

We should take time to address union concerns

Dear editor,

Regarding the formation of a veterinary union, I would very much like to thank John Dalton for his encouragement through his letter titled "Stop procrastinating on veterinary union idea" (April 6 issue). Almost all vets who are in touch with me in this regard are impatient to have the union set up at the earliest. The difference is that they show forbearance as they look forward to the establishment of an organisation that will be successful, not one that might "wither on the vine".

As the proposed union is intended to be a grass-roots organisation of the profession, it has to emerge from there. That means a prerequisite is to engage the widest possible spectrum of veterinary surgeons – working at all levels and in all fields of the profession – in the process of consultation. This is what we are currently focusing on and it will be given the necessary time to conclude.

Also, it is quite natural that the idea of the union may not appear comfortable to some members of the profession. As a result, some questions and doubts are likely to emerge. Besides consulting with those who support the idea of the union, it is equally important that we do not disregard any misgivings. Instead, we should take time to address them appropriately and explain why the union is necessary, try to dispel any fears and assure all concerned that it is intended to be a complementary, positive and unifying force for the profession.

Although the idea of the proposed union is still in the process of being unfurled, an unprecedented response is being witnessed and support for a union is growing quite fast. This is evident from the emails, letters and phone calls I receive, and from the letters and articles appearing in this publication and others. With more people opening up and writing their stories of suffering, and offering their reasons why the profession needs a union, the more determined we become to make the proposed union a successful reality, at the right time. The need of the hour is for veterinarians to leave their fears, doubts and personal interests behind and come forward in greater numbers to give a helping hand to this worthy cause.

Yours faithfully,

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