



Veterinary Association of Namibia

**OFFICIAL
NEWSLETTER
OF THE
VETERINARY
ASSOCIATION
OF NAMIBIA**

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The Manga

ISSUE 4 OF 2025

DECEMBER 2025



Dear Colleagues,
A warm welcome to our new colleagues, who have just finished their final exams. Congratulations! May you find in VAN a community of vets ready to support you and lending helping hands.

As another year is coming to a close, I'd like to thank YOU, the VAN community for supporting the VAN initiatives, such as the VAN Congress and CPD events, as well as the rabies vaccination campaigns.

Thank you to those who take the time to complete the surveys to help us shape the way forward.

The survey that stood out was the "Mental Health" survey -we've had more responses than with any other survey and also much quicker, with fewer reminders.... We've had over 50 responses. Most alarming was the fact that only 66.7% of VAN members answered "No" to the following question: Have you ever had suicidal thoughts? For this reason, together with the survey comments and the rapid turnout, we realized that this is an important topic to you, our members. Hence we

PRESIDENT'S DESK

have planned "THRIVE", our wellbeing event, to be held at the Namibia Cricket Ground Conference Venue Windhoek: 13th-15th March 2026.

We all know that our profession can be tough and challenging. While things may seem smooth on the surface, deep down they might not be -we never know the battles colleagues fight on the inside, behind that "I'm okay"-smile. Maybe your encouragement and invitation to THRIVE is what that colleague needs.

We all face pressure, stress, time constraints, fatigue, mistakes, anxiety -hence we've invited speakers to address exactly those aspects and help us develop strategies of dealing with these. Even if you think you are handling all these challenges well, please still join us for a fun-filled time with colleagues.

It is with gratitude that I may share that Hill's has committed to supporting this event! A big "Thank you"!!

To all vets and para-vets who do something creative in your free time -please come and exhibit your art at the Thrive Conference. Drawings, photography, po-

ems, any crafts... all shapes and forms are welcome!!

We are looking forward to more CPD events next year and to a few more projects, like the Antibiotic Amnesty Project, Rabies campaigns, Zoom sessions and other educational content to promote our profession, foster collegiality and safeguard our livestock and wildlife sector.

A special thank you to Drs Andrea Klingelhoefter and Cveta Pudar who have served on the VAN exco for many years but have now stepped down. We appreciate all your hard work and the time you've put into VAN!

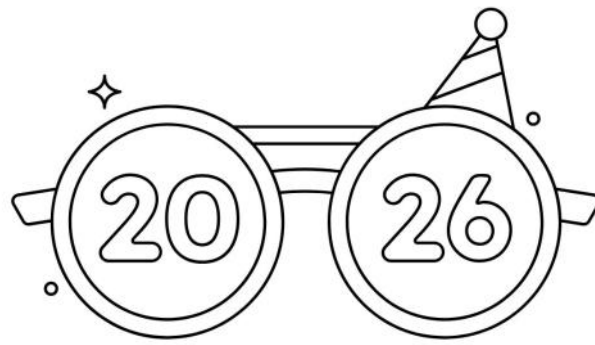
Looking back at this year, what stands out is the amazing rainy season we've had, providing much-needed water and relief, turning this country into a magnificent wonderland... What a blessing!

While most of you will probably be working this Festive Season, I hope that you will find some time for yourselves and family.

May you start the new year refreshed and filled with purpose and anticipation.

Have a blessed Christmas!

Alex



VAN NEWS: CPDs 2026

What to expect in 2026!

- Poultry Webinar Series
- Livestock group: we are looking at hosting a monthly zoom session -including disease updates and some discussions. Watch this space for more information.
- AFSCAN Twinning project: Our first meeting of 2026 will be on 13th January 2026, 18h00 GMT+2, please WhatsApp me if you are interested: +264811242224.
- WSAVA-AFSCAN Cytology and AMS webinar series part 2
- WSAVA Small Animal Reproduction Webinar Series
- Thrive 13-15 March 2026
- Small Animal Dentistry 24-26 July 2026
- Livestock CPD September 2026



Reminders!

- Please remember to look at the “Research Grant Proposal” and submit your input, so this can be finalized.
- Also be reminded that the Animal Welfare draft is out for perusal and comments.
- Be on the lookout and apply for next year’s scholarships covering conference fees, flight tickets and accommodation:
- Southern European Veterinary Conference
- VMX
- Also: please be reminded of the AFSCAN research grants and student scholarships, visit www.prosalusfoundation.org



VAN Stress Hotline

We want to create a hotline people can call if they need to vent or just talk or get some support.

If you are interested in assisting, by giving some of your time -please send us an email.



Your EXCO for 2026!

