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Spring
2012

A NEWSLETTER from EBVS (www.ebvs.org)

Editor

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Veterinary Excellence through Specialisation



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My vision for EBVS

Thomas Blaha, ECPHM
EBVS Treasurer

The hopes of the pioneers of the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS), creating a platform for a Europe-wide standardisation of veterinary specialisation at an academically high level, have been fulfilled and even surpassed: EBVS consists today of 23 "European Colleges of...", which, already fully recognised or still in their developmental phase, altogether form a body that is acknowledged and respected in the veterinary world throughout Europe as THE authority for granting veterinary specialisation titles. There is no comparable body for any other academic profession in Europe!! Although it was not in the primary scope of the founders of EBVS, today almost all veterinary universities in Europe announce in their searches for academic positions that applicants holding the title of "Diplomate EC..." will be preferred.

There is, of course, still plenty of room for improvement and further development, as well as some challenges ahead of us, on which we need to focus our attention, such as:

- Some of our colleges are still fairly small and the number of specialists needed in their field is not big enough to let them grow with a speed adequate to their needs. An assessment of potential benefits from merging with other colleges will have to be made at some stage, as administrative tasks of a European College can be unbearable for small groups of people.
- There is still a lack of Diplomates from most Colleges in the former Eastern European Member States, a situation which developed in the early years of EBVS when these countries had just emerged from the iron curtain and their academicians could not take advantage of the "de facto" procedure for historical, financial and sometimes political reasons. This has led to a patchy development of EBVS, with some European areas almost devoid of any specialist, creating a sort of a vicious circle which needs to be broken somehow (see Table n° 2 on page 20).
- Some of the specialisation areas within the more academically oriented EBVS are not 1 : 1 comparable with the



1 - Thomas Blaha, EBVS Treasurer
and Past President of ECPHM

specialisation needs of the veterinary practice.

- EBVS has still to work on being recognised by the comparable systems in North America and in Australia/New Zealand, which will hopefully lead in the future to reciprocity and mutual recognition of comparable titles by this international harmonisation process.

- EBVS has still to contribute to supporting the founding of the Asian Board of Veterinary Specialisation.

- EBVS has still to be instrumental in creating step by step a global standardisation for veterinary specialisation at an academic level.

Apart from EBVS, there is a clear need for a "middle tier specialisation" for food animal as well as small animal veterinarians, but also for veterinarians working in industry and in State Veterinary Systems. This issue has led to the idea of developing an "Acknowledged Practitioner" (AP) scheme. For the development of the AP scheme, FVE and ECCVT formed the Interim European Board of Veterinary Professional Development (IEBVPD), in which EBVS has played and will continue to play an important role.

The AP scheme is currently evolving into the Veterinary Continuing Education in Europe (VetCEE) Committee, a system for the mutual recognition of existing post-graduate training programmes which is, at the time being, more suitable to our current situation (see the article on the Acknowledged Practitioner, page 13). If trained by EBVS Diplomates, "VetCEE-recognised" veterinarians might be keen to continue their studies and go on to alternative residency programmes. Thus VetCEE might contribute to creating a wider base in some Colleges.

In the light of all this, my vision is that in the future EBVS will be strengthened as THE veterinary organisation for recognising a standardised continuous education system level leading

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to advanced knowledge and skills at an academic level, for granting highest-level specialisation titles in all areas of veterinary medicine in all EU Member States, that are recognised by all veterinarians (and veterinary students) across Europe, as well as throughout the world. This means that being a "Diplomate of the EC..." will be the "crown" of veterinary education in all EU Member States, and that this will be fully accepted and acknowledged by all European statutory bodies and national chambers.

Job Analysis

Colin Harvey, AVDC, EVDC
AVDC Executive Secretary

Editor's note - Within ABVS, performing Job Analyses have been subject of debate for a number of years, as it is felt that this is an important task for a specialist College to undertake. Some Colleges have taken the lead and have already performed a JA. Colin Harvey is Executive Secretary of the American Veterinary Dental College, which recently completed a Job Analysis, and this is why EBVS asked him to give us his views on the subject. Colin Harvey is not a certification management professional – these comments are offered from the perspective of a customer rather than that of a provider of these services.

Sometimes referred to as a Task Analysis or Job Task Analysis, a Job Analysis is performed to provide validation of the content of a training programme and/or examination. Without a formal analysis that produces a blue-print for what the examination should include, examinations are inherently arbitrary. Once the content of the examination is determined (using the examination blue-print developed as a result of the job analysis), it is a separate task to validate the pass-fail cut-off score (this is done by e.g. 'criterion referencing'). Examination cut-off score validation could be the subject of a separate article.

Job analysis and examination cut-off score validation provide protection for the College against charges that a professional certification examination was conducted arbitrarily or capriciously. While protection against legal liability may not be as much of an issue outside the USA as it is within the USA, I have little doubt that the risk is increasing everywhere.

For a veterinary specialist-certification College, the typical procedure for a Job Analysis is:

1. Write a Request for Proposals (RFP), which is then submitted to professional certification management companies

that conduct job analyses. Some EBVS Colleges may have already completed a job analysis and may be willing to provide a generic RFP, and they may have information on companies who conduct job analyses in Europe. ABVS and individual ABVS Colleges can provide generic RFPs and contact information for companies active in this field.

2. Review the proposals and estimated costs, and decide whether the College can afford the analysis. A full or 'empirical' job analysis (i.e. a job analysis for a College that has previously not conducted a job analysis) will typically cost in the region of US\$25-50,000 when performed by a professional certification management company, depending on the breadth and complexity of the clinical activities of the specialists in that College. This may seem a huge cost for a College with limited financial resources. Suggestion: because the results of a job analysis are generally considered to remain relevant for 5-10 years, budget the cost of the job analysis over a several-year period so that the full cost does not impact a single-year budget. Once a full job analysis has been performed, the process should be repeated every 5-10 years for the results to remain relevant as the specialty advances; however, the repeat ('logical') job analysis is typically less involved than an empirical job analysis because the results of the empirical job analysis are used as the starting point for the follow-up logical job analysis. The cost of a logical job analysis is likely to be in the US\$15-25,000 range, again depending on the complexity of the specialist activity within the discipline. Once the availability of funds is decided, define the time line and sign the contract. From signing the contract to presentation of the complete report is likely to take 1-2 years.

3. The mechanics of the job analysis process will be explained and coordinated by the consultant assigned to the analysis by the company conducting the analysis. What follows is a lay-man's description of a job analysis. Companies that conduct job analyses have a jargon all of their own – the chair of the College committee or the individual assigned by the College to coordinate activities with the consultant should be willing to invest some time in becoming familiar with the jargon, so that s/he can act as the 'interpreter' for the Committee members or Board.

4. A panel of a dozen or more volunteer diplomate specialists ('subject matter experts') is identified – the size of the panel will vary depending on the range of activities of spe-

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cialists in the College – see also item 11.

5. The consultant is likely to recommend that the panel members meet for a day-long workshop with the consultant (AVDC did this by having panel members arrive a day early for the Annual Meeting of the College, to minimise travel costs). The consultant will explain how the tasks required of the panel members are to be performed.

6. The primary task of the panel is to create the list of knowledge areas (e.g. '*Anatomy of the teeth*') and skills (e.g. '*Perform root canal treatment*') that a competent specialist in that discipline must know or be able to perform in their work as clinical specialists. The knowledge and skills are limited to the clinical activities associated with being a clinical specialist in that discipline – teaching and research knowledge or tasks are not included.

7. The knowledge and skills lists are collated by the consultant to separate them under headings referred to as 'domains'. For example, for veterinary dentistry, one skills domain would be Periodontal Examination (example skills: '*Probe pocket depth*' or '*Score gingival inflammation*'), and another skills domain would be Endodontic Treatment (example skills: '*Create access to the root canal*' or '*Sterilise the instrumented root canal*'). Topics often come up under both Knowledge and Skills domains, for example dental radiology.

8. The draft list of knowledge and skills domains and individual items is then circulated to all members of the panel, who comment on or add items until there is agreement by the panel members that the knowledge and skills lists are comprehensive and complete.

9. The panel members then assign importance, criticality and frequency scores to the knowledge and skills domains and to the individual items. Knowledge and skills that all entry-level board-certified specialists in the discipline must know or be able to perform (as examples, skills for veterinary surgery specialists, '*Scrub the hands and arms in preparation for sterile surgery*' or '*Suture the skin*') have very high importance, criticality and frequency scores. Skills that are less commonly performed or not necessarily performed by all specialists in that discipline, and/or that may not universally be regarded as proven treatment (example for veterinary dental specialists – '*Use a CO₂ laser to treat feline stomatitis*') are assigned lower importance, criticality and/or frequency scores.

10. The importance, criticality and frequency scores for each item are reviewed and revised by all panel members, under the supervision of the consultant, until there is agreement.

11. A second, ideally larger panel of volunteer diplomate specialists is identified and asked to validate the data developed by the primary panel.

12. The knowledge and skills domains and individual items, with importance, criticality and frequency scores, are sent to the validation panel, who review and comment on the lists under the supervision of the consultant until a final set of lists is adopted.

