

An inspiration to the industry

Harper Adams Mastermind Award 2011
went to David Mulligan for setting high standards in training, education and service



Harper Adams
University College

David Mulligan wowed the judges with his commitment and desire to champion education and training at Parklands Veterinary Practice where he has worked for the past 12 years.

He was delighted to receive this recognition of training within the industry and says he sees it as a reward to the partners in the practice as much as himself. "I can't do my job unless I get the backing from the partners. They have tried to make Parkland into a different business because of the training, services and education that we can give to all of our clients.

"The way we work as a practice is to encourage staff development. We only have 10 SQPs working here which, compared to some merchant stores, may not seem that many, but given that we only have 20 vets working from our two main branches, that's a fairly significant investment and I believe it's unusual to have that many SQPs in veterinary practices."

David comes from a small family farm background and after completing his university agricultural degree, he has been able to maintain the small family farm – a mix of suckler cows and pedigree sheep – as his career developed. He says he has been fortunate to have gained a working insight into all aspects of the veterinary profession – from veterinary medicine wholesaling, a period of working in veterinary manufacturing followed and in 2000 moved on to become practice manager of



David Mulligan with Carwyn Ellis

Parklands Veterinary Clinic.

"At the time it was a local practice with a significant income stream from Government schemes such as TB testing. Following foot and mouth there was an ideal opportunity for the practice to refocus our objectives on where the future of veterinary medicine lay. We felt that the development of expertise across all species was attainable and as a key to being successfully implemented, we identified the development of all staff, from partners to lay staff, as a requirement to achieving our goals."

TRAINING CENTRE

As well as opening a state of the art surgery in 2005 at the Cookstown branch, the practice also opened a new purpose-built veterinary clinic/training centre at the Dungannon branch in 2011.

The judges were particularly impressed with the fact that David has written and delivered LANTRA-approved modules to farm-

ers across Northern Ireland. They were also impressed with David's attitude to SQP training.

On a day-to-day basis I have responsibility for negotiating with all the pharmaceutical companies for our veterinary farm purchases from POM-V to POM-VPS, for the commercial development of the practice, the educational/training requirements for all our farm support staff, our vets CPD, and for the training needs of our clients. I was the first guinea pig in practice to do the SQP qualification and after I passed the course, I identified other staff who I thought would make good SQPs and advised them on what the qualification would offer them and helped them study.

"It's unusual to have so many SQPs, but we saw it as way of developing and enhancing personal development. It helps make the staff more confident to know that if a client comes in they will be able to deal with their query, and it's about how they value their work and career and about having more regard and respect for what they do in the practice.

"By increasing their own development it has allowed us to develop the service that we can provide to our customers, particularly in the safe use and administration of veterinary medicines to animals in our care.

"It makes sense to train and educate our staff to improve the quality of service they can offer their clients," he concludes.