

University Lectureships

In 2003 the Foundation announced the launch of three BVA:AWF lectureships in animal welfare at the universities of Bristol, Glasgow and Liverpool. This project is designed to support the development of an integrated approach to teaching animal welfare within the veterinary curriculum nationally. The three lecturer posts are expected to become established permanently after the initial four year funding commitment. The collaborative approach allows for considerable cross fertilisation and the exchange of ideas and information together with planned rotational weeks between all the schools by the three lecturers.

These positions will provide a significant boost to teaching in this critical component of the veterinary curriculum. Welfare teaching for veterinary students is not so much about the mechanics of good husbandry, but more an analysis of the welfare implications of husbandry conditions and clinical procedures, since animal welfare science is now an established and rapidly expanding academic discipline, veterinary students need the skills and knowledge to be able to understand and review critically the scientific evidence on issues ranging from tail docking of puppies to the restriction of sows in farrowing crates.

Veterinary surgeons are perceived as animal advocates and their opinion (either individual or via representative bodies) is highly valued by consumers and politicians alike. However, this credibility needs to be supported by a good working knowledge of welfare science methodologies. Furthermore, providing a basic knowledge of the ethical and legal issues involved is imperative for ensuring that students can articulate discussion in a logical manner.

This BVA AWF initiative provides an excellent opportunity to strengthen welfare related teaching in the UK veterinary schools. Each of the three posts at Bristol, Glasgow and Liverpool address slightly different, but complementary, aspects of welfare: applied welfare assessment and improvement; quality of life assessments; and epidemiology/biosecurity. In addition to teaching veterinary students, it is planned that each lecturer will disseminate their research work in both professional and client orientated presentations and publications.

The lecturers that have been appointed to the Universities are:

Dr David Main at Bristol University



David Main qualified from the Royal Veterinary College in 1992, gained a PhD at Bristol in 1997 and currently holds the RCVS Diploma in Animal Welfare Science, Ethics and Law. He is responsible for teaching welfare and ethics to both veterinary and veterinary nurse undergraduates. With the help of an enthusiastic team at the university, his research activities have centred upon developing applied welfare assessment and improvement systems in a range of species. His other research interests include welfare benchmarking in laboratory mice, assessment systems for working horses, a model lameness control plan for dairy heifers and welfare assessment of pet rabbits.

Dr Dorothy McKeegan at the University of Glasgow

Dorothy McKeegan studied Zoology at the University of Glasgow before going on to complete an MSc in Applied Animal Behaviour and Animal Welfare at Edinburgh University. After completing her PhD in 1999, she continued working at Roslin Institute near Edinburgh, conducting neurophysiological and behavioural research relating to the welfare of poultry. Dorothy was appointed as the BVA Animal Welfare Foundation lecturer at Glasgow in February 2005, where her role is to develop and apply an integrated teaching programme for animal welfare and ethics across the undergraduate curriculum. As a member of the Division of Animal Production and Public Health, and of the Glasgow University Pain and Welfare Group, Dorothy continues to pursue her research interests in avian sensory physiology, pain perception and poultry welfare.

Dr Jennifer Duncan at the University of Liverpool

Jennifer Duncan qualified from the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies in 1991. After several years working in private mixed veterinary practice she studied and obtained her PhD from the University of Liverpool in 1998. She was appointed BVA AWF Lecturer within the Division of Livestock Health and Welfare in 2004. Her main teaching duties including animal welfare teaching in BVSc curriculum herd health and preventative veterinary medicine. Her research interests include cattle lameness and welfare in sheep.