Dr Alexandra Marko—VAN President

I grew up in Otjiwarongo, where I used to hang out at the veterinary clinic on Friday afternoons and during school holidays from an early age. I completed high school in Windhoek and then graduated from Onderstepoort in 2012. I worked in rural practice for 5 months until I joined Rhino Park Veterinary Clinic in May 2013. I've come to love small animal medicine and surgery and hence am still working there to date.



I have just completed the RCVS Certificate of Advanced Veterinary Practice with focus on small animal emergency, critical care and anesthesiology. I have a soft spot for cats and therefore feel honored that my two cats are sharing their home with me...;)

Dr Jolandie van der Westhuizen—VAN Vice-president

Vice-President, Industry, Rabies Representative

Jolandie v/d Westhuizen graduated from Onderstepoort, University of Pretoria in 2012. She headed the Pathology Section at Central Veterinary Laboratory, heading rabies, parasitology and clinical pathology for six years. During that time she was part of the OIE Laboratory Twinning project between the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut (FLI), Isle of Riems, Germany and the Central Veterinary Laboratory (CVL), Windhoek, Namibia. She headed the Pathology Section at Central Veterinary Laboratory, heading rabies, parasitology and clinical pathology for six years. During that time she was part of the OIE Laboratory Twinning project between the Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut (FLI), Isle of Riems, Germany and the Central Veterinary Laboratory (CVL), Windhoek, Namibia.



The project was to strengthen the Namibian Central Veterinary Laboratory in rabies diagnostics and control and she is co-author of 9 peer review articles that was published in that time. She has also opened a private veterinary practice mainly doing equine work and has a particular interest in modern equine dentistry.

She holds a certificate in Radiology of the horse and Ultrasonography of the horse and she is a 3* FEI Official Veterinarian as well as 3* Endurance Treatment Veterinarian. She is passionate about education, improving standards of clinical care and personal development.

Dr Vincent Sevenster— VAN Treasurer

Treasurer, UNAM Representative

I was born in Pretoria but I have lived most of my life outside of South Africa. At an early age we moved to Gaborone, Botswana where I stayed for most of my life with a short move to Durban before returning to Botswana.

In Botswana I would frequently visit the Veterinarian either with my own animals or just to see what entailed a day in the life of a Veterinarian.

I had a love for medicine since I was young and from that my passion for Veterinary medicine grew.

I have lived in Windhoek since 2011 when I started the Pre-Vet course before moving over to the BVM course in 2014. I was fortunate enough to graduate in 2019 as part of the first Namibian trained Veterinarians. During my studies Small animal medicine and surgery always peaked my interest.

I have worked at Rhino Park Veterinary Clinic since January 2020, where small animal medicine and surgery are the main focus of the clinic.

I am quite interested in Orthopaedics and Diagnostic imaging. However the complex puzzle of Small animal medicine also interests me thoroughly.

I currently live in Windhoek with my wife Jolanda Sevenster and our 2 dogs and 2 cats.



Dr Elsje Boshoff—VAN Secretary

Secretary, Editor of the Manga Newsletter, Website

I was born and raised in Windhoek, and every chance I got, every second I had, I would spend it on the farm, whether it was weekends or school holidays. This is where my interest in veterinary medicine started to grow.

In 2022, I graduated from the University of Namibia, and my great love for production animals took root. Working in the production animal industry allowed me to develop a great interest and passion for the farming industry.

In my spare time, I enjoy spending time with my three dogs (“the children”), reading a book, or finding myself camping somewhere in our breathtaking country.



Your EXCO for 2026!

Dr Shalom Phiri

Animal Welfare

I grew up as the daughter of a veterinarian on a small farm called Tsumis in the southern part of Namibia, surrounded by animals of every shape and size. After school, my world existed outdoors—long walks around the kraals, the thrill of running from ostriches, and even conducting post-mortems on any birds I happened to find. Those early experiences quietly shaped a deep love for animals and a lasting respect for their health and wellbeing.

That passion led me to the University of Namibia's School of Veterinary Medicine, where I graduated in 2022. I spent my first three years as a Shelter Veterinarian at SPCA Windhoek, an experience that profoundly influenced both my professional and personal growth. Working so closely with vulnerable animals taught me compassion, resilience, and a deeper understanding of animal behaviour.

I have since moved to Lüderitz and opened my own private veterinary clinic. Part of this decision came from my roots—once a small-town girl, always a small-town girl—but more importantly, from seeing firsthand how limited access to veterinary care can be in the far southern regions of our country. My heart lies in bridging these gaps, and my dream is to take animal healthcare beyond city limits, reaching remote and underserved communities, including those affected by natural disasters.



Dr Kristen Rajzman

WVA Representative

Vice-President, Industry, Rabies Representative

I was born in South Africa and lived there for a short period of my childhood. Nevertheless, it was there where my love for all creatures, great and small began.

