

Evidence-based medicine in livestock practice

VETERINARY practices are being encouraged to contribute their understanding and data to further develop evidence-based medicine.

Recently launched is a toolkit, available to the 650 members of the Evidence Based Network managed by the RCVS Knowledge. Membership of the network is available through the RCVS Knowledge website or for further information e-mail ebvm@rcvsknowledge.org.

Dr Rita Jorge, head of research, explains that 85% of research is thought to be of little direct use to veterinary surgeons in practice. A seminar last October has led to a greater understanding that information is required about "what vets see every day". Topics are critically appraised via the global network and by use of the toolkit. A workshop for farm vets is being planned to understand the caseload in practice and to identify the most important questions to be answered.

Currently there are over 150 members of the Dairy Cow Health and Production Knowledge Group and more veterinary surgeons in cattle practice are invited to participate. A "Skills Day" will take place on 30th October 2015 and a seminar in London from 1st to 3rd November 2016.

Jon Reader of Synergy Farm Health received a grant from RCVS Knowledge to analyse the caseload in one first opinion practice. The findings were presented by Andrew Davies at the latest BCVA congress.

Just how challenging is it for practices to collate and collect data as a part of practice management? A paper is available within *Cattle Practice* (22: 183): "A quantitative analysis of the caseload in first opinion veterinary practice: livestock, UK setting". The period collated was from February 2013 to January 2014 and the question is: what happens now? How practical is it for practices to collect data and how much use is it?

Rita Jorge is enthusiastic about the study findings and is in no doubt that practice-based information will advance evidence-based medicine and fulfil the mantra that EBM assists clinicians to make good decisions in good time.

At the BCVA congress delegates were introduced to the FLYMO system for time spent by a veterinary surgeon on farm (fertility, lameness, youngstock, mastitis, other). Other includes TB, sick, education, consultancy, nutrition and obstetrics. Sick animals are further categorised

RICHARD GARD reports on the 'toolkit' developed by RCVS Knowledge plus the FLYMO system, the subject of a presentation at the BCVA congress, for evaluating time spent on-farm by a veterinary surgeon

into specific conditions.

Each veterinary surgeon completes the information before leaving the farm and a bespoke software program

(Herdkeeper) is used to collate and analyse the data. Analysis can include individual herds or groups and includes costings and business-related aspects. Veterinary

spend data analysis shows the ratio of professional fees to medicines for all species and for individual species.

Paraprofessional activity for

mobility scoring (149 sessions) and foot trimming (69% of work) is also recorded with details of foot lesions and other conditions. The paper indicates that by using the software the practice data may be analysed "with great ease".

During the year 1,329 holdings were visited. Practice clients included 38% beef, 23% ovine and 16% dairy. Medicines contributed 55% towards the total income of the practice. Dairy

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