Driving change, shaping the future

I’m delighted to present our annual report to you. The theme for my presidential year has been ‘driving change and shaping the future’ and I’m encouraged by what we’ve achieved to bring about change in BVA and provide leadership as the profession looks to the future.

An enormous personal highlight has been the success of BVA’s non-stun slaughter campaign. We have made great progress in engaging and informing the public by providing rational, science-led arguments. The campaign helped put BVA on the national stage and continues to increase our visibility amongst policymakers and the public.

Another highlight has been the joint BVA/RCVS Vet Futures project. It has been truly inspirational to meet members of all ages who are utilising their veterinary degrees in many different areas of employment, and to talk about a shared vision for the future. It has reaffirmed my belief that we have the expertise, enthusiasm and energy for a very positive future.

There have been challenges too. Developing our position on badger culling as part of the BVA policy on bovine TB eradication and representing the wide range of views within the profession has not been easy, but I am proud that we have remained consistent and credible in our approach.

On all of the big issues we’ve worked closely with our divisions. Strengthening that relationship has been one of the focus areas of our governance review and whilst I recognise there is further work to do I’m pleased that we’ve made so much progress in such a short space of time.

None of our work is possible without input from our members. You are the BVA and I’d like to say an enormous thank you to all of you.

John Blackwell, BVA President 2014–2015

Stronger and more visible

The last 12 months have been extremely busy for BVA. In January the Board agreed our Strategic Plan, which set out an ambitious agenda for the next three years. Our priorities include more proactive lobbying and campaigning. We’re particularly proud of how we’ve increased BVA’s visibility with media, policymakers and the public, ensuring the veterinary voice gets heard.

Through our governance review we’ve been looking at how we can be more effective, open and transparent. We’ve been working hard to improve relationships with our specialist divisions to ensure that we’re all working together in the best interests of the profession. We’ve also worked closely with the RCVS on the Vet Futures project to help the profession shape its own future. One of the key findings is that the profession needs strong leadership and a strong voice, and BVA is committed to providing that.

During the year we’ve met hundreds of members at events around the UK. We’ve been listening to what you tell us in meetings, through our survey panel and online, and your feedback informs everything we do.

As your professional association, we are committed to providing you with the support you need throughout your career; whether this is professional development, careers advice, legal support or financial services. Over the next year we’re planning to relaunch the Young Vet Network to provide better support for recent graduates.

We hope you like the changes we’re making. Do contact us to share your views.

David Calpin, Chief Executive

Governance Review

To make sure BVA is keeping pace with changes in the veterinary profession the BVA Board set up an ambitious governance review. The four priority areas of the review aim to address perceived issues with BVA’s existing structure and improve the way we represent and support the veterinary profession. The four areas are: BVA’s relationship with the specialist divisions; the relationship between BVA Board and Council; the election of BVA Officers; and our committee structure. The project also has two cross-cutting themes: equality and diversity, and member engagement. We have made substantial progress in each area and have engaged with members via our committees, Council, community and with our specialist divisions to make sure BVA is fit for the 21st century.

BVA Branches

BVA’s Branches in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland go from strength to strength. This year each Branch has submitted consultation responses on a wide range of veterinary and animal health and welfare issues, and engaged with key politicians, policymakers, and stakeholders. Looking ahead to the national elections in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in May 2016, we will work with our Branches to develop a clear set of priorities and policies for the new administrations.

Alongside the BVA Governance Review we are developing ideas to better support our Branches and ensure that the voice of our members in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland continues to be strong.
We represented our members at the highest level

Our manifesto

Ahead of the UK General Election in 2015, we launched our manifesto calling for vets to be at the heart of a ‘One Health’ government agenda. We used the manifesto to engage with the parties ahead of the election, and sent it to senior government officials. The key asks in the manifesto formed the basis of our discussions with Defra minister George Eustice and the UK Chief Veterinary Officer Nigel Gibbens.

www.bva.co.uk/manifesto-2015

Lobbying across the UK and Europe

This year we engaged with over 80 politicians at four regional dinners, and at our afternoon tea briefing and parliamentary reception in Westminster. We also welcomed newly elected MPs to our House of Commons reception in June. We held meetings with ministers, parliamentarians and senior civil servants across the UK and in Brussels, at which we discussed priority issues including welfare at slaughter, surveillance, bovine TB, veterinary medicines, antimicrobial resistance, and pet travel.