My family and I moved to Namibia in 2005 and quickly fell in love with this rich in nature country. I went to school at the coast and graduated at the University of Namibia in 2023. I am registered as an unconditional veterinarian with an additional professional category – wildlife by the Namibian Veterinary Council.

I started working at Windhoek Animal Hospital, in June 2025, as a mixed practicing Vet.

I enjoy treating all animals, surgery is my passion and I love working in the field.



Dr Clemen Lichtenberg

Animal Health Forum representative

After being born in the drought of 1995 I spent my childhood growing up in Gobabis and on the family farm in the Omaheke. After graduating high school in 2013 I followed in my father's footsteps and started my veterinary studies at the Onderstepoort Campus of the University of Pretoria.

After graduating from Onderstepoort in 2019 I went on to complete my compulsory community service working as a state veterinarian in the Brits area in North-West, South Africa. During this time, I started to work for EmbrioPlus in my free time and over weekends. I subsequently joined EmbrioPlus as a full-time veterinarian in 2021. Under the mentorship of Dr. M. de la Rey and Dr. R. Treadwell I gained experience in the field of bovine assisted reproductive techniques (Semen collection and freezing, Embryo collection and transfer etc).

In 2023 I returned to Namibia, after an interesting and memorable time in South Africa, to join my father at his mixed animal practice in Gobabis. With me I brought my wife Carla whom I had met at EmbrioPlus where she had worked as an embryologist in their IVF laboratory.

We have since settled in well in Gobabis and welcomed our daughter Maike in April 2025.

Working for a mixed practice provides me with a varied caseload, thus there is never a dull moment. Though I enjoy working with both companion and production animals alike I particularly enjoy spending time out on farms working mostly with cattle, implementing basic herd health protocols.

I joined the executive committee of the Veterinary association of Namibia in 2024 and have been privileged to work with a group a very committed and driven individuals and feel honored to serve such an amazing profession.

**Dr Hubertus Otto**

Animal Health Forum Representative

Born in Grootfontein and raised in Windhoek, I pursued my passion for veterinary medicine at the University of Namibia, graduating from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in 2023. As a registered veterinarian with the Namibian Veterinary Council, I hold an additional professional category in wildlife.



I embarked on my professional journey immediately after graduating by opening the Okahandja Veterinary Clinic. My areas of interest include production animals, equine medicine and wildlife.

I find joy in exploring Namibia's breathtaking landscapes. Whether embarking on 4X4 camping adventures with family and friends, discovering the country's natural wonders, or escaping to the coast for fishing and quad biking, I embrace every opportunity to experience the outdoors.

Dr Samantha Zealand

WSAVA Representative, SAVA Representative

I'm a small-animal vet from Windhoek with a big passion for welfare work and making good veterinary care accessible. I run Zealand Veterinary Consultants, a mixed-animal practice in Elisenhiem where no two days are ever the same and plans are more of a suggestion than a rule. I also work closely with the SPCA Windhoek, which keeps me grounded in the real welfare challenges our animals face.

When I'm not in the clinic, I'm usually with my dogs or hanging out with friends—most of whom are in the medical field—so our “downtime” conversations are delightfully brain-draining. I'm also known for colourful hair, piercings, and tattoos, proudly representing the fact that Namibian vets don't all look the same (and that professionalism comes in many forms).

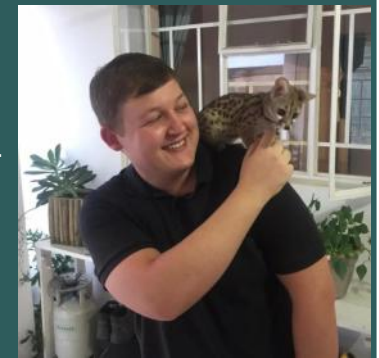
At heart, I believe every animal deserves kindness.

**Dr Mark Jahnke**

SAVA Representative

I was born and raised in Lüderitz where I spent most of my childhood surrounded by dogs.

Later, having moved to Swakopmund for school I found a deep fascination for the sciences of Biology and Physics. That, together with mild exposure to Wildlife and SPCA volunteer work, my trajectory was set.



Graduating UNAM in 2023, I spent some time working at a small animal practice in Walvis Bay before seeking warmer climates in Otjiwarongo where I am still active today.