13. The consultant uses the validated lists to generate a final report, which includes a 'blueprint' of the training programme requirements and/or examination. The blueprint consists of the proportion of the knowledge and skills domains and major sub-headings organised so that the % training time or % of the questions on the examination relevant to each domain adds up to 100%. For example, using arbitrarily selected %:

Domain: Oral anatomy knowledge - total 9%, of which:

Dental anatomy – 3%

Oral soft tissue anatomy – 2%

Etc.

Domain: Endodontics skills – total 15%, of which

Create access to root canal – 2%

Instrument root canal to apex – 3%

Etc.

Making use of the Results of the Job Analysis

- A) All questions in the examination question bank are classified as belonging to a specific knowledge or skills domain or sub-heading.
- B) The certification examination is then put together so that it includes the appropriate proportion of questions relevant to the domains and sub-headings specified in the examination blue-print.

This might seem simplistic (why do I have to write down 'Probe periodontal pocket' when it is very obvious that a veterinary dental specialist needs to be able to do that?).



2 - Colin Harvey, current Executive Secretary and former President of the American Veterinary Dental College

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The actual job analysis process is complex, and is the only way to produce an examination that tests the knowledge and skills that a detailed analysis of the work of the specialist in that discipline indicates must be tested.

Comments on Validation of the Content of the Examination vs. Justification of the Pass-Fail Cut-off score: No two examinations are the same (unless they include only identical questions), so assuming that a single pass-fail cut-off score can be applied to every examination year after year is an obvious reason to question the validity of the examination, even if the content of the examination has been determined by use of a job analysis blue-print. If a system to justify the examination pass-fail cut-off score, such as criterion-referencing, is also adopted, constructing the examination becomes even more challenging. The proportion of questions in the examination have to fit the examination blue-print as determined by the job analysis, and the average of the criterion referencing scores for all the questions in the examination must equal the pre-set cut-off score for the examination to be valid.

An alternative to the use of an arbitrarily selected pass-fail cut-off score is to construct the examination as per the content blue-print and then accept that the average criterion-referencing score will be used as the pass-fail cut-off score. However, candidates may be uncomfortable not knowing ahead of time what the pass-fail cut-off score will be. One way around this dilemma is to publish a pre-set cut-off score (e.g. the ubiquitous 70%), with the comment that the actual cut-off score used in the examination will be equal to or lower than the published figure. EBVS permits its Colleges to publish a pre-set pass-fail cut-off score and to lower (but not increase) the actual cut-off score used in a particular examination when the results are reviewed.

Use of a job analysis to determine training programme and/or examination content, and use of a proven system to justify the pass-fail cut-off score, are considered 'best practice' by organisations that set standards for certification procedures – anything short of use of this combination places the organisation that runs the certification system at increased risk of losing an appeal against an 'adverse decision' (i.e. failure to approve credentials or failure of the examination) because the organisation cannot prove that its training programme content requirements and examination content and cut-off score are valid.

Several EBVS Colleges have conducted job analyses, and some use criterion referencing when constructing the examination and determining the pass-fail cut-off score. These Col-

leges may be willing to share some of the information derived from the job analysis with their sister Colleges in Europe.

How Veterinary Specialisation developed in Oceania

Megan Parker, BVSc (Hons) PhD GAICD, FAIM
Chief Executive Officer, ANZCVS

Megan Parker is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management. She has been the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists since May 2002

The concept of a professional veterinary college for Australia and New Zealand was first discussed in 1958 by the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA). It was subsequently determined by various AVA - appointed working committees that such a body would be a national institution modelled on the UK's Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons; providing a post-graduate education programme and professional qualifications to veterinarians of superior competence. Membership of the College (with the exception of Foundation Membership) would be gained by entry examination oriented towards one of a number of fields of competence. There would be two levels of Membership – Members and Fellows (Fellows being specialist-qualified), and provision would be made for specialties, both species and disciplines.

The Inaugural Ceremony of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists was held in association with the AGM of the AVA in Canberra on 18th May, 1971; and attended by 120 invited Foundation Members. The College was however determined to be autonomous and independent of the AVA from its inauguration. At the first College AGM in 1972, President Dr DF Stewart stated "I consider that with the establishment of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists, the veterinary profession in this part of the world has reached maturity."



3 - Megan Parker, CEO of the ANZCVS

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The principal objects of the new College were to advance the study of veterinary science and to bring together members of the veterinary profession for their common benefit; and to conduct examinations of professional proficiency for the purpose of determining qualification for Membership and Fellowship of the College. Originally there was considerable debate over the proposed name of the College. It was determined that the name should be the 'Australian College of Veterinary Scientists' following some debate on the initial proposal of the 'Australian College of Veterinary Surgeons'. It was also the view of some Foundation Members that the inclusion of New Zealand veterinarians warranted recognition in names such as the 'Australasian' College or the 'Australian and New Zealand' College of Veterinary Scientists. This debate arose passionately several times over subsequent years and the name was finally changed by unanimous vote at the 41st Annual General Meeting on July 1, 2011 to the 'Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists' (ANZCVS). The first Chapters recommended in 1976 were General and Comparative Medicine, Canine and Feline Medicine, Equine Medicine, Dairy Cattle Medicine, Ovine Medicine, Porcine Medicine and Avian Diseases.

Fellowship (specialist-level) Examinations

Considerable debate ensued during the early years of the College on the "creation of a corps of specialists by admission to Fellowship of the College by examination". In December 1975, Fellowship by examination was approved in addition to election by the College Council. The examination was designed to show that the successful candidate had sufficient knowledge and experience in a particular area to gain acceptance as a specialist in that area of work. It comprised written papers and searching oral and practical tests conducted by highly-qualified examiners. By the mid-eighties, the examination became the only method by which Fellowship could be achieved.

Prior to eligibility for examination, a two - three year directly supervised training programme is required; along with evidence of case load, scholarship, research and peer-reviewed publications. The 37 different Fellowship examination subjects now on offer are available on demand. There has been a steady rise in the number of candidates over the years; currently there are 67 Fellowship candidates active in training, 24 that have completed training and 29 more who are preparing for the Fellowship examination in 2012. Standards for Fellowship training and examination meet or exceed the prerequisites for registration as a veterinary specialist in Australia and/or New Zealand. The College has played a significant role with the registering boards in Australia and New

Zealand in reaching agreement on minimum standards and qualifications needed for specialist registration. As of December 2011, the ANZCVS had a membership of 2072; 1600 of which are Members, 207 Fellows, 15 Honorary Fellows, 32 Associate Members, and 218 Life members or Life Fellows. 1611 (78%) resided in Australia, 276 in New Zealand and 185 in other countries.

Membership Examinations

Membership examinations are pitched at a unique level and are undertaken by veterinary practitioners from their fourth year since graduation, to improve their level of knowledge and understanding, and to demonstrate a high level of interest and competence in a wide variety of different subject areas of veterinary activity. Membership examinations are



4 - Zoo and wildlife Chapter member Dr David McLelland (Diplomate of ACZM, right) collecting a blood sample on a rock wallaby as part of a recovery project for this endangered species in South Australia, while researcher Laura (left) is measuring limbs for morphometric analyses.

now offered annually in most sought-after subjects and every second year in others. Originally it was proposed that the specialties offered be Pathology (including Public Health and Zoonoses), Preventive Medicine, Clinical Medicine, Surgery and Animal Reproduction and Obstetrics. The first examinations in 1973 drew 14 candidates (three from New Zealand) in nine subjects, five species-related and four in discipline subjects. Over the years the Membership subjects have expanded and refined to a total of 37 subjects. The number of candidates has increased to in excess of one hundred each year. The 2012 Membership examinations enrolments closed at 241 candidates in 21 different subjects from Australia, New Zealand UK, Hong Kong, Netherlands, Canada, Germany, Finland, Norway and Singapore.

The Red Book: General Information for Membership Candidates and The Blue Book: General Information for Fellowship

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Candidates offer detailed general advice and guidance to potential candidates on all aspects of the two levels of College examinations. These publications are available on the College's Website www.acvsc.org.au and are to be read in conjunction with each individual subject's Subject Guidelines which contain specific information relevant for examination subjects. It is important to note that standards and specifications contained within the individual Subject Guidelines often exceed the minimum standards in the *Red* and *Blue Books*, and take precedence; thereby being compulsory requirements for candidates in those specific subjects.

College Chapters

The ANZCVS differs from the North American and European Colleges as it covers a wide range of discipline areas through 20 'Chapters' within the one College. Different Chapters are based on subject/discipline areas. Each Chapter has a Chapter Executive Committee and a Chapter Examination Committee but all Chapters are governed by the one central College administration.

The Chapters operate within the College Constitution but with a great level of independence, contributing significantly to the success of the post-graduate education role of the College. The Chapters play a vital role not only in continuing education but also in the examinations conducted by the College. They have roles in the design of Subject Guidelines, the identification of mentors for candidates and in suggesting possible examiners.

All subject examiners are subsequently appointed and trained by the College's central Board of Examiners through interactive web-based seminars, plenary sessions and group workshops at College Science Week. Also, detailed instructions are provided in *The Purple Book: Information for Examiners* which offers advice to examiners on the policies and procedures of the ANZCVS examination system.



5 - The official logo of the ANZCVS: a new logo was introduced in 2011 to reflect the College name change.

