

British Veterinary Association Day Speech

Dr. Fieke Molenaar MRCVS

Incoming BVA Junior Vice President 2025/26

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Thank you Becki, my friend, who has seen me through a fair few career movements, some more positively memorable than others.

Those of you who have glanced through my CV will have noticed that my path to the BVA has been quite varied. Not because of misadventure, but mainly because our profession has so much to offer.

Not only is there a vast number of species to focus on, aiming to improve their health and welfare, but we can do it in a plethora of ways. Being a vet does not stop at being a clinician, the first image that springs to mind. We can also be conservationists, work in industry, as a pathologist, a scientist, an educator – there are so many ways to be a vet.

Recently, a BVA member expressed concern to me about the fact that, despite me having a very interesting career, there seemed to be no evidence of political or business skills. Apparently, my years as BVZS president, on BVA council or as a trustee of two charities did not cut the mustard.

Does this then make me nervous, to join as a BVA officer? Not at all. Yes, I am not a politician, and I am a business professional. I am a vet, and every vet should be capable of representing their peers in our members association. Our common ground is our amazing profession, and all of us on a daily basis we observe, deduct and decide, in the interest of animal welfare and health.

Does it make me nervous, to receive critique even before I start? Not at all. I believe in teamwork and transparency, and I invite any member to respectfully voice constructive thoughts, so that we may move forward collectively. We are all different people, who see things in different ways, but we find equality and common ground in our veterinary profession, and every voice should matter.

So, what does make me nervous? That the eyes of the next generation are upon us, and that they may find us wanting. The veterinary students and recent graduates who are being shaped in a world with global instability, fast-paced scientific advances and the rise of AI. They are faced with a shift in public perception towards our sector in the wake of the CMA investigation. These young graduates not only experience their career differently but also communicate on another level. And the BVA wants to remain a strong voice for all the vets in the UK if we can retain our connection with them.

I myself am in awe of a new grads' knowledge, and their ability to effortlessly POCUS any needy patient that rolls through the door. I am equally reassured by my fellow old school pragmatists, with our ability to get things done. And I am inspired by the likes of Mary Brancker, who go against convention and follow their own path.

So, today I feel a little bit nervous, yes, but I mainly feel welcome, here at the BVA, I feel supported by everyone here in the room, and I look forward to what lies ahead.