Post-Congress Small Animal Dermatology Wrap-up with Dr Sonja Zabel

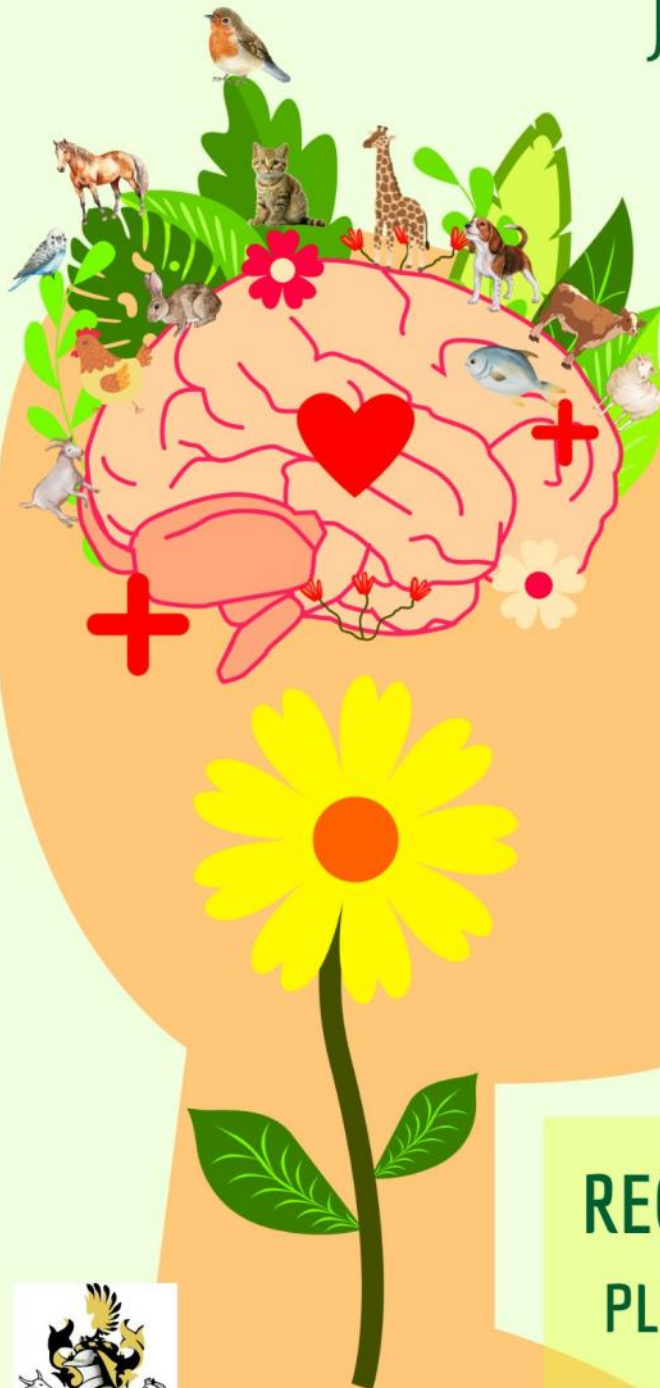
Monday 26th of January 2026, 19:00 via Zoom.

Everyone is welcome to join this session — if you have any small animal dermatology questions or if you realized you thought you understood the concepts during the congress lectures, but now it no longer seems to be the case. Any questions you forgot to ask during congress, any puzzling cases, join us!

LEARN TO **THRIVE** AND NOT JUST SURVIVE THE VETERINARY PROFESSION

REGISTRATIONS NOW
OPEN!

13 - 15 MARCH 2026



WITH DR KENNETH
JOUBERT,
JIMMY CARNES, HELEN
SILVER-MACMAHON,
ALTA VORBACK

REGISTRATIONS OPEN!
PLEASE CLICK ON LINK TO
REGISTER.



THRIVE SCHEDULE

Friday, 13 March 2026

18:30 - Evening Session

Short interactive session with Jimmy Carnes: Enneagram

Discover nine inherent personality types and how they instinctively respond to the world. Jimmy unpacks three default reactions each style brings to stress, desire, disappointment, and connection.

Walk away with a clearer understanding of your personal patterns and how they affect leadership, teamwork, and wellbeing.

19:30 - "Mask" Social with Alta Vorback

Food, fun, and creative connection

Kick off the weekend with playful ice-breakers, including sharing your most unforgettable veterinary moments.

Expect collaborative games, laughter, and a relaxed environment that helps colleagues reconnect and unwind together.

Saturday, 14 March 2026

08:00 - 09:30

Dr Kenneth Joubert: Pathophysiology of Chronic Stress

Explore the brain-adrenal axis and the cascade of adrenaline and cortisol on the body, cognition, and decision making. Dr Joubert translates complex physiology into practical insights for recognising and mitigating chronic stress in veterinary practice.

09:30 - 10:00

Tea Break

10:00 - 10:15

What is threatening the profession we all love?

A candid look at the systemic pressures facing veterinarians today, framing the day's focus on resilience and sustainable practice.