Introducing a College: ECVA

Dimitris Raptopoulos, ECVA
Former ECVA President

As a specialty, Anaesthesiology in Europe goes back to early 1950s. It was then that the two grandparents of modern veterinary anaesthesia, Dr. Leslie Hall and Dr. Barbara Weaver in the UK, endeavoured to close the gap between anaesthesia for animals and for humans. Since then, Veterinary Anaesthesia has made tremendous progress, so that it has indeed changed from art to science and now has become a very dynamic specialty.

Meanwhile, it was decided that progress in veterinary anaesthetic methods was sufficient for consideration to be given to the possibility of establishing an Association similar to that in human medicine for the promotion and recognition of anaesthesia as a specialised branch of veterinary medicine. Hence, the Association of Veterinary Anaesthetists (AVA) was established, and its first General Meeting was held in Cambridge in 1964. In 1967, the first Diploma in Veterinary Anaesthesia (DVA) of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons was awarded. However, once the European College gained full recognition, the DVA was withdrawn and candidates directed to Diploma of the European College of Veterinary Anaesthesia & Analgesia.

In 1995, the European College of Veterinary Anaesthesia (ECVA) was established. The ECVA was created as an organisation independent of the AVA by decision of the General Meeting of the AVA in April 1993 at Giessen, Germany. The College was inaugurated on 1st January 1995, formally registered in the Netherlands in 1997 and fully recognised by EBVS in 2003.

Veterinary Anaesthesiologists have expert knowledge in the recognition and management of pain, both in research and veterinary practice. In consideration of this, and of the increasing awareness of the veterinary profession and the public of the important social dimension of adequate recognition and treatment of animal pain, it was decided to change the name of the College to reflect this area of the specialty. Thus, in 2007 the College was renamed European College of Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia (ECVAA).

Initially, the AVA nominated 6 established specialists, the "grandparents" of the specialty [Prof. Dr. R. Fritsch (Germany), Dr. Leslie W. Hall (UK), Dr. C.H. Hansson (Sweden), Prof. R.S. Jones (UK), Prof. Dr. Evert Lagerweij (The Netherlands) and Dr. B.M.Q. Weaver (UK)], who named

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the following 7 "Invited Specialists": Kathy Clarke (UK), Frank Gasthuys (Belgium), Yves Moens (Belgium), Dimitris Raptopoulos (Greece), Urs Schatzmann (Switzerland), Polly Taylor (UK) and Avril Waterman-Pearson (UK). These Invited Specialists formed the "Interim Board" to serve for a maximum of 5 years to prepare the definitive organisation of the College.

The Invited Specialists together acted as an Interim Credentials & Education Committee for veterinarians who wished to be considered for *de facto* recognition as specialists. The *de facto* appointed specialists became Founding Diplomates of the College. Application for *de facto* recognition was possible for up to three years after inauguration of the College, i.e. by 31st December 1997. During this period 44 *de facto* specialists were appointed. Since then, the only way to become a Diplomate has been to pass the certifying exams. In order to be allowed to sit the exams, it is essential that each candidate undergoes a period of at least 3 years of supervised training. The first examination took place in 1997 when one candidate sat the exams and passed. Since then, the overall pass rate has been about 65% (72/111).

Training of Residents takes place in approved centres, which run standard residency programmes (Table 1). More flexible arrangements for those working outside Veterinary Schools are also available, subject to approval by the Credentials & Education Committee. Apart from the training within the framework of the residency programmes, ECVAA and AVA hold two successful scientific meetings per year, with increasing international attendance. In addition, before each scientific meeting, a day refresher course is organised twice a year for ECVAA Diploma candidates.

Today there are 60 Residents following standard (35) or alternative (25) residency training programmes. In addition, about 35 Residents have completed their supervised training, but have not yet taken/passed the exams. All ECVAA Residents must keep a portfolio of evidence to support their progression through their supervised training and completion of competencies at an approved centre. Specific documentation includes, among others, 300 anaesthetic case records handled personally, two publications on the subject of veterinary anaesthesia, analgesia, or anaesthetic related intensive care, and two case reports published or in a form suitable for publication.

Veterinary anaesthesiology as a specialty covers all aspects of anaesthesia, analgesia and intensive care in all domestic and non-domestic species. Therefore, the primary objectives of the College are to advance the study, research into and practice of veterinary anaesthesia, analgesia and intensive care in Europe, and increase the competence of those who practice in

Country	Number of Diplomates originating from	Number of Diplomates working/ residing in	Number of approved centres in
Argentina	1		
Australia	6	5	2
Austria	4	4	1
Belgium	7	3	1
Brazil	1	1	
Canada		4	2
France	4	3	1
Germany	8	6	1
Greece	2	2	1
Ireland	1	1	1
Italy	7	2	
Netherlands	4	3	1
New Zealand		1	
Norway	1	1	
Singapore		1	
South Africa	1	1	1
Spain	5	1	
Sweden	1	1	
Switzerland	10	17	2
Tanzania	1		
UK	50	49	7
USA	2	9	5
West Indies		1	

Table 1: Numbers of Practising and Non-Practising Diplomates coming from or working in various countries, and number of approved centres in each of them (2011 data)

this field. The specialist in veterinary anaesthesia will work in an academic setting, research institution, a primary or referral practice, or in any other settings where animal anaesthesia is performed.

The Practising Diplomate status of the Diplomates is evaluated at 5 year intervals, by providing evidence of continuation of working as a specialist in veterinary anaesthesia, analgesia and intensive care, and of continuing education. The Practising Diplomate status ceases by default when the specialty has not been practised for more than 2 years in a 5 year period. Such Diplomates or those who do not meet the requirements for the quinquennial re-validation become Non-Practising Diplomates. So far 130 individuals, coming from various countries around the world, have been designated as Diplomates. Out of these 130 Diplomates, 5 are Honorary members, 2 retired, 1 resigned, 2 were expelled, and 4 deceased. From the rest 116,

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6 - The first 6 Presidents of ECVA in the order they were elected, from left to right: Polly Taylor (UK, 1995-1999), Frank Gasthuys (Belgium, 1999-2002), Dimitri Raptopoulos (Greece, 2002-2005), Kathy Clarke (UK, 2005-2008), Yves Moens (Austria, 2008-2011) and Klaus Otto (Germany, 2011-2014). Picture taken at the ECVA-AVA 2011 congress, Liverpool, UK.

102 are Practising, and 14 Non-Practising Diplomates (Table 1). The first President of the College was Polly Taylor (Cambridge, UK, 1995-1999), followed by: Frank Gasthuys (Gent, BE, 1999-2002), Dimitris Raptopoulos (Thessaloniki, GR, 2002-2005), Kathy Clarke (London, UK, 2005-2008), Yves Moens (Vienna, AT, 2008-2011), and Klaus Otto (Hannover, DE, 2011-2014). The first two (PT, 1998-99 and FG, 2007-09) have also served as Presidents, and K. Clarke (2010-11) as Secretary of the EBVS.

Cooperation with the American counterpart (American College of Veterinary Anesthesiologists, ACVA) is expanding. Following a decision of the Executive Committees of both Colleges, Diplomates of each College may sit the exams of the other without having to fulfil any further requirements. Moreover, ACVA Diplomates can train ECVA residents in ECVA approved centres and ECVA Diplomates can train ACVA residents in ACVA approved centres. There are already numerous training programmes running in both North America and Europe supervised by both ECVA and ACVA Diplomates. It is also noted that the journal "Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia" is the official journal of ECVA, ACVA and AVA.

The Role of EBVS Country Reps

Neil Forbes, ECZM

EBVS President

The following is intended to serve as a reminder to EBVS Country Representatives of their duties and expectations:

1. To encourage all diplomates in their country to use the EBVS logo on their letterhead and promotional material
2. To contact their professional veterinary licensing body (competent authority) and to enquire if they are recognising EBVS Diplomates, if not to bring this matter to the notice of the EBVS secretariat.
3. To gather a data base of Veterinary Educational organisations, Professional groups and societies within their geographical area, to whom EBVS should send the periodic EBVS Newsletters.
4. To be watchful, mindful for any professional, political or other activity within their geographical area, which is contrary to the interests of EBVS and to bring this to the EBVS Executive Committee without delay.
5. To periodically use the promotional material, as posted by the EBVS on the country reps page, to achieve publication in their own countries in the most appropriate and widely read journal, magazine or website. In essence to promote the existence and aims of the EBVS within their own geographical area.
6. To field and address any correspondence from their own nationals, relating to national issues which may have some interaction with the EBVS.

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**The Asian Board of Veterinary
Specialisation: slowly, but moving ahead**

Stefano Romagnoli, ECAR
EBVS Past President

The following is a brief interview with Dr. Siraya Chunekamrai, a private practitioner from Bangkok, Thailand, who has been one of the strongest advocates of the establishment of an Asian Board of Veterinary Specialisation.

Stefano Romagnoli – Siraya, establishing an Asian Board of Veterinary Specialisation (AiBVS) looks like an enormous task, particularly for somebody in private practice. How did all this get started and who helped you to start canvassing for such an elaborate organisation?

Siraya Chunekamrai – This adventure was initiated by the Veterinary Practitioner Association of Thailand (VPAT) of which I am currently a member of the Advisory Board. I feel really indebted to VPAT for sponsoring all the meetings and my travels abroad, and particularly to Prof. Kaywalee Chatdarong, the current President of VPAT (*editor's note* - associate professor in animal reproduction, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok), for her vision and guidance.

