**BCVSp & RCVS Joint Officers – note of meeting, 6 November 2020**

In attendance:

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| **Organisation** | **Attendees** |
| RCVS | Duncan Ash (Senior Education Officer)  Niall Connell (Vice-President)  Susan Dawson (Treasurer)  Eleanor Fergusson (Registrar)  Mandisa Greene (President)  Linda Prescott-Clements (Director of Education) |
| BCVSp | Karla Borland  Myra Forster-van Hyfte  Gayle Hallowell Richard Hepburn |

1. Apologies of absence received from Lizzie Lockett.

**Minutes from the meeting held on 12 June 2019 – actions**

**University of Liverpool DBR**

2. DA confirmed that Liverpool had updated the webpage for the Diploma in Bovine Reproduction so that the references to it being a Specialist level qualification and holders being eligible for Specialist listing, had been removed.

**Digital packs for APs and Specialists**

3. There had been no further progress with this from RCVS. BCVSp were still keen on the idea going forward and would be willing to contribute to content for the Specialists. As reported at the last meeting, many new RCVS registrants who are already European Specialists are still largely unaware that they need to also register as a Specialist with RCVS. Therefore any information on this, and Specialist/AP status generally, that could go to new registrants would be appreciated.

4. Although not directly addressing those particular areas, LPC explained that there was current a review of AP Status being carried out, and there were plans to promote the status once the review had concluded, so Specialist status could also be included in these promotions going forward. Part of BCVSp remit was also to promote Specialists to the public, and therefore would support anything RCVS could do to assist with this.

**Dual Specialists**

5. DA clarified that the decision to no longer allow for dual listing was re-confirmed by Education Committee in Sep 2019, after RCVS received a letter asking for this to be re-considered from a number of those who had two listings. BCVSp had also run a survey on the issue, and the results were shared with the Specialist S/C earlier in 2020, but they had agreed that the response rate was too low to be able to take any meaningful data from it, and it’s not been taken any further since with the decision still standing.

**Alternative training routes**

6. LPC had contacted Amanda Boag about progress on this, and would be able to follow up by email once confirmation had been received.

7. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

**Internship regulation**

8. KB reported that BCVSp had recently published some guidance for those taking on internships, as there were concerns around the number of un-paid internships that were currently being offered. There were also fears that new graduates could become vulnerable to this, as they could be keen to take on internships to make up for lost opportunities for practicing clinical skills due to lockdowns and restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

9. BCVSp asked if RCVS had any plans on issuing any guidance on the area, however whilst in agreement that it was a concerning issue, as a work-based issue it did not necessarily fit into the remit of RCVS. However, there was a possibility that some guidelines could be introduced within the Practice Standards Scheme. RCVS asked if the BCVSp guidance could be sent for reference.

**Actions:** BCVSp to forward guidance to RCVS; RCVS to look into internship regulations within PSS

**Working hours regulation**

10. BCVSp also raised concerns about the increasing number of vets who were having to sign contracts which opted them out of the working hours directive, and there was a growing expectation that vets would be working long hours, and RCVS were asked on their views on this.

11. Similarly, whilst sympathetic to the situation, there was nothing RCVS could do in terms of regulation around this as practices were legally able to operate in this way. It was acknowledged that long hours could be an ultimate cause of vets leaving the profession in the long term, and also a cause for mistakes in the short term, and RCVS would advocate and promote vets to be mindful of their own physical and mental health, and how their working life was affecting this. Therefore, although nothing could be done from a regulatory point of view, it was agreed that work would be done within the Mind Matters initiate to try and address this issue. BCVSp offered to submit some case studies that could used.

**Actions:** Mind Matters to consider issue; BCVSp to submit case studies

**Promotion of APs and Specialists**

12. GH reported that a Nottingham student had recently conducted a project on perceptions of APs and Specialist from within the profession, and also amongst students. The results showed that essentially no students were aware of the training and experience required to obtain either status, and 25% of the profession were also unsure. Further to this, around 75% of the public surveyed didn’t fully understand the term “specialist”, and there were comments that “consultant” would be more appropriate and in line with human medical professions. It was also reported that many non-specialist vets had started to refer to themselves as consultants. Therefore, BCVSp were keen for more to be done to promote the statuses.   
  
13. As reported earlier in the meeting, the review on AP status had retuned similar results to student’s project, and LPC confirmed that work would be done going forward on the promotion of APs and also Specialists. LPC also asked if the results from the project could be shared, and GH confirmed that she would ask for permission from the student.

**Actions:** RCVS to begin preparation on promotion of APs and Specialists

**Telemedicine**

14. Specialists generally are able to offer advice remotely to other vets as a standard practice, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic, remote consultation between vets had been increasing. BCVSp asked if there was any specific guidance around what amount or level of remote advice and consultation would be considered appropriate. EF confirmed that RCVS did have limited advice on this, however it was more around vet to client advice, rather than vet to vet. Therefore as a general rule, the onus would be expected to be on the individual to use their own judgement as a professional as they would in other situations. It was reported that there would be a survey on telemedicine carried out in the new year, and the issue of guidance around vet to vet remote advice could be considered with the rest of the results.

**Actions**: RCVS to look into options of guidance for remote vet to vet consultations

**Joint communications**

15. MFH reported that BCVSp were copied into various comms and press releases from other organisations in order to be able to share anything relevant to their members and followers on social media, and asked if they could be included with RCVS comms as well. RCVS did have comms lists, and the Director of Communications, Ian Holloway, would be asked to make contact with MFH on the issue.

**Actions**: IH to contact MFH

**Date of next meeting:** to be confirmed for November 2021.