EST.2005

Bushwhackers

WHERE ADVENTURE BEGINS



SCIENCE PLAN
VETERINARIAN RECOMMENDED

10:20 - 18:00

Jimmy Carnes: Notice, Name, and Diffuse Anxiety

10:20 - 13:00 · Notice

Identify the nature of chronic anxiety, how it manifests in the body, and how it shapes interactions. Learn to spot where anxiety lives in your daily practice.

13:00 - 14:00 · Lunch

Connect informally during a catered lunch. Local psychologists, including Alta Vorback, host reflective prompts to deepen learning.

14:00 - 15:30 · Name

Surface assumptions, expectations, false beliefs, and the inner critic. Examine universal sources of anxiety and communication styles that keep teams stuck.

15:30 - 15:45 · Tea Break

Reset with refreshments before diving into practical tools.

15:45 - 18:00 · Diffuse

Practice tools that diffuse anxiety: Life-Giving Lists, differentiation, conscious relationship maps, breaking stuck patterns, and Brave Practice exercises. Interactive segments feature local psychologists such as Alta Vorback.

18:30 - Evening Social

Dinner braai, jamming session, and art exhibition

Sunday, 15 March 2026

08:00 - 09:15

Helen Silver-MacMahon: Under Pressure – Spotting Stress Before It Boils Over

Build a personal "stress radar" that helps you recognise early warning signs in yourself and your team. Helen explores how different personalities display stress and shares strategies to de-escalate triggers before they become crises.

09:15 - 10:30

After the Storm: Turning Veterinary Setbacks into Lessons

Even the most skilled professionals face moments when cases do not go as planned. Learn to process the emotional impact, debrief constructively, and build a culture that sees mistakes as opportunities to grow.

10:30 - 10:45

Tea Break

10:45 - 12:00

Safe to Speak: Building Teams That Trust and Thrive

Understand psychological safety in veterinary teams—what it looks like, why it matters, and how to protect it. Gain tools to foster openness so colleagues feel comfortable raising concerns and ideas.

12:00 - 13:00

Beyond Tired: Staying Sharp When the Work Never Ends

Fatigue is more than feeling sleepy—it impacts judgment, emotional control, and patient care. Learn the science behind fatigue and practical strategies to sustain energy for yourself and your team.

13:15 - Closing Session

Lunch & Interactive Workshop with Alta Vorback: "The Importance of Self-care"

Wrap up the weekend with a creative self-care session led by local psychologist Alta Vorback. Capture personal commitments, share takeaways, and connect with peers before heading home.

Veterinarians - Full Weekend

Including catering

Super-Early Bird (before 05 Dec)

VAN Member: **N\$1,800**

Non-member: **N\$2,500**

06 Dec - 15 Feb

VAN Member: **N\$2,000**

Non-member: **N\$2,700**

15 Feb - 28 Feb

VAN Member: **N\$2,300**

Non-member: **N\$3,000**

Veterinarians - One Day Options

Friday

VAN Member: **N\$400** | Non-member: N\$600

Saturday Full Day

VAN Member: **N\$1,100** | Non-member: N\$1,400

Saturday Half Day

VAN Member: **N\$600** | Non-member: N\$800

Sunday

VAN Member: **N\$800** | Non-member: N\$1,200

Para-professionals & Students

Full Weekend including catering

Super-Early Bird (before 05 Dec)

N\$1,800

1 Dec - 15 Feb

N\$2,000

15 Feb - 28 Feb

N\$2,300

Para-professionals & Students

One Day Options

Friday

N\$400

Saturday Full Day

N\$1,100

Saturday Half Day

N\$600

Sunday

N\$800

THRIVE ART EXHIBITON

All vets and para-vets, please bring your art -drawings, photography, crafts, poems etc.

All those who play instruments — be ready for our "Thrive jamming session".

How Capable Life Can Help Veterinarians Carry the Weight of Their Work

(Jimmy Carnes from Cable Life will be speaking at Thrive)



Research data confirms what many vets already know: long hours, emotional strain, client expectations, financial pressure, and a culture of perfectionism all take a toll. The *Veterinary World* literature review names these realities clearly—and highlights just how often they lead to anxiety, burnout, depression, and, tragically, suicide among veterinarians. Behind these statistics are real people doing meaningful work under relentless pressure.

Left to our own devices, we usually try to convince ourselves we need to "work harder," or "be more resilient," or "believe change is just around the corner." If this self talk worked as well as we imagined, the statistics would come back differently. At Capable Life, we help you learn to notice and manage the assumptions, expectations, false beliefs, and false needs that keep you stuck. We help you notice the invisible emotional and relational forces that quietly drain us over time—things like internal pressure, self-criticism, and the way anxiety can hijack decision-making and relationships.

