

UP FRONT...

It is always wise to do some forward planning – not least in the world of publishing, where life is all about copy dates and deadlines. But sometimes, the best laid plans...

Such was the case when commissioning our 'Comment' article in this issue. Back in January, when the planning began, we fully expected to have left the EU before this edition of *Veterinary Practice Today* was on your doorstep and we thought it would be an excellent idea to ask BVA past president, Gudrun Ravetz, to sum up what that leaving really meant for the veterinary profession.

Yet, the fickleness of politics and politicians means that here we are in May still within the EU. Notwithstanding that, Gudrun has written an excellent article on the current situation for the profession.

The effect of leaving the EU on the supply, licensing and prescribing of veterinary medicines has been one of the big issues within the veterinary profession; but just as important is how medicines are used, particularly on farms. Medicine use on farms has changed over the last decade or more and this is discussed in Owen Atkinson's excellent article on medicine stewardship. He highlights the need for better medicine compliance and storage on farms and points to the ever-present threat of antibiotic resistance – looking at how medicine stewardship by the veterinary profession can redress many of these issues.

Staying with the farming theme, Kaz Strycharczyk writes about the farmer's trusty companion, the sheepdog, with particular reference to the health and welfare of these working dogs and the role of the farm vet in their care. As a former owner of a Border collie, whose looks were more impressive than his herding abilities, I read with interest Kaz's comments on the scavenging traits of sheep dogs (Yes, I remember this well!) and the additional welfare risks a farming environment presents.

The country is going through a painful political process, but this is nothing compared to the real pain that our companion and commercial animals sometimes suffer and this is dealt with by two of our authors, Joanna Potter and Marie Rippingale. Joanna's article is the first in a series on chronic pain in dogs and cats that looks to improve our understanding of chronic pain and its management; while Marie takes an interesting look at pain scoring in equines and how the use of facial expressions can be used to assess pain.

Our next issue is due to be published in early July. Who knows if we will still be part of the European Union or be that 'Sceptered Isle floating alone in a silver sea', to slightly misquote Shakespeare's Richard II. Whatever the future holds, we still have to plan our journal well ahead – but no assumptions this time.

Maggie Shilcock
Editor

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Elmtree Business Park
Elmswell
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk IP30 9HR

Tel: 01359 245310

Fax: 01359 245253

enquiries@veterinarypracticetoday.com
www.veterinarypracticetoday.com

Editorial

Editors

Maggie Shilcock

maggie.shilcock@visionline.co.uk

Tel: 01359 245310

David Watson

david.watson@visionline.co.uk

Claire Newton-Ransom

claire.newtonransom@visionline.co.uk

Associate editor

Sarah Kidby

sarah.kidby@visionline.co.uk

Tel: 01359 245310

Design

Graphic designers

Melody-Anne Neville

Gemma West

Bradley Young

designer@visionline.co.uk

Production

Publications manager

Clara Ashcroft

clara.ashcroft@visionline.co.uk

Tel: 01359 245310

Advertising

advertising@veterinarypracticetoday.com

Tel: 01359 245310

Subscriptions

subscriptions@veterinarypracticetoday.com

Tel: 01359 245310

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