SR - Which Asian countries are currently involved in establishing AiBVS, both as colleges as well as people involved in the Organising Committee? We know that AiBVS is open to all Asian countries, but which are the starters or the pioneers at this time? Could you mention at least a few names of people representing their countries?

SC - The Initial Organising Committee (IOC) of the AiBVS is due to include the newly formed Colleges; also, active country representatives will be invited according to the IOC selection committee's proposal. This selection committee was proposed and accepted at the meeting in Jeju (*editor's note* - World Small Animal Veterinary Association Congress, Korea, October 2011) and consists of Masahiko Nagata (Japan), Kanmoon Seo (Korea) and Shane Ryan (Singapore). At present the selection committee's work is ongoing.

SR - Which Colleges are already formed, and from which countries are they?

SC – Within the IOC, representatives of Colleges currently active in Asia are: Kangmoon Seo (Ophthalmology), Toshiro

Iwasaki (Dermatology), Hajime Tsujimoto (Internal Medicine), while representative of Societies currently active in Asia are Nobuo Sasaki (Surgery) and Kaywalee Chatdarong (Theriogenology). There are also members of a variety of different countries who are actively interested even though they have not formed a Society or College but they belong to special interest groups in each country/region.

SR - One of the most important things for a College is to establish residency programs, as training residents is the only viable option to make a College grow. With regard to the Asian Colleges that exist already, how do they recruit their members? Do they have residency programmes, and do they hold exams to test their candidates?

SC – I believe that there must be an organisation somewhat similar to European or American Veterinary Specialty Organisations in the training and testing of candidates. However, you will have to ask this question to each specific College.

SR - What is the underlying feeling among Asian countries about AiBVS? Do they feel that this structure is being imposed upon them, or are they happy with it?

SC - For those who have been at the meetings held so far, I do not think there is resentment or fear of an imposition. However, there is some concern whether the system will be too strict or too lenient, whether it will be inclusive and truly pan Asian, and whether all country governments will approve or acknowledge its existence



7 - Siraya Chunekamrai, DVM, PhD,
Bangkok, Thailand

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Spring
2012A NEWSLETTER from EBVS (www.ebvs.org)

Editor

Stefano Romagnoli
stefano.romagnoli@unipd.it**EBVS** EUROPEAN BOARD
OF VETERINARY
SPECIALISATION

Veterinary Excellence through Specialisation

The Veterinary Pathology Residency Programme at the University of Milan

Paola Roccabianca, ECVP

Paola Roccabianca is Associate Professor in Veterinary Pathology at the University of Milan, where she has been training ECVP Residents since 2001. She tells us about how she shaped a high quality program, one which every Resident would like to be a part of.

The ECVP training centre at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Milan, Italy, opened in 1998 and represents the oldest residency programme for veterinary pathologists in Italy. At that time, the training was organised as weekly practical meetings intended as an educational aid to all pathologists who needed to familiarise themselves with the contents and the format of the first certifying exam of the ECVP that was held in Hannover in 1999.

Presently, minimum requirements to access the residency programme are a veterinary degree and license to practice in Europe although previous experience in veterinary pathology is regarded positively during the recruitment process. Actually, most Italian candidates entering the residency programme have a sound background in pathology thanks to the Italian undergraduate education system which requires students, in order to graduate from Veterinary School, to prepare a thesis that involves 1-2 years of basic research or practical work in the subject of their choice. Thus, most candidates accessing the residency have already attended a pathology diagnostic laboratory for their undergraduate thesis. Additionally, the work for their graduation often becomes one of their first publications.

Residents complete the programme via a standard three year route through graduate national funding (maximum of 2 residents per year) or an alternate 5 year programme that is selected by candidates already working as pathologists in industry or private laboratories and receiving funds from their institutions. Residents opting for the alternate route need to work full time in pathology, have to



8 - Paola Roccabianca with 9-yr old Lea



9 - ECVP Residents and students working on a gross pathology case

attend the weekly meeting of the programme and are required to spend one year at our institution training full time in pathology under the responsibility of one ECVP Diplomate. Residents' supervision is the responsibility of three permanent ECVP board certified pathologists and one ECVCP Diplomate. These specialists are assisted by a group of external ECVP and ECVCP Diplomates working in Industry and in National and International institutions who collaborate regularly with the educational programme through the contribution of study material, gross and histopathology practical seminars, questions and mock exams. On a regular basis (approximately once a month), pathologists from universities, private laboratories and industry are invited to give seminars on their special field of expertise.

The standard programme is organised into study, practical, research activities and an intense one full day meeting that takes place once a week and which is intended to instruct trainees specifically and exclusively on the format and content of the 5 sections of the ECVP exam. Three year residents enter the programme in November, are appointed a sponsor and are assigned the "beginner study programme" that will need to be completed in the first three months of residency. Such programme includes an intense theoretical (a responsibility of the programme coordinator) and practical training dealing with organisation of the diagnostic services and facilities, basic necropsy techniques, gross and microscopic descriptive (histology, cytology) techniques and report writing. Then, complete study plans for the three and five year programmes are assigned and reviewed every 6 months to evaluate residents' progress. In addition, residents attend graduate courses integral to the postgraduate position including statistics, English for TOEFL preparation, how to prepare a poster and an oral presentation and how to write a scientific publication. These courses may be incorporated into the pursuit of a PhD depending on the resident's personal ambition.

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Trainees rotate on a monthly basis through the following diagnostic services: one week on large or small animal necropsy duty, one week on histopathology biopsy service including avian pathology and exotic animals.

The trainee will be off for two weeks every month both to finalise the reports, as well as to study, review the literature and pursue her/his research program. Access to the on site cytology diagnostic service is possible at all times. The large animal facilities (large animal teaching hospital) are located on the outskirts of the city of Lodi approximately 35 kilometres from Milan, thus rotation through the large animal teaching hospital is planned in collaboration with onsite pathologists.

From their arrival, residents work with the programme coordinator and supervisor to identify a basic research project and significant case reports aimed at achieving a minimum of two publications (mandatory to access the certifying exam). Residents are required to present their research and case reports at the annual ECVP-ESVP meeting and at the meeting of the Italian Society of Veterinary Pathologists.

Trainees are also strongly encouraged to pursue extra institutional training including the ECVP summer school (two weeks every year in summer), the "Joint Pathology Centre" (formerly American Forces Institute of Pathology) gross and descriptive techniques courses and a minimum of a 3 month practical training in an international academic pathology department or in a pharmaceutical company in order to complete their basic preparation.

In addition to all the training activities illustrated above, residents contribute to the organisation and preparation of the "core" event that is a weekly meeting structured in morning sessions of gross pathology and histopathology and in an afternoon meeting recapitulating the format of the 5 sections of the certifying exam. Three histopathology cases, one cytological preparation and one electron microscopy are assigned for description and interpretation in the exam format every week, these cases are presented and discussed by all participants. Following the microscopic section, gross images are projected with an indication of the species and the questions asked. Answers are immediately scored and discussed. Two scientific publications from the exam reading list are reviewed and examples of questions extracted from these papers are presented by the appointed residents.

Initially intended to prepare the onsite residents, the weekly meeting now regularly hosts an increasing number of trainees from different Italian veterinary pathology centres (visiting residents). This approach has proven pivotal in the creation of a varied milieu and a balanced teamwork attitude reinforcing the interaction and solidarity among residents from different institutions. This has enabled the creation of

study groups that join forces to prepare for the exam from a variety of centres, utilising conference call systems and exchanging study material. All the study material gathered by visiting pathologists and previous trainees is kept in Milan in electronic and hard paper formats and handed over to on-site and visiting residents.

To assess candidate's preparation, a mock exam schedule has been established providing the sponsor and programme coordinator with means for progress evaluation of each resident. The same scheduled examinations are made available to the visiting residents. First and second year residents are assigned a mock exam composed of gross pathology and histopathology sections during the summer. The mock exam is corrected and scored in conjunction with the sponsor to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate in order to modify their study plan appropriately to their individual needs.

Third year residents have an increasingly tight schedule consisting of mock exams scheduled every two months starting February-March prior to the Certifying exam. Three full mock exams composed of the 5 sections (histology, gross pathology, general pathology, veterinary pathology and comprehensive pathology) are taken in June, September and November but only residents passing the June mock exam are allowed to sit the ECVP certifying examination.

The Milan residency programme has successfully trained



Sixteen eyes are better than two

10 - Histopathology rounds with the residents at the ten-headed microscope

16 veterinary pathologists and has collaborated and keeps contributing to the education and preparation of visiting residents from several Italian Veterinary Schools including Bologna, Padova, Perugia, Teramo, Torino and residents from

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Schools in Spain and Portugal. Welcoming external trainees to the weekly meeting and providing access to the on-site customised plan of mock exams has proven a successful strategy becoming one of the major strengths of our training centre. This strategy has led to good collaborative relationships between exam candidates and their institutions. This collaboration is considered unique in Italy and the Milan training centre has contributed not only to the harmonisation of the preparation of Italian veterinary pathologists but has helped the networking of diverse pathology institutions opening up partnerships that go far beyond the preparation of residents.