www.bva.co.uk/campaigns

We championed the veterinary profession

BVA in the news

BVA media coverage continues to rise. In 2014, our average monthly media hits increased by 61% to 261 per month and in the first half of 2015 the average increased a further 34% to 350 hits. The proportion of BVA media coverage appearing in national and regional press also increased from 29% (2011/12) to 75% in the first half of 2015, massively improving BVA's visibility. National coverage highlights in 2014/15 included hitting the front page of The Times in January with our non-stun slaughter campaign.

www.bva.co.uk/news

Survey panel successes

BVA's flagship Voice of the Veterinary Profession surveys generated approximately 500 additional pieces of media coverage in 2014/15. To coincide with a major non-stun slaughter debate in Parliament, we released figures from the Voice survey that nine in 10 vets think consumers should be better informed about slaughter methods. Over 130 news outlets covered the story.

With less than a year to go until the microchipping of dogs becomes compulsory across the UK we released figures showing that the majority of vets estimate a quarter of dogs are not yet microchipped. The story was covered by The Times, Sunday Times, The Sun, BBC1 and ITV.

www.bva.co.uk/voice

Vet Futures

We've been working with the RCVS to provide strategic leadership for the profession through the Vet Futures project, to help the profession prepare for and shape its own future. We've had a fantastic response from vets, students, and vet nurses through our UK-wide roadshow, our surveys and focus groups, and there is a lot of agreement about the major challenges and opportunities. We'll be launching an action plan based around our vision and key ambitions for 2030 at BVA Congress at the London Vet Show.

www.vetfutures.org.uk

Veterinary View with ITN Productions

We have been working in partnership with ITN Productions to produce Veterinary View, a news and current affairs-style programme about and for the veterinary profession. The programme will explore the challenges and opportunities the profession is facing and highlight some current innovations. The programme will be premiered at BVA Members’ Day on 24 September.

www.bva.co.uk/veterinary-view

BVA Members’ Day

This year BVA Members’ Day will be held in Edinburgh on 24 September. The day is free for members to attend and includes lunch and a drinks reception. Highlights will include a keynote address from Tom Solomon, Professor of Neurology, University of Liverpool, who is heading Britain’s efforts to combat Ebola, and the BVA awards ceremony celebrating members’ contributions to the profession.

Book your place at www.bva.co.uk/membersday
We provided first-rate services to support members

**World-class journals**
We agreed a new five-year contract with BMJ, our publishing partner, to further strengthen our *Veterinary Record* and *In Practice* journals, and our online open-access journals. We also agreed a new offer for members to receive an increased discount of 20% on recruitment advertising in Vet Record Careers.

**Exclusive member offers**
This year we continued our partnerships with Bupa, Lloyd & Whyte and Elsevier so that members could benefit from exclusive rates on health insurance, insurance and financial services, and publications. In the coming year we will be undertaking an audit of member benefits and seeking members' views on what they would value most.

www.bva.co.uk/benefits

**High-quality CPD**
We consolidated our national CPD programme aimed at the general and mixed practitioner. Our courses cover topics relating to companion animals, farm animals, equine, and non-clinical. In 2014, our CPD courses around the UK were attended by nearly 600 delegates.

www.bva.co.uk/cpd

**Enhanced website and communication channels**
In 2014 the BVA website was relaunched and the BVA community refreshed. The discussion forums on the BVA community allow members to share views and have their say. In April 2015, in response to requests from members we launched BVA’s Facebook page. This provides members with an additional way of engaging with us.

www.bva.co.uk

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**Bovine TB**
We continued to lobby for an evidence-led and comprehensive approach to bovine TB eradication. We worked with our specialist divisions and committees to develop a strong position on bTB and continued to influence and inform the public debate on the issue.

**Non-stun slaughter**
Our campaign to end non-stun slaughter attracted over 120,000 e-petition signatures and triggered a House of Commons debate. The high-profile campaign across the UK increased awareness of this important animal welfare issue and opened a dialogue with policymakers and religious communities.

**Responsible dog ownership**
We successfully lobbied for the compulsory microchipping of all dogs across the whole of the UK, raised members’ concerns about the import of puppies with Defra, and used the Voice survey results to promote messages about responsible dog ownership in the national media.

**Veterinary surveillance**
We lobbied against the dismantling of veterinary surveillance systems before new systems are put in place and we surveyed members to find out how changes are impacting at a local level. We lobbed the Efra select committee to carry out an inquiry into the changes.

