

Editorial

Looking beyond Brexit in 2020

A NEW year, a new decade and, soon, a new era and new challenges for the UK. As Brexit approaches, 2020 is set to be dominated by negotiations over the UK's future relationship with the EU.

However, there will be plenty going on besides Brexit.

To start with, a small but significant win for animal welfare will be achieved, when a ban on using wild animals in travelling circuses in England comes into force on 20 January. A more substantial welfare benefit can be expected in April, when third-party sales of puppies and kittens will be banned in England. A similar ban in Wales may follow after 'overwhelming' public support was expressed in a consultation on the issue.

Sustainability and the environment are likely to receive increased attention in 2020. Consistent with wider society's interest, the profession is keen to contribute – according to a BVA survey, 89 per cent of vets want to play a more active role in the UK sustainability agenda. To this end, initiatives like Vet Sustain, which promotes positive ethical and environmental principles that vet professionals can incorporate into their working lives, should develop further. The BVA will want to maintain momentum on its 2019 sustainable animal agriculture policy, promoting the concept of 'less and better' when consuming animal-derived products.

The BVA is set to publish significant new policy positions in 2020 too, including on bovine TB (bTB), welfare at slaughter and good veterinary workplaces.

On bTB, the government has yet to respond to the 2018 Godfray review of England's bTB strategy. The review acknowledged that bTB was a complex disease to control, with no easy answers to reducing disease levels, and said it was time for a new impetus and 'concerted and concentrated effort by all sectors involved'. With the British Cattle Veterinary Association calling for vets to be put in the driving seat in combating bTB, and to have greater influence over policy, it will be interesting to see what the government says when it publishes its response.

Professionally, the RCVS will be phasing in a new model for continuing professional development this year. The model requires vets and vet nurses to undertake more reflective learning and measure their

impact on practice and patient outcomes and will become compulsory in 2022.

The RCVS is also aiming to complete its review of 'under care' and 24-hour emergency cover this year. Currently, it intends to finalise proposals for any changes and publish new guidance in November, a move that could have far-reaching implications for how future veterinary services are delivered.

All vet professionals will be able to contribute to a review of veterinary nursing, which is being carried out by a task force set up by the BVA and the British Veterinary Nursing Association. As well as drafting a position document on the role and direction of the profession, the task force wants to produce a definition of veterinary nursing.

In the autumn, the Harper & Keele Veterinary School will become the ninth vet school in the UK when it accepts its first students.

Vet Record begins 2020 with a focus on its relaunched Innovation Award (<https://bit.ly/2XQIKC9>). Entries close on 25 January and shortlisted applicants will present their ideas at the Animal Health Investment Europe forum next month.

Later this year, this journal will revisit the idea of an evidence-based veterinary medicine (EBVM) manifesto, a project it began contributing to in 2019. Setting out the steps needed to strengthen the relevance of research to day-to-day practice, the manifesto aims to support the profession in embracing EBVM.

2020 also marks the final year of the Vet Futures Action Plan 2016–2020, which was drawn up to take forward the recommendations in the 2015 report 'Vet Futures – taking charge of our future'. BVA and RCVS will be reviewing progress against the plan and considering next steps.

These developments are just a few of those already in the pipeline. There will be many others, and a busy year lies ahead, with lots to discuss and debate beyond Brexit.

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