The “Acknowledged Practitioner” title is replaced by “Vet-CEE” recognition

Thomas Blaha ECPHM
EBVS Treasurer

Most of the EBVS accredited Diplomates throughout Europe are aware of the efforts of the European veterinary community to establish, alongside the EBVS-driven specialisation at an academically high level, a “middle tier” for acknowledging recognised post-graduate training programmes for all veterinarians outside the academic career. The first initiative to create such a middle tier was taken by FECAVA and UEVP in 2009, which resulted, with the inclusion of organisations such as the EAEVE, the EBVS, the FVE and the Statutory Bodies working group of FVE, in the foundation of the Interim European Board of Veterinary Professional Development (iEBVPD).

This iEBVPD took on the task of developing ideas and procedures for a Europe-wide programme for granting the title “Acknowledged Practitioner” to veterinarians in practice and other fields of veterinary medicine that are not involved in working at specialist level.

It took a number of long and fruitful discussions with more and more bodies and national organisations within the European veterinary profession to figure out that at present it is not really necessary to create an additional title such as the “Acknowledged Practitioner”. Instead, it is important to start setting minimum standards for a “middle tier” and to go first for mutual recognition of appropriate existing titles through EU Member States. This change of the scope of the iEBVPD, agreed upon by the FVE and the member organisations of the ECCVT, will be recognised by renaming the iEBVPD as the “Veterinary Continuous Education in Europe Committee” (VetCEE), which can be described as follows:

The Veterinary Continuing Education in Europe Committee (VetCEE) is being established collaboratively by the main Euro-

pean Veterinary organisations. Founding members are:

EAEVE (European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education)

EBVS (European Board of Veterinary Specialisation)

FVE (Federation of Veterinarians of Europe)

UEVP (Union of European Veterinary Practitioners)

Co-opted members are:

FECAVA (Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations)

The Statutory bodies working group of FVE

The VetCEE objectives are:

To promote structured continuing professional development and life-long learning of veterinarians in order to improve the level of knowledge, skills and competencies of veterinary practitioners to a level higher than graduation but lower than that of a European Specialist.

To encourage and facilitate the delivery of high-quality veterinary care at first opinion practice level for the benefit of animal health and welfare and also the benefit of owners and society.

To accredit structured continuing education programs, which are achievable by veterinarians in full-time employment.

To develop a system whereby practising veterinarians (and veterinarians in any other non-academic employment) across Europe can gain recognition for attainment of structured post graduate education which indicates a competence to deliver a high level of veterinary service in their chosen field of practice.

The proposed system will recognise and embrace appropriate programmes which already exist in some European countries and provide the basis for their mutual recognition across Europe. The VetCEE programme would be totally different from the EBVS specialisation model which requires high level academic achievement and continuing teaching and research-based post qualification commitment, that is proven by e.g. peer-reviewed publications in veterinary scientific journals.

The EBVS is fully supportive of this approach (still under development) to Europe-wide standardisation of the necessary life-long learning of veterinarians, and hopes to continue to be a major contributor to the process of setting standards and the recognition of European veterinarian continuous education programmes.

It is anticipated that the EBVS Colleges will function as supporting bodies for the activities of the VetCEE Committee and will provide assessors for the VetCEE process aimed at establishing minimum standards for national or private continuous education systems with the goal of mutual recognition at the level of a common European standard.

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As to the current status of this initiative, at the EBVPD meeting with "EAEVE-EBVS-FVE-UEVP-FECAVA-Statutory bodies" on March 20th concerns were raised, but it was agreed that more information, a simple business plan for a pilot study, and a new position paper for circulation at respective AGMs was needed. The pilot study would focus on Companion Animals and test financial requirements, standards, and the accreditation system.

The ABVS AGM in Chicago

Peter O'Brien, ECVCP
EBVS Vice President

The American Board of Veterinary Specialities (ABVS) met Feb 24th and 25th this year at the AVMA headquarters building at 1931 N Meachan Road in Schaumburg, just 15 miles away from O'Hare airport in Chicago. It was a full-day Friday and Saturday morning meeting just like the EBVS AGM, with a social get together over a meal at a great restaurant on the Friday. I noted many more similarities to our own EBVS meeting and organisation, than I noted differences.

I was pleased to be there, representing the EBVS. I was also pleased to see a fellow Clinical Pathologist, Bob Hall, there as well. Megan Parker also attended representing the ANZCVS. We both gave scheduled half-hour presentations on our organisations and their recent activities. These stimulated considerable interest and there were a lot of questions, as the ABVS delegates seemed intrigued with how we did things.

The ABVS was established in 1959 by the House of Delegates after a recommendation of the Council of Education of the AVMA. Criteria for recognition of a veterinary speciality organisation had been established in 1951. The charge to the ABVS was remarkably similar to that of the EBVS which makes sense as it served as a primary model for EBVS. A representative from each speciality attended, with an alternate identified as back-up.

The AGM: Extensive informational, operational and guidance documents had been distributed electronically in advance, along with past meeting minutes and the current agenda. The meeting was chaired by Janyce Seahorne and attended and minuted by AVMA staff. At the start, attendees were reminded about the confidentiality of information regarding specific colleges. Agenda items included past minutes, elections, annual and 5-yearly report reviews, new speciality proposals, old business from the last meeting and new business. The new business is where the EBVS and ANZCVS were heard from directly and from the ABVS's EBVS liaison (Colin Harvey). The various (sub)committees gave reports including those from the Policies and Procedures and the International

Relations Committees, both chaired by Colin Harvey, who also updated ABVS on the International Veterinary Speciality Working Group. There was also an Annual Reports Review Committee.

The participants were welcomed by Dr Ron DeHaven, AVMA executive vice president. He went on to briefly overview the AVMA Strategic Plan for 2012-2015. The objectives are to strengthen the economics of the veterinary profession, enhance veterinary education, promote animal welfare, advance R&D, and enhance membership engagement. The preparedness of all participants, the quality of the presentations, the smooth and effective progress of the meeting, and the friendly, co-operative and discussive spirit were all very impressive.

Items and facts of special EBVS interest: Items of special interest to EBVS operations may be a) the job description of ABVS reps – Neil has been working on this for ourselves; b) the review of P&P for language (use of *should* versus *must* versus *may*) – which probably sounds familiar to those who have attended EBVS AGM for a few years; c) the proposal for an ABVS newsletter – with good reference to the EBVS newsletter; d) a proposed letter to the US state veterinary boards from the ABVS via the AVMA executive on the use of the term specialist; e) a proposed new (sub)speciality of equine dentistry; f) a shorter, intervening meeting / telecom of reps between AGMs, and finally, g) questions arising from 5-year reviews, such as what is the minimum number of specialists in a speciality? what is the college's growth strategy to balance the demand? what proficiency awards are there? what is the strategy for outreach?

Also noteworthy for the EBVS may be that the number of members of the AVMA (represents ~85% of all US vets) was ~83,000. The FVE has >200,000 vets from 38 countries in 46 national organisations. Approximately, 10% of American vets are specialists, whereas only ~1.5% European vets are specialists.

College Representatives — Duties and Expectations

Neil Forbes, ECZM
EBVS President

Each College Representative is a member of the EBVS Board. Membership and voting privileges are accorded to 'one representative' from each of the (provisionally or fully) recognised Colleges. An alternative representative should be designated by each College to attend EBVS meetings if the representative is unavailable. Colleges with more than one Speciality shall be represented by a single representative, who will promote the interests and opinions of the whole College.

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The presence of a College representative or alternative representative at EBVS meetings is mandatory for all Colleges. On a year by year basis, the EBVS may allow Colleges to bring both the representative and the alternate representative to the AGM, so long as the College is represented at the meeting by 'one voice', that of the representative.

Each College must have one Contact Person (typically the Secretary) who acts as liaison between the College and the EBVS and who has the responsibility to distribute documentation received to the relevant persons within their College. It is the Colleges responsibility to ensure that, at all times, the EBVS has the up-to-date contact details of the College contact point.

The College Contact Person and the College Representative may or may not be the same individual person. If they are two different persons, it is up to the College to make sure that information is passed on from the Contact Person to the Representative (prior to the EBVS meeting) and from the Representative to the Contact Person (after the meeting).

The Annual Meeting is held in the Spring. An additional meeting may be held each year as necessary. The invitation and relevant documentation for EBVS meetings is distributed to the EBVS members, via the College contact point, at least 6 weeks before the respective meeting. The EBVS secretariat will endeavour to post details of forthcoming meetings on the EBVS website, to enable forward planning by delegates.

Prior to the AGM

All College Representatives are present at the EBVS to represent their Colleges interests. They may also be required to vote on issues that affect EBVS as a whole. It is essential that prior to attendance at the AGM, all College Representatives have read and shall be fully conversant with the following:

- The Policies and Procedures of EBVS
- The Constitution of EBVS
- The Policies and Procedures of their own College

Representatives will be required to sign a declaration at the AGM, stating that their Colleges policies and Procedures are in line with those of EBVS. Representatives shall have read the EBVS AGM Minutes from at least the previous 4 years.

Representatives shall have read, considered and sorted opin-

ion and policy position on all relevant issues from their own Colleges Executive Committee, in relation to all agenda points for the AGM.

