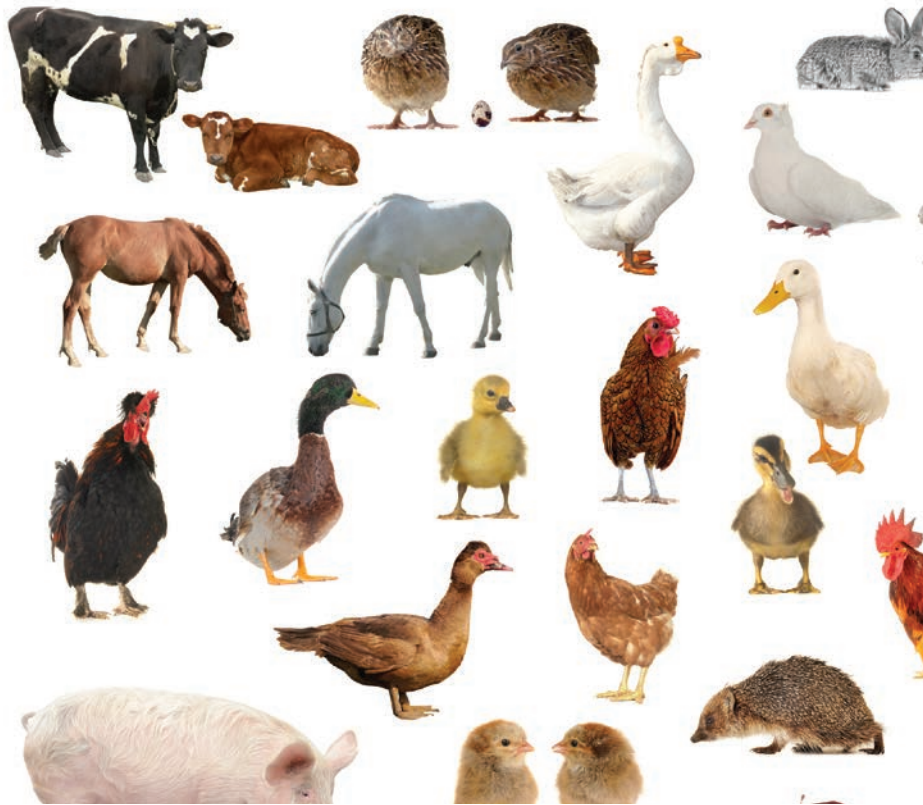
Why Veterinary
professionals
numbers
should worry
EA govts

KVA Council
CHAIRMAN
Reflects

DOG BREEDING
Great Potential for East Africa



Veterinary Witness



VETERINARY WITNESS - HOW IT HAPPENED: VETERINARY MEDICINE'S ROOTS

The rich and varied history of veterinary medicine—the discipline of detecting, treating, and preventing diseases in animals— goes back thousands of years. Driven by a mix of need, inquiry, and compassion, the profession has changed dramatically from prehistoric societies to the present. This historical narrative follows the significant events, notable personalities, and turning points that have moulded veterinary practice into what it is now.

Ancient Origins: Early Humaneutics

Veterinary medicine originated in prehistoric societies when animals, whether as companions, transportation, or cattle, were absolutely integral to human life. Early veterinary techniques have been discovered in the ancient writings of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and India.

Dating roughly 1754 BCE, the Code of Hammurabi in Mesopotamia makes allusions to animal care. Analogous early knowledge of animal health is shown by ancient Egyptian papyri from about 1800 BCE, which record cures

for ailments in cattle, dogs, and birds.

Veterinary procedures are also mentioned in ancient Indian scriptures like the Vedas and the works of physician Sushruta about 600 BCE. Though mostly remembered for his contributions to human medicine, Sushruta's writings cover the treatment and maintenance of animals— especially horses and elephants—that were essential to Indian culture.

Greco-Roman Contributions: Vegetius's Hippocrates

Veterinary science advanced dramatically during the Greco-Roman era. Often known as the "Father of Medicine," Hippocrates (c. 460 – c. 370 BCE) shaped early veterinary practices with his all-encompassing view of health and illness. Though he concentrated mostly on human medicine, his concepts on observation and diagnosis prepared veterinary science.

Another important person, Aristotle (384–322 BCE), penned

a great deal on animal anatomy and physiology in his "Historia Animalium." For upcoming veterinarians, his findings on the parallels and contrasts between human and animal biology offered insightful analysis.

Veterinary medicine evolved throughout the Roman Empire towards increased formalism. Greek physician Aelius Praxagoras, active in the third century BCE, penned one of the first veterinary books with an eye towards horse care. Later, in the fourth century CE, Publius Vegetius Renatus wrote "Mulomedicina," an all-encompassing manual on veterinary medicine covering cattle and horses. For centuries, veterinary science in Europe grew to rely mostly on this study.

