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FUTURE IS BRIGHT, BUT ADAPT STUDY CONTENT, SAY VETS

VETERINARY surgeons are generally positive about the UK profession's future, with 59 per cent very or fairly optimistic according to a survey of more than 600 vets and students.

But vets also highlighted the need to reduce stress – the single highest priority goal for the future, with nearly a fifth (19 per cent) of respondents choosing it from a list of options – along with securing greater public recognition for the profession.

Vet Futures, a joint project from the BVA and RCVS to help the profession shape its own future, carried out the survey. It explored vets' attitudes towards the profession and asked them to prioritise the key issues and rank major threats and opportunities.

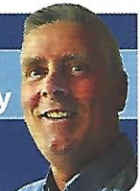
Priorities for vets varied according to different areas of work and seniority. However, an overriding theme was the pursuit of public recognition for the role vets play in non-clinical roles, such as research, food supply and security, and public health.

Respondents' goals for 2030 include:

- veterinary leadership on animal welfare issues;
- respected and valued role in society;
- valued role for vets in education on responsible animal ownership; and
- higher profile on animal-related issues that affect public health.

In terms of their own careers, 59 per

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cent felt they had met or exceeded their expectations, with others saying their careers had only met some expectations (38 per cent) or not met any (three per cent). Among those dissatisfied vets, reasons for their responses included few opportunities for progression, pay and working hours.

BVA president John Blackwell said it

was good to see the "veterinary glass half full" for many, but he was concerned about younger vets.

"We know younger vets are disproportionately represented among those who are feeling less positive about their own careers, which is a real concern for future generations. Clearly, work needs to be done to innovatively tackle some of the concerns."

The survey also asked vets to rank threats and opportunities for the profession, with increasing expectations around customer service seen as the greatest area of opportunity.

Vets also wanted the structure and content of undergraduate training to reflect the breadth of career choices and to allow students to specialise earlier.

Respondents highlighted the opportunity to increase public awareness and understanding of veterinary contributions to health and concerns relating to animal disease.

RCVS president Stuart Reid said: "There is a lot for the veterinary profession to be proud of, but the Vet Futures survey shows vets are concerned the public doesn't understand or value the variety of roles we undertake outside clinical practice.

"We have also heard through our guest blog that vets working outside of practice sometimes feel they are treated as second-class vets."

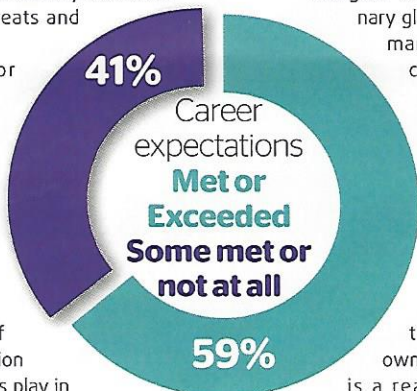
Solutions

However, Mr Blackwell said the association had been receiving interesting ideas to deal with the issues in the profession, and encouraged more vets and vet nurses to get involved.

"Through the Vet Futures UK-wide roadshow and our online engagement, we have been hearing new and interesting ideas for the future. We want to hear from as many vets, vet nurses and others who have a stake in the future of the profession as possible through our Veterinary Vision essay competition or via the Vet Futures website."

According to Prof Reid, veterinary confidence in the future was high on the agenda.

"Through the Vet Futures project RCVS and BVA aim to address the lack of public awareness about the variety of roles undertaken by members of the profession, as well as increase understanding and access to these varied career opportunities among the profession. We want to enable all veterinary surgeons to not only feel optimistic, but confident in their future."



Penelope pitstop: pigeon misses Belfast by count

A HOMING pigeon that got lost en route to its home is being cared for by a veterinary team until it can head home.

Penelope the homing pigeon set off from Wales to return to her home in Belfast and arrived in Glasgow rather than her hometown.

The experienced, but confused, racing pigeon is being cared for by the veterinary team at The Pets 'n' Vets Family Practices in Glasgow.

Partner Ross Allan said: "It seems she forgot to turn back – an error her owner says she made once before. Penelope's owner in Belfast has given our nurses a special feed her up to aid her recovery after her unnecessary journey, and she'll soon be fit enough to be released and homeward bound this time."

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