After the AGM

Draft Minutes of an Annual Meeting will be electronically distributed to all College representatives for comments within 30 days of the finish of the annual meeting. An electronic vote on accepting the Minutes will then take place within one month of distribution.

All Colleges are obliged to take part in the vote. Once accepted, the Minutes will be published on the restricted section of the EBVS website.

Other Duties and Responsibilities

College Representatives shall promote their discipline to all interested parties and professional groups, within the European region. They should be watchful for any negative activity or publicity, in relation to EBVS, or their College and bring such information to the notice of the EBVS Executive Committee. They shall at all times promote the interests and position of EBVS within their field.

All College Representatives shall ensure that both they and their 'alternate' are registered to receive messages from the EBVS Representatives Forum and that they shall read and respond to all messages in a timely manner (within a two week period). In the event that the representative is away from their office for more than two weeks, they should notify their alternate, such that College communication can be maintained.

Each College Representative shall formulate with their College, how they are best able to promote and encourage development of their discipline's Specialisation within areas of Europe where their discipline is not represented.

The College Representative shall gather any relevant e mail addresses for interested parties or groups, within their sphere, to whom EBVS might usefully forward their periodic Newsletters.

Editor's note: a careful reading of the EBVS Newsletter is also warranted by College Representatives, both prior to and after the AGM, as the Newsletter is meant also as a mean to facilitate the transfer of information from EBVS to Colleges

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EBVS Quality Management of Resident Training and Examination

Peter O'Brien, ECVCP
EBVS Vice President

For the last few years the EBVS has been working on enhancing its quality management of resident training and examinations. A major impetus for this initiative was a wide perception that examination pass rates for certain colleges could be unacceptably low. This could arise if either a college's exam practices or the training programme were suboptimal, although candidate screening could also be an issue.

Developing P&P: To move forward in addressing this issue, the EBVS first conducted an extensive survey of the colleges' practices in examination of residents. Then the practices in common to the majority were identified and proposed for adoption by all. After much, and repeated, AGM and web-based forum discussion, basic, consensus standards were defined. These have been voted for by the majority of colleges to become incorporated into EBVS policies and procedures. A similar survey is now beginning to define consensus standards for training of residents.

Training the Specialist Examiner: As the EBVS executive committee increasingly interacted with other equivalent organisations in the US (ABVS) and Australia – New Zealand (ANZCVS), it became aware of how they dealt with similar issues. From this, the EBVS is now introducing a satellite, 1-day workshop to its AGM, providing training for the specialist examiners of the colleges. The first workshop is voluntary, although in subsequent years it is anticipated that this or comparable training will become mandatory for the examination committees.

The workshop is being put on in collaboration with colleagues from the a) ANZCVS, Dean Glen Coleman of the University of Queensland, and Megan Parker CEO of ANZCVS, b) ABVS, Colin Harvey who has been chairing the IVSWG (International Veterinary Speciality Working Group), c) Education experts at University College Dublin, David Jennings and Diane Coleman, who piloted the workshop last summer with Glen and the examination committee of the ECVCP, d) and from the EBVS, Stephen May, and Peter O'Brien. For more details or to register, please contact the EBVS Secretariat (email: info@ebvs.org).

Next: Training the Trainer: It is expected that at next year's AGM, the above workshop will be expanded to include training of the education committees of the college on optimal and consensus strategies for residencies. This will be piloted during the summer with one of the colleges.

What it takes to be a President (while being full time clinician, residency supervisor and part-time lecturer)

Neil Forbes, ECZM
EBVS President

Looking back, I was certainly naive, when I was first asked to become a member of the Executive Committee (EC) and the anticipated time commitment was explained to me. Even considering Stefano's commentary as to the work load at the end of his Presidency, I note that in this year, the number of communications is 100% up on 2 years ago, as is the number of meetings which the EBVS is obliged to attend in an official capacity. Certainly for me, there have been 'too many balls in the air at one time' over this last 24 month period.

With 50% of all EBVS Diplomates being in practice, it is perhaps strange that I have had the honour of being the first clinician to be EBVS President. However I have to be honest and state that the commitment in terms of time and availability, has been far greater than anticipated or in truth possible for myself as an employed clinician. I strongly believe that this has been a failing of EBVS, as it is vital that the organisation can be led by any representative member, without it placing a totally unrealistic time commitment on them.

Even smaller, national professional organisations provide time and funding for such activities and I am delighted that with effect from 2012, the same will apply to EBVS. This has been a challenging and transitional period for our organisation. It is true to say that none of us really appreciated how much Sharon Green did for the EBVS. The effect being that previously EC members were obliged to do far less themselves, than is currently the case. In essence we were too reliant on a single person, in particular Sharon's knowledge and memory of past activities of EBVS.

Historically EBVS Presidents, during their term of office attended all the necessary meetings. I remain deeply indebted to all my EC colleagues, as when I explained that this simply

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was not possible for me as a clinician, there was unanimous support for dividing these responsibilities between all EC board members. The end result has been a much more manageable work load for each person, but more importantly it means that instead of each President attending all the meetings for just 2 years before handing the baton on, we now have all officers, maintaining certain responsibilities and developing vital relationships with other organisations over a longer period of time, e.g. six years, i.e. throughout their anticipated period on the EC. I have no doubt that this vital change will make EBVS a more robust and dependable organisation, with a much greater inherent memory.

Hopefully with these changes in hand, other clinicians will be encouraged and also feel able to represent their fellow 'clinical specialists' on the EC. EBVS as an organisation still has many challenges to overcome, in a fast developing and increasingly global environment.

LETTERS to the EDITOR

Letters to the Editor can be sent directly to the Editor (stefano.romagnoli@unipd.it) or to EBVS (info@ebvs.org).

Darkness in Spain (but not only there)

Dear Editor — With the present letter we would like to communicate our concern regarding the misleading view given in your article in the most recent EBVS Newsletter entitled "Recognition of EBVS Diplomas in Europe: the current darkness (Spain et al.) and a bright future ahead (France)" (*editor's note: EBVS Newsletter 3: 2011, p 14-16*). In our opinion, the situation of the EBVS Diplomas in Spain is very different between different Veterinary Faculties, and our centre has been in contact repeatedly with the present president of the "Consejo General de Colegios Veterinarios de España (CGCVE)" to work towards national recognition of the EBVS Diplomas.

In the "Facultat de Veterinària, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona" at present we have 13 Residency programs approved by the respective European Colleges (ECVM-CA, ECVD, ECVN, ECVO, ECVA, ECVBM-CA, ECAR, ECEIM, ECVS-Equine, ECVP, ECLAM, ECVDI, and ECZM) supervised by the EBVS. Our residency programs have resulted in 18 European Diplomates in several specialties, and another 27 undertaking their respective programs. Based on available information in the EBVS web site, there are 169 EBVS Diplomates in Spain. At our Veterinary Faculty 44 EBVS Diplomates and 5 Diplomates of American Colleges (recognized by the ABVS) develop their professional and academic career. Therefore, it is obvi-

ous that the situation of EBVS Diplomas is not the same across Spain, and our Faculty leads the rest of Spain in quantity and quality of European and American Diplomates trained in Spain and abroad. The present president of the CGCVE is himself an European Diplomate of Veterinary Pathology. Up until this point the CGCVE has not shown an interest in official recognition of the EBVS Diplomas. After the CGCVE commissioned a report on Veterinary Specialisation in Spain, our Dean and several EBVS Diplomates in our Faculty sent a letter on 8th March 2011 to the CGCVE president to request recognition of the existing European system of specialisation. The report on Veterinary Specialisation commissioned by the CGCVE is intended as a stepping stone to proceed with National Veterinary Specialisation degrees similar to those well established in the UK (Certificates RCVS), Germany or The Netherlands. The European Board for Veterinary Professional Development (EBVPD) has now been formed and its statutes approved by the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe. The new body will be seeking to establish and harmonize Continued Professional Development standards for 'acknowledged veterinarians' or 'advanced practitioners' in different areas of the veterinary profession across Europe. It is anticipated that the National Commission of Veterinary Specialties in Spain recently named by the CGCVE will follow the guidelines provided by the EBVPD.

Given the confusion about this whole situation of the EBVS Diplomas in Spain, we respectfully request that you clarify your statements about the "darkness in Spain" in the forthcoming EBVS Newsletter. We would be delighted to meet with you to further discuss this matter and assist us to proceed with official recognition of EBVS Diplomas in Spain.

Reyes PLA, PhD, Dean
Eduard Jose-Cunilleras LV PhD Dip ACVIM
Dean Deputy Coordinator Veterinary Degree
Facultat de Veterinària
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Dear Dr. Pla - in answer to your letter, the EBVS is concerned about the situation in Spain as this probably mirrors or is a good example of what is going on in several other European countries. We are very pleased to learn that the Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona (UAB) is a leader in Spain and is lobbying very hard in order to achieve formal recognition of EBVS diplomas in Spain, but the fact that UAB is better than other Spanish Universities is not going to change the overall situation in Spain, where EBVS Diplomas are still not going to be officially recognised.