Many veterinarians are wired for responsibility and excellence. That's a gift—but when anxiety is running the show, those same traits can turn into relentless self-judgment and impossible standards. Capable Life gives language and tools to recognize when anxiety is narrowing perspective, amplifying guilt, or pushing someone to carry more than we should.

Staying connected to yourself and others is crucial for mental health. We help you stay connected, aware, and present—to yourself, to your values, and to the people around you—without dumping stress on others or withdrawing into isolation. In a profession where many people struggle silently and delay asking for help, we want to give you tools to get off the treadmill of "more of the same" and "try harder."

Most importantly, Capable Life is preventative. If you wait for burnout or crisis to show up before looking for support, you usually have less energy and fewer resources at your disposal to get well. Capable Life gives you tools you can use daily, whether in the middle of a hard client conversation, a moral dilemma, or a season of exhaustion.

Annual Scientific Congress 2025

Congress 2025 took place in Windhoek, at Arebbsuch Travel Lodge. The first day was dedicated to Safeguarding Namibia's Livestock Sector. Speakers included Prof Helmke von Bach, Dr Baby Kaurivi, Prof Bobwealth Omontese, Prof Anita Michel, Dr Carla van Zyl and Dr Danie Odendaal.

On the second day of congress 2025, Hills sponsored a three hour lecture stream, presented by Dr Vanessa McClure. Dr Danie Odendaal and Prof Anita Michel continued with relevant and interesting topics for the production animals veterinarians. Dr Benhard from DVS also updated the congress goers on Foot and Mouth Disease, and what DVS is currently doing and implementing. Dr Pete Morkel and Dr Michael Brown ended the second day.

Third day of congress, WSAVA sponsored a five hour lecture stream, presented by Dr Sonja Zabel, board certified dermatologist. Dr Sonja kept everyone on their toes with her interesting cases. Our Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr K Shoombe paid a visit to congress and had a comprehensive discussion with the attending veterinarians. The day divided into small animals and wildlife. Dr Erik Verreyne, Dr Ulf Tubbesing and Dr Pete Morkel ensured that the wildlife veterinarians were presented with intriguing topics, filled with loads of experience in the field. The day was wrapped up by research presentations by Dr Vaino Kuume and final year UNAM students. Additionally, we had Sunday sessions for wildlife and small animals presented by Dr Ulf, Dr Erik and Dr Sonja.

This year we had the privilege of hosting 3 evening functions, which allowed for plenty social time and catching up.

Thank you to all our amazing sponsors, without you congress would not be possible:

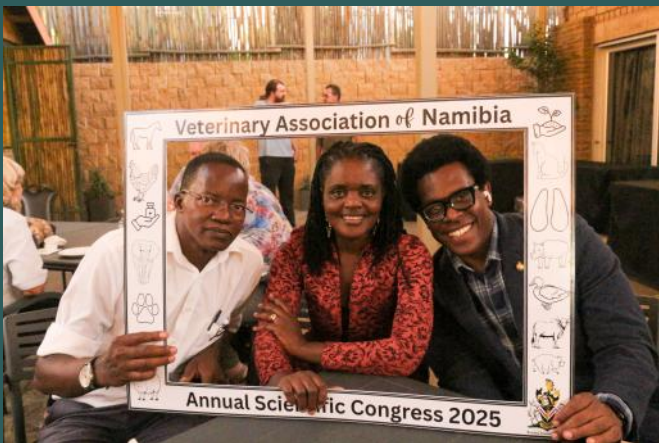
WSAVA, Hills, MSD, PPS, V-Tech, Feedmaster/Namib Laboratories, VetsBrands, Kyron, Virbac, Cube Route, Zoetis, HIPRA, Strategic Marketing Ecovet & Valemount, SWAVET, Diag Import and Export, Auas Vet Med, GEKA, Equifarm, Micca, Corporate Guarantee, Farmstyle Distribution, AIM-animals in motion.



Photo above: left Industry sponsors introducing themselves.



