

2006 Poultry Health Course, Institute for Animal Health, Compton Laboratory, Newbury, Berkshire, United Kingdom

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I had an opportunity to spend part of February and March (27th February – 21st March) in various areas of England, United Kingdom amongst veterinarians, biologists, wildlife conservationists and environmentalists.

The main aim of my trip was to attend the Poultry Health Course (PHC) which is held annually at the Institute for Animal Health (IAH), Compton Laboratory, Newbury, Berkshire. The PHC lasted nine (9) days, from 27th February to 9th March 2006, after which I had another opportunity to travel around and observe some private poultry units and wildlife conservation areas.

The Poultry Health Course was an absolute delight (Table 1); I can now say that I have much confidence in most issues relating to poultry/avian health and production. I got a clear understanding of improved poultry production, disease pathogenesis and diagnostics, and a little more on the infamous wildlife–domestic animal disease interface, a subject of crucial importance especially in this era of emerging zoonoses (e.g. avian influenza) that are increasingly becoming a threat to the human population. Uganda, already faced with various socio-political problems and trying to solve one of its biggest health problems (the HIV/AIDS scourge), is very vulnerable.

Poultry production in Uganda is one of the areas of importance in national economies and performs a major role in improving the nutritional status and income in many smallholder farmers and landless communities through provision of eggs and meat for home consumption as well as surplus for the market. Over 70% of the poultry products and 20% of animal protein in Uganda comes from this sector; however mortalities due to disease and predation have been too high that poultry production has been too low and irregular. The PHC has equipped me with basic knowledge in disease dynamics i.e. combating disease especially in terms of bio-security, diagnostics and therapeutics in both domesticated and wild birds. I am now ready to disseminate this knowledge to fellow veterinarians, other interested scientists and the grassroot communities.

Having gained such experiences of this role abroad, in a country I so desired to once travel and travelling out of East Africa for the very first time, was indeed a privilege. **Many thanks go to IFAR who provided £600 (six hundred pound sterling)** to assist me attend the PHC (Table 2) and to Dr. F. Scullion who kept me informed about the Grant and the deliberations that followed thereafter. Thanks also go to Professor John E Cooper, DTVM, FRCPath, FRCVS and Mrs Margaret E Cooper, LLB, FLS, who helped coordinate my trip so carefully that comfort was guaranteed for my entire stay in the UK.

Table 1: Detailed Poultry Health Course lectures and other activities thereafter

Date	Activity/subject	General Comments
27 th Feb /06	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome and round table introductions by <i>Dave Cavanah(Course Director) and Terry Naylor(Course Administrator) of IAH</i> 2. Immune system of the fowl by <i>Adrian Smith of IAH</i> 3. Infectious Bronchitis(including coli septicaemia) by <i>J.K.A Cook of Houghton Trust, Huntington</i> 4. Diseases caused by chicken anaemia viruses and other circoviruses by <i>Daniel Todd of Agri-food Biosciences Institute of Northern Ireland, Belfast</i> 5. Adenoviruses diseases by <i>Michael Hess of Clinic for Poultry and pet birds veterinary University of Vienna</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Great start especially with a good introduction of the immune system basics which gave a clear understanding of disease pathogenesis of the topics discussed thereafter. 2. Laboratory diagnosis of both viral and bacterial infections was well discussed, to maximum comprehension, and the practical and field work was marvellously presented.
28 th Feb/06	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. histomoniasis by <i>Michael Hess of Clinic for Poultry and pet birds veterinary University of Vienna</i> 2. Mycoplasmas by <i>Janet Bradbury of Liverpool University</i> 3. Reoviruses, infectious laryngotracheitis, infectious avian encephalitis and fowl pox by <i>Dick Jones of Liverpool University</i> 4. Laboratory diagnosis of virus infections by <i>Richard Gough of Veterinary Laboratories Agency</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. However much the intensity of the course was, each topic was presented in a way so as to be easily grasped.
1 st March/06	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hatchery practice by <i>Charles Deeming, Hatchery consultant, Lincolnshire</i> 2. Avian Pneumovirus diseases (diagnosis and vaccination) by <i>Clive Naylor of Liverpool University</i> 3. Duck industry and diseases and how to carry out field investigation by <i>Keith Gooderham, veterinary practitioner , Huntington</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The course presenters/instructors were so approachable.
2 nd March/06	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Infectious bursal disease by <i>Chris Morrow Aviagen LTD</i> 2. immune system of the fowl in the context of vaccination and encounters with pathogens by <i>Adrian Smith of IAH</i> 3. emerging diseases including necrotic enteritis and Biosecurity by <i>Chris Morrow of Aviagen</i> 4. Vaccination strategies and application of vaccinations and a workshop on vaccination by <i>Peter Cargill of Merial Animal Health</i> 	
3 rd /March/06	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mareks disease and lymphoid leucosis by <i>Venugopal Nair of IAH</i> 2. Genetics of disease and transgenics by <i>Peter Kaiser of IAH</i> 3. Campylobacter by <i>Mike Jones of IAH</i> 4. Trends and future trends in world broiler meat production and the influence of poultry breeders and skeletal diseases by <i>Barry Thorp of Aviagen, Edinburgh</i> 5. Molecular approaches to diagnosis <i>Cavanah of IAH</i> 	
6 th March/06	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ELISAS by <i>Holly Davies, contract group IAH</i> 2. Biology and control of coccidiosis by <i>Martin Shirley</i> 3. diseases of Game birds by <i>Chris Davis of Game Conservancy Trust</i> 4. Newcastle disease and influenza virus by <i>Dennis Alexander of Veterinary Laboratories Agency</i> 	
7 th March/06	<p>Visitation to a broiler farm and onsite discussions with owner and David parsons, a private veterinarian and a visit to Parsons practice in Wincanton, Wiltshire</p>	
8 th March/06	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Management of broiler and broiler breeders, turkey industry and turkey diseases by <i>Paul McMullin, Veterinary Practitioner, Thirsk</i> 2. Feed related problems by <i>Steve Wilson and Andrew Fothergill, BOCM Pauls</i> 3. Applied therapeutics by <i>Steve Lister, Veterinary Practioner, Norfolk</i> 	

