

VETS AND INTERNATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Following the success of the BVA Overseas Group CPD on "Post Conflict and Disaster, the Veterinarian's role" held in conjunction with the Royal Army Veterinary Corps in April 2005; together with the interest generated by the article published in In Practice "Taking the Lead: Veterinary Interventions in Disaster Relief" (In Practice (2006) 28, 48-51, it has become apparent that there is an increasingly significant role to be played by the veterinary profession within the sphere of international disaster management.

To this end, the Overseas Group of the British Veterinary Association would like to hear from veterinary professionals with significant overseas experience who would be prepared to become involved in supporting a veterinary disaster management resource for members of the profession and organisations involved in crisis work overseas. We are particularly keen to receive help from those with livestock and working equine experience in developing countries and specifically in regions prone to recurrent natural disasters.

It is important that the profession is seen to be proactive within this sphere of overseas work. The international humanitarian sector is increasingly looking to the veterinary profession for guidance: on a global level, not only are we recognized as the experts in animal health and welfare issues but also as a resource with regards to hands on knowledge of animal/human interdependence and the devastating socio-economic impact that comes about from destruction of this dynamic.

Veterinary professionals, and indeed paraprofessionals such as nutritionists and husbandry experts, have been working and researching subjects for decades that can now be brought together under the disaster management umbrella for the evolution of policies and interventions that will benefit animal welfare and humanitarian development alike. We would be pleased to have our attention drawn to any such research previously undertaken.

The BVA Overseas Group is uniquely placed to orchestrate such a resource, the worldwide working network that already exists between us and organisations such as the Commonwealth Veterinary Association and the World Veterinary Association allows for exchange of information and experiences between local veterinarians and international experts. This international focus on veterinary issues enables provision of sustainable benefit to affected communities.

The aim of the group is to support the creation of a small panel of professionals to provide expertise and advice to governments and humanitarian agencies with regard to appropriate veterinary disaster management interventions as well as to support individual veterinarians involved in disaster work.

Please direct any comments and expressions of interest to: Helena Cotton, BVA Overseas Group, British Veterinary Association, 7 Mansfield Street, London W1G 9NQ, e-mail: helenac@bva.co.uk

Laura Bowen

Chairman – BVA Overseas Group, c/o BVA, 7 Mansfield Street, London W1G 9NQ

Tess Sprayson

Global Veterinary Solutions, 3 Rill Cottages, Aylesbeare, Devon EX5 2BR