Renaissance and mediaeval advances

Although veterinary science in Europe stagnated considerably during the Middle Ages, the importance of horses in agriculture and battle meant that their treatment remained first priority. The discipline of farriery—that is, horse hooves and shoeing—became specialised.

But veterinary science prospered in the Islamic realm. Veterinary knowledge was incorporated by Persian scholar Avicenna (980–1037 CE) into his medical encyclopaedia "The Canon of Medicine." His writings affected Islamic and later European veterinary as well as human medicine.

The Renaissance attracted fresh enthusiasm for medicine and science. Pioneering anatomist Andreas Vesalius (1514 – 1564) made major discoveries to comparative anatomy, therefore impacting veterinary science. His thorough research of animal anatomy helped one to grasp animal physiology and pathology.

Modern Veterinary Medicine's Birth

With the founding of the first veterinary schools, modern veterinary medicine began in the eighteenth century. Often credited with creating the first veterinary school in Lyon, France, in 1761, is French veterinarian Claude Bourgelat. For individuals tending to animals, especially cattle afflicted by diseases like rinderpest, a terrible cattle plague, Bourgelat saw the importance of rigorous instruction and training.

Other European schools, like the École Nationale Vétérinaire d'Alfort in France (1765) and the Royal Veterinary College in London (1791), sprang from the Lyon veterinary school's success. Emphasising anatomy, pathology, and clinical practice, these establishments standardised veterinary education.

Key Figures and Advancements in the 19th and 20th Centuries

Driven by scientific discoveries and inventions, veterinary medicine had amazing developments in the 19th and 20th centuries. French microbiologist Louis Pasteur (1822– 1895) made revolutionary contributions to veterinary as well as human medicine. Vaccines developed by Pasteur for rabies and anthrax transformed both human and animal disease control.

Veterinary education and practice were greatly advanced in England by veterinarian and lecturer John Gamgee (1831–1894). Gamgee helped veterinary societies and publications to be established as well as promoted the professionalisation of veterinary medicine.

Further scientific advance and specialisation came with the 20th century. Improved detection and treatment of animal diseases came from developments in microbiology, parasitology, and pharmacology. Modern surgical methods, vaccinations, and antibiotics changed veterinary care.

The founding of the World Veterinary Association (WVA) in 1947 gave veterinarians worldwide forum to cooperate, exchange information, and advance animal welfare. Advancing veterinary science and tackling worldwide animal health issues depends on the WVA, which remains indispensable.

Veterinary Medicine Modern Times

Veterinary medicine is today a highly specialised and varied discipline covering not only pet and cattle care but also wildlife conservation, public health, and biomedical research. From private offices and farms to zoos and research labs, veterinarians operate in a range of environments.

Veterinary treatment has improved even more with the inclusion of cutting-edge technologies such as telemedicine, genomics, and diagnostic imaging. To handle challenging problems including zoonotic illnesses, food safety, and environmental preservation, veterinarians today work with other scientific fields. Veterinary medicine's past is evidence of the close relationship between people and animals that endures. Veterinarians have always adapted and invented to satisfy changing demands of society, from prehistoric healers to modern scientists. Looking ahead, the dedication to bettering animal welfare and health is still as strong as it has ever been, guaranteeing that veterinary practice will always be vibrant.

Meet your Publisher: Dr Simon Alubbe



The Late WVPA President Dr Nigel Horrox, a veterinary surgeon, a publisher, a veterinary leader, and a great communicator inspired Dr Simon Alubbe to be proud about his media and communication side and to deploy it to serve the veterinary profession.

Navigating Knowledge: A Vet's Journey Through Media, Communication & KM

I graduated with a BVM degree from the University of Nairobi in December 1994. It was a day of great celebration, the culmination of four intense years of veterinary training. In my view, few degrees can match the rigor of veterinary studies in Kenya—perhaps even across Africa. There is no specialization; you must master ten common domestic animals: the cow, goat, sheep, dog, cat, donkey, chicken, pig, horse, and camel.

Even with intense study and endless reading, oral and written exams always had the potential for surprise—like a hidden snake in the grass. I remember a classmate being asked how much urine a rabbit produces daily. How could anyone prepare for that? His attempt at an educated guess turned out to be laughably wrong.

After graduation, I took a year off to work with Focus-Kenya, a Christian NGO. In 1995, I landed my first job—not as a vet, but as a medical representative for Amoun Pharmaceuticals in Mombasa. Never having lived in Kenya's coastal paradise, I leapt at the chance. Evenings were spent at Mama Ngina Drive, soaking in the ocean breeze.

