



ANNUAL REPORT

2011





Introduction

2011 was a special year for veterinary organisations and institutions all around the world. It was designated World Veterinary Year in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the formal existence of veterinary training and an organised veterinary profession. The Veterinary Council celebrated World Veterinary Year with a memorable ceremony in the RDS, site of the first veterinary school in Ireland. Veterinary practitioners who had been 50 or more years on the register were presented with medals of long service by President Mary McAleese. The medal recipients were honoured for their contribution to the profession, the agriculture industry and Irish society, in general. President McAleese recognised the fact that the function of the veterinary practitioner in society extends far beyond the treatment of sick animals emphasising the key veterinary role in public health.

Continuing the "One Health" theme and as a further contribution to the World Veterinary Year celebrations, a webinar on the responsible use of antimicrobials was organised by the Veterinary Council in conjunction with Safe Food and the School of Veterinary Medicine, UCD. There was wide-ranging discussion on many facets of antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The participation of 380 veterinary practitioners at ten venues is indicative of the relevance of this topic. During the year Council members highlighted concerns about AMR at meetings with the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine and with Department officials. In relation to responsible antimicrobial usage, the Council continues to promote good veterinary practice, with particular emphasis on good prescribing practice.

With the introduction of mandatory continuing veterinary education (CVE) for all registrants from the start of 2012, there was a lot of activity in the continuing education field this year. Overall, the level of compliance with the scheme was very good. Staying up to date with current developments offers reassurance to owners that their animals are receiving optimal veterinary care. In addition, the maintenance of practice standards facilitates good veterinary practice. This year the Practice Accreditation Scheme has been under review. Improvements in the structure of the scheme will help to ensure that the public retains confidence in what is generally a very high standard of care provided in this country. In October the Council hosted an informative workshop on veterinary ethics which gave insight into current perspectives and future directions which might be taken.

In relation to veterinary nursing those nurses who are provisionally registered were offered the opportunity to complete a Council accredited course, run largely on line, by St John's Central College. Successful participants will be transferred to the main veterinary nurses register. The BSc in Veterinary Nursing offered at Dundalk Institute of Technology was accredited during the year, this brings to five the number of veterinary nursing courses in the State currently accredited by the Council.

This year there were 18 complaints received concerning veterinary practitioners which were considered by the Preliminary Investigation committee, two of which were referred for inquiry by the Fitness to Practice committee. No complaints were received concerning veterinary nurses.

There were seven full meetings of the Council this year as well as numerous committee and subcommittee meetings. I feel it is important to recognise the commitment of the members of Council, who act in a voluntary capacity, giving freely of their time in the interest of the public good. I welcome the four veterinary practitioners who were elected in November to sit on Council.



I would also particularly like to thank those Council members who retired this year: Paddy Rogan, Bill Cashman, Joe Cassidy, Donal Connolly and Pat Talty. I would also extend my gratitude to the Registrar, Valerie Beatty and her assistants Karen Bonner, Regina Cogan and Yvonne Reville for their dedication and hard work.

Lindy Vaughan
President



The Council comprises 19 members, 10 of whom are elected from amongst the profession and 9 who are appointed. L Vaughan was elected President on 21 January 2010 and S Ó Laoide was elected Deputy President on 21 January 2010. They hold these positions until 31 December 2011.

Elected Members: Elected Until 31 December

W Cashman	2011
J Cassidy	2011
J Collins	2013
D Connolly	2011
T Hanley	2013
S Ó Laoide	2013
M O'Donoghue	2013
M Osborne	2013
P J Talty	2011
L Vaughan	2013

Appointed Members: (Period of Appointment Expires on 31 December 2013)

Appointed by the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

B Bent
D MacFadden
G Mulcahy (NUI nominee)
F Mulligan (NUI nominee)
J O'Rourke
M O'Sullivan (Food Safety Authority nominee)
S Quinn
P Rogan
F Smith (Minister for Education & Science nominee)



Statutory Committees of Council:

Veterinary Education and Training Committee (VETC)

D Champion, J Cassidy, J Collins, T Hanley (Chair), G Mulcahy, F Mulligan, M O'Donoghue, F Smith and PJ Talty

Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC)

B Bent, D Connolly, D MacFadden and PJ Talty

Fitness to Practise Committee (FTPC)

T Hanley, G Mulcahy, F Mulligan, S Murphy (Independent Chair), M O'Sullivan, M Osborne and S Quinn

Other Committees:

Finance Committee

D Connolly, S Ó Laoide (Chair) and L Vaughan

Legislation and Ethics Committee (LEC)

B Bent, J Cassidy, D MacFadden, F Mulligan, S Ó Laoide, M Osborne (Chair), J O'Rourke, M O'Sullivan and P Rogan

Practice Premises Committee (PPC)

W Cashman, D Connolly (Chair), T Hanley, M O'Donoghue, F O'Leary, J O'Rourke, M Osborne and S Quinn

Veterinary Liaison Committee (VLC)

B Bent, W Cashman (Chair), J Collins, M O'Sullivan and S Quinn

Conjoint Committee

S Ó Laoide (Chair), P Talty

J Collins, F Murphy, P Nowlan – Veterinary Ireland

M Lyons – Veterinary Officers Association



The Registers

The Register of Veterinary Practitioners was established on 29 June 2006 pursuant to section 43 (2) of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005. The Register is published on the Council's website. The total number of registered veterinary practitioners on the Register at 31 December 2011 was 2372. New registrations for the year amounted to 102. 201 voluntary removed their name, 17 were erased and 17 deaths were notified to Council in the year. Restorations following voluntary removal amounted to 37 and 7 names were restored following erasure.