Photo above right: Industry hall

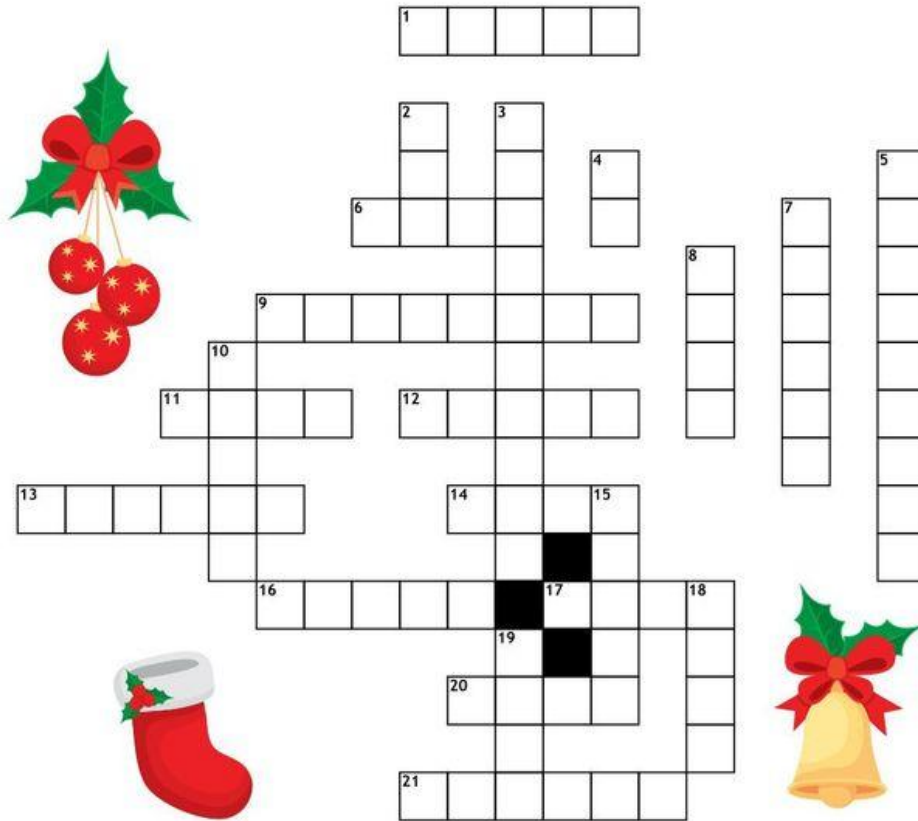






Christmas Songs

Crossword Puzzle



Across

1. Have Yourself a Little Christmas
6. Santa Claus is Coming to
9. Rudolph the Red Nose
11. It's Beginning to Like Christmas
12. Silver
13. Bells
14. Let it
16. Deck the
17. We.....You a Merry Christmas
20. It's the Most Wonderful of the Year
21. The Days of Christmas

Down

2. All I Want for Christmas is My Front Teeth
3. Winter
4. on the Housetop
5. O Tree
7. the Snowman
8. Rocking Around the Christmas
10. Old Saint Nicholas
15. Christmas
18. I'll Be for Christmas
19. Chestnuts Roasting on an Open

Word Bank

| | | | | | |
|----------|------------|-------|------|------|--------|
| Town | Wonderland | White | Home | Time | Jingle |
| Reindeer | Frosty | Wish | Two | Fire | Halls |
| Twelve | Merry | Bells | Up | Snow | Look |
| Jolly | Christmas | Tree | | | |

MERRY CHRISTMAS

K F A M I L Y T R N K B J L H
 Y M U T J C O R B S X G O J H
 Y U P L R C A R O L S I Y I F
 Y C M R R E Q N W E E V E N N
 L H F E E P E H D N D I J G O
 S R B T D S C S S Y W N G L R
 Y I Q M T Y E R C M C G S E T
 U S T O C K I N G S J A E I H
 U T L I G H T S T G S D N W P
 L M F L I O V S M S N J S E O
 K A V F X B I Z G I I G D T L
 B S R E B Z S L E I G H X C E
 F K Y O L Q H R N S N O W R U
 X N L R J F Z C D N D E X X V
 H S T A R W S A N T A T L V M

BOW
 CANDY CANE
 CAROLS
 CHRISTMAS
 ELF

FAMILY
 GIVING
 JINGLE
 JOY
 LIGHTS

NORTH POLE
 PRESENTS
 REINDEER
 SANTA
 SLEIGH

SNOW
 STAR
 STOCKINGS
 TREES

New VAN Logo

We are excited to announce that we are inviting the you to participate in our logo design contest!

This is a unique opportunity for you to showcase your creativity and contribute to the visual identity of the Veterinary Association of Namibia.

We welcome all suggestions, and you are invited to design a logo that captures the essence of our mission and values. The logo must be “user-friendly”, we must be able to use it for branding, for advertisements and so.

Please submit your designs and suggestions to the secretary (secretary@van.org.na).

Once all entries are received, we will host a voting session to select the winning logo.

This is a chance for your artwork to become a lasting symbol, so unleash your creativity and be part of something special!

We look forward to seeing your innovative ideas.



VAN Antibiotic Amnesty Project

In collaboration with GEKA, VAN wants to create public awareness of AMS and promote the safe disposal of antimicrobials.