9 th March/06	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Salmonella by Paul Barrow of University of Nottingham 2. public health importance of Salmonella by Andrew Pearson of Health Protection Agency 3. Commercial layers, disease epidemiology, key diseases and major panics as well as field incidence of problems by Grant Hayes, Veterinary Practitioner, Cambridgeshire 	
	End of the Poultry Health course	
10 th March/06	Spend the entire day with Sean Wensley, BVSc, MSc, MRCVS at The Ack Veterinary Practice observing and participating in the admitted cases both small animal and avian	I had a chance to compare the nature of veterinary practice in Uganda with that in the UK.
11 th March/06	A visit to Liverpool central, to Mersey river where Sean and I took a boat ride and later proceeded to the National Trust of Formby for the admiration of the Red squirrels and sand dunes. We continued further inside the Trust and ended up at the Irish Sea, giving me an opportunity to see the sea for the first time in my life.	Travelling to the UK not only benefited me through the poultry health course but also enlightened me about other aspects of nature conservation
12 th March/06	A visit to the Blue Planet Aquarium	An amazing observation of multiple fish species, representing a collection of all fish from all over the world. This same day it snowed heavily, this was a moment I wanted to observe, seeing snow for the first time.
13 th March/06	A ride to Chester Zoo	Appreciation of the organisation, spatial requirements and environmental enrichment at the zoo.
14 th March/06	<p>A tour of The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT), Martin Mere</p> <p>Poultry Facility (Building) on the outskirts of the Trust</p>	Trust consist of both captive and wildfowl, this was important because it gives a clear understanding of the possibilities of disease transmission/sharing among captive, wildlife and domestic animals (poultry).
15 th March/06	A visit to London Zoo, met the students of Wild Animal Health MSc course	Together we took a tour of the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons.
16 th March/06	A visit to the British Veterinary Association(BVA), 7 Mansfield Street, London	Met and had a talk with the President BVA, Freda Scott-Park.(Figure 1)
17 th March/06	Spent a day at Cambridge School of Veterinary Medicine	Gave a talk to the Final – Year students about the basic challenges to the veterinary profession in Uganda, community conservation tools for those interested in wildlife and a summary about the poultry industry in East Africa
18 th -20 th March /06	A visit to the Centre Environment and Hydrology, to meet Tony Turk of the International Owl Society (IOS)	
21 st March/06	Travelled back to Uganda	

Figure 1: BVA President Freda Scott-Park (Right) and Senhite Celsus at the BVA Offices on 7 Mansfield Street, London



Abbreviations

BVA: British Veterinary Association

IAH: Institute for Animal Health

IOS: International Owl Society

PHC: Poultry Health Course

WWT: Wildfowl and Wetland Trust