Our concern originates not just from the fact that a) the Consejo General de Colegios Veterinarios de España (CGCVE) states that recognition of EBVS diplomas in Spain is not possible (this is, unfortunately, a problem common to many other Southern European countries, including Italy), but rather from b) the CGCVE's recent decision to foster the establishment of a national system for veterinary specialisation with residencies and exams parallel to those run

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by EBVS colleges. Both the above are objective situations which you also admit in your letter and which seriously affect the development of veterinary specialisation in Europe. A third fact, your statement that c) you and several other EBVS Diplomates from UAB wrote in March 2011 to the President of the CGCVE, Dr Badiola to request recognition of the existing European system of specialisation, is also reflected in my article on the EBVS Newsletter.

As items a), b) and c) show that you and I agree on the most important aspects of this issue, I see little if any reason to clarify the statements of my article. I do realise that Spanish EBVS Diplomates may have been hurt by the tone of my article and/or by the fact that their situation was being dealt with as if it was the worst case in Europe. This is obviously not true and I do apologize if I hurt anybody's feelings. In fact, the Spanish situation is likely to be very similar to the situation in many other Southern European countries, the only difference being that the recent report published by the CGCVE envisaged the establishment of a National Veterinary Specialisation system (with Training Centres and Trainees of disciplines similar to the EBVS Colleges but controlled by the CGCVE). Such systems have been responsible in Europe for delayed recognition of the need for a European level specialist (see Romagnoli, J Vet Med Ed 37 (4), 333-338, 2010). Therefore, we fear that such a decision might actually push back the development of European-level specialisation in Veterinary Medicine in your country.

With regard to the current system in the UK and the role of the Diplomas of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, the situation is actually quite different from the way it may look from the outside. Please see below a short commentary from Stephen May on this subject.

Again, on behalf of the EBVS Executive Committee let me thank you for your letter to us, and especially for your continued effort to foster the development of a sense of awareness in your country for the importance of European Veterinary Specialisation. I am glad that my article was responsible for such an upsurge of feelings, as this is an important prerequisite for great achievements. Obtaining formal recognition of European Veterinary Specialisation from national as well as European politicians is a task of utmost importance for our profession, one which – once obtained – will be remembered as a great achievement.

The Editor

The Newsletter article on specialisation in Spain stimulated the response from our colleagues from Barcelona which the editor was keen to publish. I share the view that it is important to have mutual understanding of our national situations so that together we can support colleagues in individual countries, as well as collectively making progress in the recognition of veterinary specialisation at the European level. However, I cannot let the paragraph that refers to specialisation in the UK (and several other countries) pass without comment.

I would argue that the situation in the UK is completely the opposite of the model suggested as appropriate for Spain; namely, pro-

gression from European to national diplomas. The Diplomas of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) preceded the establishment of the European Colleges, and an early decision was taken that once Colleges became fully recognised, where they had diplomas that directly mapped to existing RCVS Diplomas, the latter would be phased out. Therefore, progressively, various diplomas, such as Diagnostic Imaging, Anaesthesia, and Ophthalmology have disappeared. The ones that remain, such as the RCVS Diploma in Equine Orthopaedics, have no perfect match currently run by a European College, and therefore, because they fulfil a national purpose, are still available through the RCVS. While both Diplomas co-existed, they were separately considered when individuals applied to be listed on our national Register of Specialists.

There was never a requirement to have "advanced" to a national diploma, and in fact, now, the standard specialist qualification for registration as an RCVS Specialist in the UK is a European Diploma. If readers follow the link below to the RCVS website and click on the titles of the diplomas that have been superseded, they will find a note and link directing them to the EBVS website. <http://www.rcvs.org.uk/education/postgraduate-education-for-veterinary-surgeons/diplomas/>

Stephen MAY, ECVS
EBVS Secretary

The UEVP-FVE Spring Meeting

Dear Editor - I write this letter in response to the EBVS newsletter "Fall 2011" that is published on internet. Unfortunately there seems to be a misinterpretation of the FVE position regarding the "European professional card" (editor's note: EBVS Newsletter 3: 2011, p 17-19). The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) has always expressed its skepticism towards the project of a physical professional card. In this regard, I would like to remind you that: FVE has been involved in the consultation process on the modernisation of the professional qualification recognition Directive (Dir. 2005/36/EC) and in the discussions on the feasibility of a European professional card since the EU Commission first launched the mutual evaluation process. The practical work started early in 2010 with preliminary meetings and the public consultation included several phases which led to FVE issuing the following documents:

- 2 briefing notes
- 2 joint statements with the Sectoral Professions and
- A final response to the COM (2011) 367 green paper on 20 September 2011 (FVE/11/Docs/045).

Concerning the European professional card the DG internal Market & Services set up a "Steering group on the professional cards" made up of 32 experts from European associations representing different professions (FVE joined the group) and experts from 10 Member States. 7 case studies (nurses, engineers, doctors, pharmacists, real estate agents, physiotherapists) were also produced.

An electronical certificate connected to the IMI system instead of

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a plastic card has been widely advocated by the doctors, pharmacists, physiotherapists, nurses as well as by FVE. At point 9 of the FVE briefing note of May 2011, FVE provided to the COM the following comment: "FVE is not convinced of the need and cost-effectiveness of a professional card. Besides, FVE believes that the question of the liability of such a system needs to be raised. Instead, FVE calls for the implementation of an "e-card" or "e-file" device, that could be linked to the IML system and would be easier to use and more flexible".

In the response to the Green Paper FVE again explained its concerns about putting in place a European professional card and replacing the current regime. Further to the public consultation and to the results of the "Steering Group on the professional cards" and of the feasibility studies, the current legislative proposal envisaged the possibility of setting up a voluntary electronic certificate linked to the Internal Market Information system. The procedure and further details will be drafted through the "Implementing Acts (new Comitology procedure).

It is presumed that the professions that will apply for the electronic certificate system are those who submitted to the DG Internal Market & Services the feasibility studies. The procedure has still to be clarified.

Christophe BUHOT, Dr. Vet Med
President FVE

Dear Dr. Buhot - thank you for your letter with clarification on the FVE position on the European professional card. I apologize for any misinterpretation I may have conveyed to our readers through my report of the FVE meeting in Palermo of last June.

The Editor

Failing to provide EBVS Diplomates with insurance

Dear Editor - it is with great interest that I have read the last EBVS newsletter. In this issue, you bring up to point of recognition of the specialist title by the different veterinary bodies of European countries. So far I have not had any problems with this however I am now facing another frustrating issue.

Having started an independent activity as a freelance specialist surgeon, I have tried to get myself insured. However, either companies refuse to provide me with insurance or they ask outrageous fees. Their motivation is that since I am a specialist, I will have more difficult patients, more risk of them dying etc. More risk for them to have a claim. I have tried to explain them that the situation in veterinary medicine is not the same as in humans to which they compare. As any "fool" graduating from vet school can in theory offer the same services as I do (without calling him/her a specialist) and perform surgery on the same animals without legislation obstructing them from doing it. It is therefore frustrating to find out that after board ECVS diploma and with now nearly 10 years of experience you are regarded as being more dangerous than any other colleague.

I believe this is a domain in which the EBVS should be able to help also. Since the insurance companies need to be made aware of the existence of specialty in veterinary medicine. That these specialists are actually at lower risk of mistakes and claims than "common" vets performing the same activities. It should therefore be the other way around, they should not be willing to insure vets who have not followed a specialty track in specific areas. This would also push the local governments in recognizing specialists if insurance is behind.

Denis Verwilghen DVM, MSc, PhD, DES, Dipl. ECVS

Dear Denis - this is interesting. I would suggest the easiest starting point is to ask other colleagues who they are insured with and ask for quotes from other providers. This can only be an issue, if you are being quoted a higher rate than any other vet, for the same level of cover. If you can prove that is the case, I would be interested to hear back from you. If conversely, it is just that being insured as an equine surgeon is expensive - then I am afraid we know that is then your territory. I guess the insurance world knows that there is a stated level of mortality during normal equine anaesthesia and surgery.

Neil FORBES, ECZM,
EBVS President

FACTS about EBVS

Stefano Romagnoli, ECAR
EBVS Past President,

A new website - By the time you are reading this, the EBVS will have finished migration and re-activation of its website, forums, and email. The forums have been down for a few months as there have been and still remain a few bugs in the website and email system, although the vast majority of features are now functional. These had evolved over the tenure of Sharon and Mathew Green's excellent and skillful management of EBVS communications. With their final retirement at the end of last year, the location and management of electronic communications had to be migrated to another host and location, using other software and support persons.

A draft of geographic distribution of EBVS Diplomates is shown in Table n° 2. Distribution of European Veterinary Specialists across Europe varies remarkably, with a striking feature being the almost complete absence or very low numbers of EBVS Diplomates in Eastern European countries and Portugal. This situation is due to several possibly unrelated reasons (see also *My Vision for EBVS*, page 2). Whether or not the uneven distribution of EBVS Diplomates may hamper the development of Veterinary Specialisation in those countries thus constituting a problem is an issue which should be debated.

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Spring
2012

A NEWSLETTER from EBVS (www.ebvs.org)

Editor

Stefano Romagnoli
stefano.romagnoli@unipd.it**EBVS**EUROPEAN BOARD
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SPECIALISATION

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Table n° 2 - Draft distribution of EBVS Diplomates throughout European Countries. The number of diplomates of Colleges with ≥ 2 subspecialties may be overestimated due to the difficulty in tracking Diplomates who are listed in 2 or more subspecialties in the same College. EBVS College Representatives are kindly asked to double check the distribution of Diplomates in their respective Colleges, and report on any discrepancy to the Editor. Data were collated using each College website and, when country distribution was not featured on the College website (as it was the case with most Colleges, unfortunately) using the EBVS website search features.