The Register of Veterinary Nurses was established on 1 January 2008 pursuant to section 93 (2) of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005. The Register is published on the Council's website. The total number of registered veterinary nurses on the Register at 31 December 2011 was 478. New registrations for the year amounted to 71. 15 voluntary removed their name, 15 were erased, restorations following voluntary removal amounted to 37 and 7 names were restored following erasure.

The Register of Certificates of Suitability was established on the 1 January 2007 as prescribed under Part 9 of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005. The Register contains the details of each premises registered under the Council's statutory Premises Accreditation Scheme (PAS). The total number of premises registered under PAS on 31 December 2011 was 696 classified as:-

Registered Veterinary Practice (RVP) - 215
 Registered Veterinary Surgery (RVS) - 167
 Registered Veterinary Clinic (RVC) - 193
 Registered Veterinary Hospital (RVH) Companion Animal (CA) - 112
 Registered Veterinary Hospital (RVH) Equine (Eq) - 9

Obituaries

It is with regret that the Council records the deaths of the following registered members notified to it during the year. Council extends the sympathy of its members and of the profession to their families.

Collins, SM	Comerford, PJ	Crowe, SD
Dodd, L	Dougan, P	Draper, M
Gaffney, W	Harney, J	Hurley, M
Logan, GJ	Lunny, WJ	Lyons, PJ
McCarthy, W	Mulligan, TD	Thorpe, R
Walsh, B	Weavers, ED	



Committee Reports

Finance Committee

Membership of Committee – listed in another section of the Report

The Committee met on 3 occasions during the year and in early 2012 to consider the audited accounts for 2011. Apart from the consideration of the audited accounts the Committee also reviewed the quarterly management accounts prepared for Council.

The Veterinary Council's audited accounts for 2011 are appended to this Report. The 2011 figures show that income amounted to €1,296,507 and expenditure amounted to €659,394. There were two exceptional items of expenditure during the year, the ceremony to award commemorative medals to veterinary surgeons which was held in the Royal Dublin Society to mark the 250th world anniversary of the veterinary profession and the funding provided in respect of the provision of an approved course for Provisionally Registered Veterinary Nurses at St John's Central College, Cork. The Balance Sheet reflects continued investment in the Council building and IT infrastructure.

The Veterinary Council's Education Trust Fund audited accounts for 2011 are also appended to this Report.

Preliminary Investigation Committee

Membership of Committee – listed in another section of the Report

The Council received 18 applications in 2011 for inquiries into fitness of practise under section 76 of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005. This is the same number as received in 2010 and considerably less than in 2009. The Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) met on 15 occasions in 2011 and dealt with 14 of these cases. Two cases did not proceed as the initial inquiry was not followed through by the applicant and an application for an inquiry was not received. The two remaining cases are on-going.

The subject of the cases concerned dogs (7), cats (4), horses (1), assault (1) and cat passport (1). More specifically the allegations made by complainants related to misdiagnosis by practitioner (6), post operative complications (3), unnecessary tests carried out (1), inadequate emergency consultation (1), assault (1), insufficient overnight monitoring (1) and poor practice procedures (1). One case has been referred to the Fitness to Practise Committee for inquiry.

In 13 of the cases considered the Committee concluded that there was insufficient evidence to recommend that the complaints be referred to the Fitness to Practise Committee for inquiry and these recommendations were accepted by Council

Fitness to Practise Committee

Membership of Committee – listed in another section of the Report

One inquiry was held in front of the Fitness to Practise Committee (FTPC) in 2011. Five members of the FTPC sat to hear an inquiry, the five people are (i) two registered persons who are members of Council, (ii) two non registered persons who are members of Council and (iii) an independent chair who is a practising solicitor and nominated by the Law Society.



The inquiry was spread over six days and was held in private.

Legislation and Ethics Committee

Membership of Committee – listed in another section of the Report

The Legislation and Ethics Committee (LEC) met on 4 occasions in 2011. Ms M Osborne continued as chair of the Committee. The Committee continued to respond to queries concerning both codes of professional conduct. The two issues which dominated this correspondence were communication (between veterinary practitioners and clients and between veterinary practitioners and their professional colleagues) and certification, including vaccination certificates for companion animals, pregnancy certification of broodmares and new certificates for Pre-Purchase Examination of horses. As highlighted in last year's report from the committee, certification is a vital aspect of a veterinary practitioner's work and adherence to the twelve principles is essential to maintain the highest standards.

During the year the Committee considered the revisions being undertaken by the New Zealand Veterinary Council and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeon to their Codes of Professional Conduct.