Mombasa is the culinary heart of Kenya, and I indulged in coastal delicacies: kebabs, mkate mayayi, exotic fish, coconut water, roasted cassava, and a variety of flavorful rice dishes. My mum still insists she has never seen me healthier or happier than during my time in Mombasa. I shared a cramped, one-room home in Magongo with my high school mate Engineer Oliver Kirubai and three other friends. It was so warm we couldn't sleep with the windows closed! At work, I learned fast. Marketing pharmaceuticals to

doctors and pharmacists was no easy task. One particular encounter stands out: I was at Mombasa Hospital, presenting generic heart medicines *Cardioguard* and *Delay Tiazem* to the late Dr. J.B. Okanga, a renowned cardiologist. When he asked, “Young man, do you know what heart disease is?” I responded with the confidence instilled by endless rehearsals with my supervisor. But Dr. Okanga wasn’t convinced. His lecture on the need for original research into generics reminded me that expertise was not something I could fake.

I spent seven years as a medical representative, traveling across Kenya and engaging with over 2,000 doctors and countless pharmacists. The pay was super, and the per diems were amazing, not to forget a fully fuelled and serviced company car to take one around, and occasionally used to impress the ladies. By 2001, I had grown tired of the routine. Doctors began to refer to me by the products I sold: “Ah, Mr. Forceval, welcome!” a surgeon would say, having prescribed the supplement often. And then there was the increasing competition—aggressive sales reps who disregarded professional boundaries. One even waited to chat a doctor at a leading hospital outside the restroom!

In 2001, newly married, having just brought forth my first born daughter, and turning 32, I decided to change paths.

Instead of studying for an MBA like many of my peers, I enrolled in a postgraduate diploma at the School of Journalism, University of Nairobi. I had applied back in 1994 but didn’t make the cut due to intense competition. This time, I secured a spot in the evening stream.

It was an exhilarating two years, learning from Kenyan media legends like Joe Kadhi, Magayu Magayu, Edwin Nyutho, Absalom Mutere, Zeke Waweru, Ochilo Omolo, Khakudu Agunda, and Evan Mwangi. There were no female lecturers during my time, but these men fostered my discovery as a writer and communicator.

After my postgraduate diploma, I ambitiously enrolled for a master’s degree at City University, London. Despite being warned that attending without a scholarship was reckless, I took the plunge. I resigned from MacNaughton Limited, gathered Ksh 750,000 from diverse sources, and set off for London with what was only a third of what I needed for tuition and living expenses.

I stayed with my friend Peter Oyugi and his wife Cecilia before moving to Walthamstow in East London. City University was a fascinating experience—lecturers quoting their own published work! But my financial shortfall became glaring. Halfway through my dissertation, I was cut off for



Dr Simon Alubbe attends a past Ghana International Book Fair.

non-payment.

I found myself working three jobs: cleaning offices at 4:00 AM, serving as a room attendant at the Chamberlain Hotel, and doing weekend security work. The grind was exhausting, but I still couldn't make ends meet while supporting my wife and daughter back in Kenya.

In 2004, weary of the struggle, I returned to Kenya and soon joined Longman Kenya as a production coordinator, thanks to my school of journalism classmate Kakai Karani, who was the general manager. Between 2004 and 2019, I thrived in the publishing world, moving from Longman to East African Educational Publishers and eventually to Oxford University Press. I gained broad experience across production, sales, marketing, educational publishing, general management and regional publishing in East Africa.

After eight years as a production manager at Oxford, I took early retirement in 2019. While I enjoyed my job, I saw the writing on the wall: my salary and benefits had become a significant cost, and I knew the company would soon look to cut costs. In 2020, I shifted to communication management at KCB Foundation before moving to GIZ Uganda in 2022 to work in knowledge management.

From a vantage point age of 55, I look back on an exciting career filled with many highs and some lows. Working with GIZ Uganda's One Health program rekindled my connection to veterinary medicine. This led to the birth of

Vetmedia Magazine—a platform to serve the veterinary profession.

Vetmedia Magazine isn't my first foray into magazine publishing. I once launched *Christian Gold*, a Christian magazine, and later helped found *Animal Focus* under the Kenya Veterinary Association. Though these ventures faced challenges, they deepened my passion for magazine publishing and gave me a grounding in the basics of format.

While at GIZ Uganda, I accomplished one pending business; completing my masters degree in mass communication. The journey to this qualification had been interrupted in 2003 by my lack of school fees, and though I could have pursued it earlier, I threw myself into my work in the publishing sector with such intensity that it left little time to do the MA. So, when Liverpool John Moores University gave me a scholarship to study online through Unicaf University, I jumped at the opportunity. I hope to pursue the PhD when funds allow.

Back to Vetmedia Magazine, my hope for it is that it becomes the home of veterinary storytelling. This magazine is for vets, by vets, with stories that inform, educate, and entertain. I envision it as a forum where veterinarians can learn about one another and forge lifelong collaborations.



Dr Alubbe at GIZ Offices in Bonn, Germany, during a training in February 2023. He has just completed a twenty two month stint as a knowledge management advisor at the Global Programme for Pandemic Prevention and Response, One Health. He has been based in Kampala, Uganda.

Vetmedia Magazine

Magazine Staff:

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