**Antimicrobial resistance**
Working with the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe we have been lobbying MEPs to make sound decisions in the development of EU regulations on veterinary medicines and medicated feed. And we challenged the Chief Medical Officer’s comments on the use of antibiotics in veterinary medicine.

**Veterinary wellbeing**
We worked with the RCVS to support the Mind Matters Initiative to coordinate activity to support veterinary surgeons’ wellbeing and raise awareness of support services.

**Improving public perceptions of the profession**
BVA Officers gave interviews to promote and defend the profession, for example, Robin Hargreaves was interviewed on BBC Radio 4’s programme *You & Yours* about vet fees. Increasing our media profile has reinforced the profession’s position as a leading voice on animal welfare.

**Tendering for veterinary services**
We have maintained an ongoing dialogue with APHA, Defra and the Welsh Government to support the role of private veterinary surgeons, and we successfully lobbied for an extension for practices to sign up to contracts with Delivery Partners in England.

**Increase in veterinary undergraduates**
We worked with the Veterinary Schools Council, Association of Veterinary Students, and *Veterinary Record* to implement our education action plan. Education has featured strongly in our joint Vet Futures project with the RCVS.

**Regulation and para/allied professionals**
We are working with the RCVS and Professor the Lord Trees to gain government support for a Bill to protect the title of ‘veterinary nurse’.

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We campaigners on the issues that matter
Young Vet Network
Providing support for recent graduates remains a priority for BVA. Recent graduate members automatically become part of the Young Vet Network and receive additional benefits. In 2014 we began to review the support that young vets need and the workings of the Young Vet Network. This year, we will offer improved support to young vets across the UK.

www.bva.co.uk/youngvetnetwork

Canine Health Schemes
The Canine Health Schemes, run by BVA in partnership with the Kennel Club, continue to provide dog breeders with the option of testing for certain inherited conditions such as chiari-like malformation and syringomyelia, hip and elbow dysplasia, and hereditary eye disease. This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Hip Dysplasia Scheme.

www.bva.co.uk/chs

Have you seen the new and improved BVA community? Join the discussions at www.bva.co.uk/community

Membership
Total membership for 2014 was up by 3.9% to 15,045, as measured between the December 2013 and December 2014 Council meetings.

- Main/Standard 26%
- Young Vet Network 15%
- Group 19%
- Joint 2%
- Concession 7%
- Students 31%
- Other/Associate members 1%

New members
It is only through increasing our membership base that we are able to continually enhance the membership benefits and services we provide, and speak with a strong voice when representing the veterinary profession. It is therefore to report another year of membership growth.

2014 saw particularly strong growth in the Group (up by 24%) and Student (up by 12%) membership categories, so that they now represent 19% and 31% of the total membership figure respectively.

The end of year membership figure (at 31 December 2014) was 15,064.

Our finances
The Board has continued to ensure sound management of BVA’s finances. For the year ending 31 December 2014 BVA made a surplus of £321,732 (up from £149,454 in 2013).

Income
Total income last year increased by 8%, to £5,764,797. The main increase was due to the significant increase in advertising revenue from BVA’s publications, up 19% since last year. BVA’s membership continued to grow, up 3.7% to 15,046 members, leading to a 1% increase in revenue. Income from the Canine Health Schemes increased by 2%.

Expenditure
Total expenditure increased by 5% to £5,443,065. The cost of providing membership services increased by 7%, reflecting BVA’s investment in both the Vet Futures project and in increased media visibility through the creation of a survey panel. The cost of providing the publications increased by 1.5% whilst the cost of the Canine Health Schemes increased by 1%. Underlying administrative expenditure (excluding depreciation on capital expenditure) increased by 3.5% and included £49.5k donations to veterinary related charities, including the Veterinary Benevolent Fund (Vetlife) and Animal Welfare Foundation.

There was significant capital expenditure in 2014, predominately on a new integrated website and customer relationship management system, which totalled £461k. This was delivered on time and on budget and financed out of BVA’s working capital.

Reserves
In addition to the surplus of £321,732 there were unrealised investment gains of £12,412. Total reserves increased during the year by £334,144 to a year-end total of £10,543,457. If one excludes the tangible assets then the resulting working capital reserves are £2,082,317.

A copy of the full set of statutory accounts is available to all members, on request, from BVA headquarters. They also appear in the members’ only section of the BVA website at www.bva.co.uk.