In October of this year the Committee hosted a seminar entitled: Veterinary Ethics in Ireland: Current Perspectives and Future Direction which was attended by members of the Council, representatives of veterinary practitioners and veterinary nurses, the Department of Agriculture, veterinary educators and representatives of other professional regulators including the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland, the Dental Council, and An Bord Altranais. During the afternoon the particular nature of veterinary ethics was discussed, especially the multiple responsibilities a veterinary professional has, to his/her client, the patient, society, and to other veterinary professionals. This was illustrated by case-based discussions. Consideration was also given to how a Code of Professional Conduct is developed and the two generally recognised models: that of the proscriptive/prescriptive type, where what should or should not be done in a given situation is explicitly stated, and the principles-based model.

The Committee intends to publish a report on the seminar in the Veterinary Ireland Journal and also intends to explore ways in which strategies and resources could be developed by Council to help veterinary professionals recognise and deal with ethical conflicts.

Veterinary Education and Training Committee (VETC)

Membership of Committee – listed in another section of the Report

The Veterinary Education and Training Committee (VETC) met on 6 occasions in 2011. The sub-committees covering Registration and Veterinary Nursing meet between meetings and report to the main committee. The VETC reports to Council where its decisions are ratified.

Continuing Veterinary Education (CVE). Mandatory CVE requirements for renewing the Licence to Practise on 1 January 2012, as allowed for in section 66 (4) of the Veterinary Practice Act 2005, requires that both veterinary practitioners and veterinary nurses have achieved the requisite number of credits in the credit year 1 August 2010 to 31 July 2011. The number of queries concerning the eligibility of courses or activities for CVE credit increased substantially during the year as a result of registrants seeking to comply with their obligations. The consequential work



load for the Council's administration as almost 3,000 registrants sought and supplied information regarding their CVE was very significant. The veterinary profession now joins most other professions in requiring members to continue to keep themselves informed of new practices, procedures and legal obligations in their field. Members of the VETC attended the UCD Hospital Day in August in order to answer the profession's questions on this subject.

Registration. A small number of registration queries from veterinary practitioners and veterinary nurses with qualifications from countries outside the EU were dealt with on a case by case basis. One candidate sat and passed the registration examination. The possibility of the Council entering into a mutual recognition agreement with the South African Veterinary Council is being explored.

Veterinary Nursing. Letterkenny IT and Dundalk IT veterinary nursing courses were revisited and these courses were approved by Council so that graduates may enter the Register of Veterinary Nurses. 77 Provisionally Registered Veterinary Nurses undertook the on-line course approved by Council and delivered by St John's College, Cork to enable them to join the main veterinary nursing register by the deadline of 31 December 2012.

The report on the joint VCI/EAEVE visitation to assess the MVB degree in UCD was completed and approved by Council in mid 2011. The Council is delighted to continue to accredit the MVB as a registrable qualification for entry to the Register of Veterinary Practitioners.

The EU Directive concerning the mutual recognition of professional qualifications is being reviewed by the European Commission with a view to making changes which should come into effect in 2012. The Council has participated in this review process and has made submissions to the relevant EU directorate.

Practice Premises Committee

Membership of Committee – listed in another section of the Report

At the end of 2010 the Practice Accreditation Scheme (PAS) had completed a four year cycle. The Certificate of Suitability (COS) issued after this cycle is valid for two years. This time period is being used to review the standards and develop these from the experiences to date. The review of the PAS standards and regulations will be completed by mid-2012. The communications strategy being adopted by the Council will ensure that those applying for a renewal of their COS by 31 December 2012 will be afforded adequate time to make whatever changes will be necessary to remain compliant.

The Council's decision to also review the assessment process began with a series of meetings. The committee met six times, a focus group once and there was one meeting with the premises assessors (PAs). The existing panel of PAs continues a planned schedule of revisits to premises with close out non conformances and a cross section of premises picked at random. The organisation of the assessments and the management of the PAs and their work are centred in the Council offices.

A new in-house organisation structure has put in place a PAS Management Team with responsibility for coordinating the PAs and their work, this group reports to the Practice Premises Committee at least once quarterly.



There was significant legal and professional expenditure during the year as a result of preparatory work on files for prosecution and case files for the Council's Authorised Officer in respect of late applicants who had failed to renew their COS within the required timeframe.

Conjoint Committee

Membership of Committee – listed in another section of the Report

The Conjoint Committee concentrates on addressing national and European veterinary matters and draws its membership from the Council, Veterinary Ireland and the Veterinary Officers Association.

The committee held five meetings during the year. PJ Talty and V Beatty attended the two FVE General Assembly meetings in May and November 2011 representing the Veterinary Council. In addition, the general council meetings of Veterinary Ireland were attended by members of the Conjoint Committee as observers.

The committee organised the celebration of Vet 2011, the 250th anniversary of the foundation of the profession. In February all practitioners who had been on the register for more than 50 years were presented with a medal by the President of Ireland Mrs Mary McAleese. In November the committee in conjunction with the liaison committee and with Veterinary Ireland organised a webinar on Responsible use of Antimicrobials, the webinar was made available in 10 venues one of which was in Belfast.

