

Many of us feeling similar disillusionment

Dear editor,

As a graduate of 20 years ago, I write to congratulate Shams Mir for his letter (June 2 issue). I am in full agreement with him, and can easily think of many colleagues who, feeling similar disillusionment and despair at the veterinary profession, would have similar views.

It is refreshing to see opinions so honestly and clearly stated among all the mealy mouthed "why-oh-why" stuff around at the moment.

As a regular reader of the letters page of *Veterinary Times*, I have never felt moved, until now, to contribute myself. I feel there is real anger building at the grassroots level, the magnitude of which the RCVS and the other veterinary associations are hardly aware of. Witness the all-time low turnout at the last RCVS council elections.

We have a situation where, on the one hand, our regulator announces in its news bulletin that disciplinary action against a member concerning some exceedingly serious (and apparently proved) allegations are postponed due to "lack of time" and, on the other, it makes the constant threat that members could expect disciplinary proceedings to commence, as well as them receiving a criminal record, for dispensing generic cephalexin. In Dr Mir's letter, I particularly appreciated the description of the RCVS as being mainly "to safeguard members of the public from vets", though it surely fails even in this function while it continues to act as enforcer for the absurd VMD regulations and yet tolerates the practice of homoeopathy.

As regards Dr Mir's specific union suggestions, I eagerly await all the outraged responses from various tired and emotional partners in the coming weeks, as there always are when anyone voices such a dangerous and radical idea. I recall a similar letter was published a few years ago, swiftly followed by a response from the then-president of SPVS questioning why such a union was needed when, of course, there already was one in the form of the society. Once again, the current president of SPVS has duly trotted out that line. I actually find that SPVS is one of the more useful veterinary organisations, although I am under no illusions that its salaries survey is primarily for the benefit of partners wanting to know the going rate.

The group I feel most sorry for is the graduates of the past few years, and all those in the foreseeable future. At least when my contemporaries and I qualified, we may have quickly realised we were in a crock of shit, but we were in work and minimally indebted. To be in the aforementioned crock, £50,000 in debt and having to compete with 700-plus domestic graduates a year for the same shabby jobs, it should surely come as no surprise that a few will be tempted to rig up the pentobarbitone drip.

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