	EC AR	ECA WB M	EC- BHM	EC EIM	EC LAM	EC PHM	EC PVS	EC SRH IM	EC VAA	EC VCN	EC VCP	EC VD	EC VDI	EC VIM	ECV N	ECV O	ECV VP	ECV PH	ECVP T	EC VS	EC ZM	EV DC	EV PC
Austria	9	1	10	2	2	6	2	1	4	1	3		1	3	1	2	3	9		10	3	2	2
Belgium	16	3	10	9	4	16	1		3	4		3	8	13	6	3	7	7	4	25	3	2	10
Bulgaria																							1
Croatia																					1		1
Cz Rep			4	2								2		1	2		2	2		1	2		1
Den- mark	5		6	1	4	12					1		4	13			1	6		1	1	1	3
Finland	4		3	3	2	4							1	5	3		1	6	2	5		2	1
France	19	4	22	6	6	8	3	3	3	6	7	14	9	8	8	7	54	12	13	47	2	2	18
Gema- ny	24	2	27	14	18	26	6	2	7	6	4	9	7	23	17	5	42	27	5	54	10	2	24
Greece	5		4			3		8	2		1	1	1					13	1				4
Hungary	5		5			2				1	3							1			3		1
Ireland	3		8	6		1			1		1		5	7		1	3	5	1	13			5
Israel			1	1	4	1					2	1	1	7	2	1	2	1	2	8	1		
Italy	15	8	9		1	5		2	2	2	15	7	6	5	8	4	29	15	5	10	1	3	17
Latvia																							
Lithua- nia																							1
Luxemb													1										
NL	15	2	20	12	7	10	3	2	5	3		4	7	13	1	7	10	10	5	32	6		3
Norway	8		2	3	3	1		2	1	1	2		2			1	6	5		3	1		
Poland			1			2		1							1				1				
Portugal	1		6									1					2	1	1	1			1
Serbia			1															1					
Slov Rep			4																				
Slovenia			2				1															1	
Spain	20	5	4	5	9	30		5	1	2	2	4	2	5	5	2	27	3	1	8	7	1	26
Sweden	15		1	4	5	6			1		3	2	3	6	3	4	8	5	4	10	2		3
CH	4		17	7	3	2			17	3	4	7	14	17	8	6	30	11	4	41	6	1	4
Turkey							1																
UK	13	3	27	28	11	10	2	13	54	4	13	15	32	71	39	12	30	35	6	136	19	7	12

College Reports (5-yr or Full Recognition) are often a milestone in the life of a College, due to the relevant amount of information portrayed as well as the remarkable workload they put on Executive Committee members. A draft yearly schedule of EBVS College or Subspecialty Reports due in the near future is provided here as a mean to help Colleges to plan ahead for such important activities (Table 3). EBVS College

College	Year Recognized		Next Review	
	Full	Provisional	5 Year	Full Recog
ECAR	2004		2014	
ECAWBM		2002 BM; 2011 AW		2012 BM 2021 AW
ECBHM	2010		2015	
ECEIM	2010		2015	
ECLAM	2008		2013	
ECPHM		2004		2014
ECPVS		2008	2013	2018
ECSRHM		2008	2013	2018
ECVAA	2003		2013	
ECVCN	2009		2014	
ECVCP	2007		2012	
ECVD	2006		2012	
ECVDI	2002		2017	
ECVIM-CA	2002		2017	
ECVN	2002		2017	
ECVO	2003		2013	
ECVP	2007		2013	
ECVPH	2011		2016	
ECVPT		1997		2012
ECVS	2000		2010	
ECZM	2005 Avian	2009 Herpetology 2009 Sm Mamm 2009 Wild Pop H 2011 Zoo Mamm	2015 Avian	
EVDC	2009		2014	
EVPC		2003	2010	2013

Table n° 3 - Yearly schedule of EBVS College or Subspecialty reviews or reports over the next few years.

representatives are kindly requested to double check the information reported in Table n° 3 for their respective Colleges, and report on any discrepancy to the Editor.

The new Spanish EBVS Representative is Dr. Anne Lanevski-Pietersma. This information has been communicated to a group that is leading an initiative where EBVS representatives of Spanish origin are petitioning their government for a more mainstream approach to veterinary specialisation.

In the future College Secretaries are likely to be requested in their College Annual Report to sign a declaration that their College P&P are in line with the EBVS model.

There will be no new College this year, as no application for provisional recognition was sent to the EBVS Secretariat by Nov 1st, 2011. There has been no new action from the proposers of the a) European College of Veterinary Anatomy, and b) European College of Aquatic Veterinary Medicine. The European Society for Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care has been working towards establishing a joint (International?) College with the Americans.

Do you have a comment or a critique about anything published in this issue of the EBVS Newsletter? Send an e-mail to the Editor at stefano.romagnoli@unipd.it. Your contribution will be published in the following issue

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN DENIED THE USE OF YOUR SPECIALIST TITLE ANYWHERE IN EUROPE?

EBVS Diplomates are entitled to use their Specialist title anywhere in the world. In Europe, all countries **MUST** accept the use of such a title. However, using one's title is not equivalent to having legal recognition from state authorities or being granted equivalence and licensing from statutory bodies. States may refuse to officially acknowledge the legal status of EBVS Diplomates or accept that EBVS titles are at least equivalent to national specialist titles. If any of the above happens to you, **PLEASE LET US KNOW ABOUT IT**. We may be able to help. But, more importantly, we will be able to put together a database of information which may turn out to be helpful for legal protection of the European Veterinary Specialist title in the new European Commission Directive

Editor

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Veterinary Excellence through Specialisation

What EBVS has been doing for Diplomates in 2012

Stefano Romagnoli, ECAR
EBVS Past President

- **Peter O'Brien travelled** to Chicago in late February to attend the ABVS annual general meeting, where he gave a presentation on EBVS (see his report on page 14)
- **Peter O'Brien attended a meeting** on EBVPD on March 20, where the foundations of the new Vet-CEE system were laid down.
- **Peter O'Brien and Stephen May attended the ECCVT meeting** in Bruxelles on March 21. EBVS (POB) chaired the meeting which focused especially on discussing the progression of VetCEE; developing the policies and procedures and vision of ECCVT with EBVS playing a critical role, and reports from the 3 member organisations with EBVS presenting a detailed account of its own recent activities and vision.
- **Thomas Blaha and Maureen O'Brien made endless phone calls** to the Limal (Belgium) subsidiary of the BNP Bank where the EBVS account still is. The poor command of the English language of BNP Bank clerks has made running bank operations quite difficult. Options for changing bank and country of the bank account are being evaluated, but the fact that EBVS is not registered in Germany (Treasurer) or in Ireland (Secretariat) but in The Netherlands poses a problem.
- **Neil Forbes will attend the WSAVA meeting** (Birmingham, UK, 10-14 April) representing EBVS.
- **The EBVS Executive Committee met** 3 times: once in person at Stanstead airport in January, and twice more on Skype in February and March.
- **Neil Forbes wrote a letter** in response to an editorial that appeared in a February 2012 issue of the Veterinary Record (Simplifying specialisation—*Veterinary Record* 2012 170: 138)
- **Stefano Romagnoli wrote a letter** to the Dean of the Veterinary School at the University of Barcelona (see page 17-18), in reply to the Dean's response to the article that appeared on Recognition of EBVS Diplomas in Europe (EBVS Newsletter issue 3, page 14-16). Following an exchange of e-mails, SR has been invited on April 26 to travel to Barcelona to meet the Dean to discuss strategies for recognition of EBVS Diplomas in Spain.
- **Stephen May and/or Stefano Romagnoli will attend** the EAEVE meeting in Budapest in May representing EBVS.

- **Stefano Romagnoli will represent EBVS** at the ANZCVS General Meeting, to be held in June in Brisbane, Queensland (Australia); attendance will either be on Skype or in person.
- **Peter O'Brien is likely to travel** to Amsterdam to represent EBVS at the FVE General assembly in June.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- **WSAVA Meeting**, April 10-14, 2012, Birmingham
- **EBVS General Assembly** April 20-21, 2012, Bruxelles (B)
- **EBVS training workshop for Veterinary Specialty Examiners** April 22, Bruxelles (at the same venue as the EBVS AGM)
- **EAEVE General Assembly**, May 15-16, 2012, Budapest (HUN)
- **FVE General Assembly** 8-9 June, 2012, Amsterdam (NL)
- **ANZCVS General Meeting** June 28-30, 2012, Brisbane, Queensland (Australia)
- **ECCVT meeting**, October 2012, Bruxelles (B)
- **ABVS General Assembly** February, 2013, Schaumburg, IL (USA)



Now I have my chance !

Peter O'Brien, ECVCP, EBVS Vice President, nominated as a candidate for President for 2012-2014

Editor's note: Front cover picture portrays an autopsy on a sperm whale being performed by ECVCP Diplomates and Residents at the Veterinary School of the University of Padova, Italy. The sperm whale was an adult female stranded on the Northwestern coast of the Adriatic sea