

Paving the way for British Veterinary Union

“YOU’D have to have been hiding under a rock not to have noticed the debate in these pages and elsewhere about a veterinary union,” said Nicky Paull, then president of BVA, in the August 2009 issue of this magazine.

The debate didn’t end there, it has continued unabated ever since the idea of a union was launched in June 2008 and it is constantly gaining momentum.

New developments like the move towards a possible strike action by vets working in the meat inspection area late last year and the recent dismay expressed by vets working for DEFRA’s TB testing programme for the BVA’s failure to secure an increase in their payments are adding new dimensions to the debate.

Challenge

It is not unlikely that those watching this debate as bystanders, not feeling directly addressed by the content of the discussion, might see it as continuing endlessly. But those vets and nurses who have pinned their hopes to the proposed new organisation, who for obvious reasons cannot come forward to assist, appreciate that transforming an idea into a reality under such circumstances is a challenging process.

However, while the discussion has

continued, the idea of the union has already transformed into a movement.

The inception of Vets4BVU as a forerunner organisation of the proposed British Veterinary Union (BVU) in June last year followed by the creation of the Vets4BVU Steering Group (SG) a month later were significant steps forward. Incorporating veterinary nurses into Vets4BVU was yet another major leap forward, widening the remit of the organisation.

The SG continued to expand and by now it has nine highly dedicated members, consisting of six veterinary surgeons (four employed vets including one new graduate and two employers) and three veterinary nurses.

The dedication of the members of the SG, particularly of those members who for fear of reprisals cannot disclose their identity in public, is a testimony to the validity of the cause they stand for.

The meeting of the SG with the president of BVA, Professor Bill Reilly, and his team in November last year at Bristol was a landmark for Vets4BVU in that not only did it end the perceived elusiveness of the movement but also ended up pushing the organisation over the crossroads.

While the discussion in the veterinary print and electronic media is

going on and must continue to facilitate the emergence of a new organisation based on consensus rather than division, Vets4BVU is taking concrete steps to pave the way for setting up of the proposed union in the near future.

In order for the proposed union to truly emerge from grassroots level of the profession and for involving every single supporting veterinary surgeon and nurse into the process of developing the new organisation, the SG is preparing to facilitate all vets and nurses to join as members of Vets4BVU as a non-incorporated, non-profit making association.

Pertinent information

For this purpose, Vets4BVU will shortly launch its own website, which will serve as a source of pertinent information for the wider profession, enable vets and nurses to register online, provide a forum for the members to discuss issues of mutual interest, enable the SG to run consultation exercises and to conduct online polls as necessary.

Furthermore, Vets4BVU will make its first national level appearance through its representation at the BSAVA congress exhibition in Birmingham next month. Our stand in

the main arena is intended to bring home the Vets4BVU campaign to thousands of vets and nurses, provide them the relevant information, enable them to contribute their views and facilitate their registration as members. The membership will be free. However, the website will provide the possibility of making voluntary donations.

We urge all

veterinary professionals – vets and nurses working in different fields of the profession, retired vets and nurses, and veterinary students – who feel that the profession needs an organisation dedicated

to look after the welfare of vets and nurses as professionals and as personnel both at individual and collective levels, to please take the trouble of registering themselves as members of Vets4BVU so that we can together pave the way for laying the foundations of the proposed British Veterinary Union.

As we extend the invitation of joining Vets4BVU to the wider profession, it is important to reiterate that our policy of confidentiality regarding members will strictly be maintained as long as the membership does not decide otherwise.

For your suggestions and queries, we welcome readers to contact us by e-mail on vets4bvu@hotmail.co.uk.



Dr SHAMS MIR reports on the next stages in the development of the BVU

Launching a website and taking a stand at the BSAVA congress for vets and nurses to register

Why not put your boots on for charity?



THE Blue Cross is heading for the Himalayas in October: two vets and two vet nurses have already signed up and are raising funds in earnest – and more are being sought. They will be joined by other animal lovers who also want to do their bit for the charity by taking on a physical challenge.

The sponsored trek takes place over five days in the Dharamsala region of the Himalayas.

“Camping for the duration of the trek adds to the challenge but really will make it a trip of a lifetime for those taking part,” says the charity. “Highlights of the whole event are travelling by sleeper train, seeing Buddhist temples and the residence of the Dalai Lama, trekking in a spectacular environment and an optional trip to the Taj Mahal or spending free time in Delhi.”

For full details, contact Emma at the Blue Cross on 01303 862 996, e-mail emma@lifecyclepromotions.co.uk, or see the website www.bluecross.org.uk.



VETERINARY Practice What our readers say...

Link with buying group not the first...

IT’S always dangerous to claim a first! The report on the front page of the January issue about Norfolk Farm Vets linking with Anglia Farmers in what, our report said, “is believed to be the first agreement of its kind between a buying group and a veterinary practice”, brought this response from Steve Sharpe, practice manager at Hampden Veterinary Hospital: “Hampden Veterinary Hospital’s Farm Department (Aylesbury) has had a similar arrangement with the Orion Farming Group for many years. The Orion Farming Group has a membership of over 330 farms across the home counties, southern counties and the south-west. The mutual benefits are very much as stated in the article for both parties.”

RCVS logo

Our request for ideas for a new logo for the Royal College brought out the worst in some of our readers – and also several requests for anonymity.

One wrote, “Some years ago BP spent millions having its logo redesigned and settled on a tilting forward of its initials. The RCVS would/could be best served by not spending any money and simply titling its letters backward – it would at least be appropriate.” And another: “As the College is primarily concerned with discipline, why not intertwine a whip through the four letters?”

One more and we’ll stop: “The wingdings typeface on my computer appeals to me. It’s also meaningless – is that a good or bad thing?”

No prizes for anyone so far.