- Stickers that go on medication dispensing bags: “return for safe disposal”
- GEKA will incinerate these
- VAN will provide materials for education of the public by videos, leaflets, QR codes -Would like to encourage interaction of vets and pet owners/public regarding safe disposal and AMS



Equine Odontoclastic Tooth Resorption and Hypercementosis – an overview

By Dr Nicola Maughan-Brown

Equine odontoclastic tooth resorption and hypercementosis (EOTRH) is a progressive, painful disease predominantly affecting incisors and canines but can affect cheek teeth as well. Whilst it most commonly affects horses over 15 years old, it can be found in horses as young as 10 years old. Geldings are more frequently affected than mares.

The underlying cause is unknown and likely multifactorial and there is research ongoing to establish a cause.

It is a progressive disease with no known prevention. Clinical signs of EOTRH are variable depending on the stage and severity of the disease. Horses may not exhibit clinical signs in the early stages. Since EOTRH has a gradual onset, owners may not recognize the clinical signs until the condition becomes painful for the horse.

Clinical signs include gingival inflammation, tooth discolouration, not wanting to bite down on carrots and difficulty grazing. In more advanced stages findings include gingival recession and/or hyperplasia, subgingival swelling, bulbous enlargement of teeth and draining tracts appearing around the tooth. Teeth may fracture or become loose and displaced/fall out. Affected horses may exhibit halitosis, drooling, head shaking, quidding, and weight loss.

Diagnosis is confirmed with radiography using incisor x-ray biteplates.

Extraction of affected teeth is the treatment of choice. This can range for 1-2 teeth to all 12 incisors. This should be performed by a specifically trained veterinarian using specialised equipment under sedation as well as regional and local anaesthesia.

The prognosis after surgery is favourable. Most horses are eating well within a few hours post-op and completely healed within 6 weeks with an overall improvement in quality of life. Owners, while occasionally reluctant at first to proceed, report positive changes to temperament and condition of their horse even when only 1-2 teeth are extracted.

Client education is important as long-term practical management is required, for example not retiring the horse on a farm with only grazing unless soft grass guaranteed.

Two cases in pictures:

Jazz. 20-year-old TB gelding.

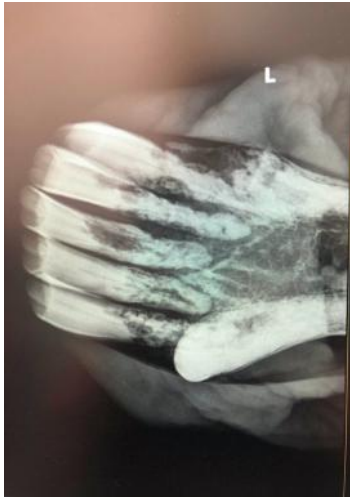
Reluctant to bite off carrots but otherwise no other issues that owner was aware of. EOTRH suspected at routine dental and confirmed with radiographs. Extracted all 12 incisors and 304. Recovered fully after 8 weeks and enjoyed a good quality of life until his death due to unrelated causes aged 24.



Gingival recession and hyperplasia for all incisors. 304 fractured.



Maxillary incisors – resorption and some hypercementosis



Mandibular incisors and canines.



4 weeks post op. Mandible sockets fully granulated by 8 weeks.

Antarah -22-year-old Warmblood gelding.

Incidental finding on routine dental. Extracted 102, 103, 202, 203, 303 and 403 together. 304 and 404 looked slightly affected on xrays but opted to be conservative. 2 weeks post-op sockets all healing well apart from 303 which still had a lot of purulent discharge. Extracted 304 on that day and within 2 weeks both sockets had caught up to the other extraction sites.

Owner noted 6 weeks post op that he is his old self again. Neighs to greet her again, energetic when ridden and generally happier. She had put his "depression" down to aging.

At 6 month check-up a few weeks ago Antarah has gained weight and top-line and sockets look perfect. We will continue to monitor the remaining canines and incisors as they may need to be extracted at some stage.



Severe gingival recession. Gingival hyperplasia and some purulent discharge from draining tracts



304 deemed borderline until 303 socket would not heal 2 weeks post op.



The 6 incisors extracted and bleached. Demonstrates extent of resorption and hypercementosis.



Post extraction. Post extraction. Purulent material was pouring out when local was injected around the teeth.

Purulent material was pouring out when local was injected around the teeth.



202 and 203 sockets 2 weeks post op.



303 socket 2 weeks post op not healing as well as the others due to connection with the affected 304.



403 socket 2 weeks post op.

References:

- Lorello O, Foster DL, Levine DG, Boyle A, Engiles J, Orsini JA. Clinical treatment and prognosis of equine odontoclastic tooth resorption and hypercementosis. *Eq Vet J*. 2016;48:188-194.
- Limone LE. Update on Equine Odontoclastic Tooth Resorption and Hypercementosis. *Vet Clin North Am Pract* 2020 Dec; 36 (3): 671-689



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We would love to hear from you!

**Have an interesting case, story
or pictures to share with us?**

Please send them to:

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