

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Ensuring best publicity for vets' initiatives

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Business overview:

XLVets is a group of independently-owned veterinary practices in the UK. They work together to share experience, knowledge and skills to reach the highest standards of animal health and productivity.

Founded in the UK in 2005, XLVets originated from a group of predominantly farm animal-biased veterinary practices, who created a model of how individual practices can work successfully in partnership.

Role – what does your job involve?

As Marketing and Communications Manager, my role involves the development and overall management

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In a series of questions, **Joanne Sharpe**, of XLVet UK Ltd, tells Northern Farmer about her marketing role

of group marketing and communications activities to ensure XLVets delivers effective, market-leading activities for our member practices.

I am also responsible for our Livestock Matters magazine, which provides the latest information on a range of livestock management issues for our practices' clients.

We are planning our first national farming conference on Driving Dairy Efficiencies in September at Harper Adams University, bringing together 170 delegates, at which attendees will hear about the latest projects and initiatives and have the opportunity to get involved with a

series of practical workshops.

What is your typical day like?

I don't have a typical day! It ranges from working with our vets on our latest initiatives to liaising with suppliers or the media. Recently, I have been visiting member practices, working on the launch of our new brands and finalising the latest edition of Livestock Matters.

Which part of your job do you enjoy most?

I really like working with the vet practices. There is such an enthusiasm with the vets and practice teams and I enjoy being part of what they are



VARIED DAYS: Joanne Sharpe of XLVet UK Ltd

trying to achieve with their clients.

What's your greatest achievement?

As a marketing professional, it was fantastic when we won a top award at the Veterinary Marketing Association Awards last year for our initiative and innovation in the marketing of the BVD CHECK TAG to farmers.

This was a simple, cost-effective and practical method of testing for BVD and recording negative results on a database so that farmers can check the

BVD status of animals they purchase.

We developed a range of marketing tools to support the initiative and worked with tag manufacturers, laboratories, livestock marts and veterinary practices nationwide to involve as many as possible to make the scheme a success.

Your view on the future?

The veterinary profession and wider industry is undergoing huge change, which coupled with other pressures, including low milk prices,

reducing antibiotic usage and changes to Government support within agriculture, will result in vets and farmers looking at alternative ways of working together to drive efficiencies, but at the same time improve animal health and welfare.

Hobbies/Interests?

I don't have much spare time, but I do have a small flock of Suffolk sheep and enjoy spending time on the family dairy farm and getting out my horse, especially on the beach.