BVA Council 14 December 2022 – summary of discussions

EMS Working Group
1. Council received an update from Dr Kate Richards, RCVS Senior Vice President, on the College’s position on the future of EMS. It was reported that the recently published RCVS position ‘Extra-Mural Studies fit for the future: improving learning, flexibility and opportunity” will begin with a pilot scheme for the new EMS database in 2023, before its full implementation in 2024, when EMS will be fully outcomes based, allowing students to decide on their own learning objectives. Council members raised concerns regarding the proposed reduction in the number of EMS weeks.

2. Council also heard from Liz Mossop, chair of the BVA EMS Working Group, on the development of BVA’s position. Council members welcomed the focus on the important role of EMS in the development of professional identity, and calls to address discrimination, harassment and bullying during placements.

Non-traditional companion animals
3. Council recognised the pragmatic compromise position being taken on the matter of wild-caught fish, and welcomed the constructive debate which had taken place within the working group. Subject to some minor amendments, the position was approved by Council.

bTB
4. Council received an update from Chair of the bTB review group, Gareth Hateley, confirming that while the position would be subject to ongoing review, it was the conclusion of the review group that, after reviewing the available evidence, there was no need for any material change to the existing position.

5. Council voted to approve the review group’s conclusion that the BVA policy would not be amended, other than by the addition of an addendum document which would provide an update to the research priorities and highlight the importance of social science to the understanding of disease control.

Update from the Chairman of the Board
6. Council noted the Board Chairman’s report, which detailed BVA’s healthy financial position, on track to break even for the financial year. The 2023 budget had been signed off by the Board, set within the context of the three-year Strategic Plan 2021 – 2023, with all the main income streams budgeted to increase.

7. Council also received an update on BVA’s next strategic plan, which would be developed over the coming year, ready for publication in January 2024.

Board Director
8. Council voted in favour of re-electing Chris May as a Board Director for a further three-year term.
RCVS Workforce Action Plan

9. Council received an update from RCVS President, Melissa Donald, on the recently published RCVS Workforce Action Plan, which highlighted the workforce issues facing the profession, and identified a number of solutions for cross-stakeholder action.

10. Council worked in groups to review the actions and current activity under each ambition in the workforce plan, suggesting priorities and additional activity which should be considered by RCVS. While Council broadly agreed with and welcomed the plan, it was felt that greater clarity was required in some areas, notably in relation to the difference between 'leadership' and 'management', as well as in the development of general practice as a chosen pathway.

Avian Influenza

11. Council received a presentation from Richard Jacks, president of the British Veterinary Poultry Association, summarising the current situation in relation to the avian influenza pandemic in the UK.

12. Council members received advice on dealing with birds brought into practice, with calls being made for guidance to be developed and signposted to help practices deal with potential cases.