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Dear Colleagues,

This year has started at a fast pace, with the threat of FMD looming, which has led to several meetings and engagements between the various veterinary stakeholders. Thank you to all who have made the time to join the online meeting with DVS, as well as the FMD training offered by DVS. It is important that all stakeholders collaborate and we approach this in unity.

We've had our first in-person CPD event of the year in March: "Thrive 2026 -Learning to THRIVE and not just survive the veterinary profession". Recognizing the importance of mental wellbeing is an important first step. This was an interactive event with lectures, group sessions, creative activities and games. While we understand that mental health is not something a weekend workshop can sort out, but rather a process that requires ongoing effort and work, we hope that

PRESIDENT'S DESK

the themes and lectures were a good starting point. To all "Thrive" participants: an online follow-up session will be provided by Capable Life. Thank you to everyone who joined!

Going forward with this, VAN is planning on establishing a group that will undergo further training lead by a psychologist to equip these individuals to operate a "stress hotline", which vets and paravets can contact if they need to talk. Should you be interested in joining this group, please contact a VAN exco member.

Please note, VAN has also started a closed/private "Mental Health" Facebook group where individuals can vent or rant or just ask questions anonymously. These are the details: "Namibian Vets Stick Together"

Just having created awareness around the Thrive event and interaction with sponsors, many members of the public have approached us, saying they have been unaware of the challenges veterinarians are facing. Hence VAN is

also working on creating public awareness.

What's ahead?

We would like to continue collaborating with DVS on the FMD front and are working on a possible training day.

World Veterinary Day: An initiative of the World Veterinary Association, this day is celebrated annually on the last Saturday in April, aiming to highlight the crucial work veterinarians do and raising awareness of veterinary roles in zoonotic disease control and One Health initiatives.

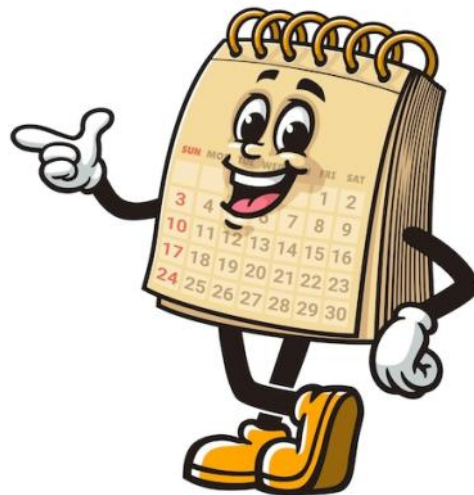
WVD Theme for 2026: "Veterinarians: Guardians of Food and Health"

Especially looking at the current situation with regards to FMD, which is threatening our livestock industry and hence the whole agricultural sector, the role of veterinarians and para-veterinarians becomes very important and we would like to highlight this among the public.

The Antibiotic Amnesty Project will also be launched soon.

Wishing you all a blessed Easter weekend!

Alex



VAN NEWS: CPDs 2026

- April: WSAVA / AFSCAN Small Animal Reproduction Online Lecture Series starting
- July: WSAVA and PSAVA supported Small Animal Dentistry CPD in Windhoek
- November: VAN Congress 26th-29th November 2026
- Livestock CPD September 2026

Monthly:

- Livestock zoom sessions

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.
- 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.



THRIVE 2026

Thrive took place from March 13th to 15th, and the weekend was filled with excitement. Unlike the usual education-focused lectures, we were introduced to fresh, innovative topics that broadened our perspectives.

The sessions offered valuable insights we can apply to personal growth, workplace improvement, and developing healthier coping mechanisms.

Friday evening began with Jimmy Carnes introducing us to the Enneagram, where we explored our inherent personality types. The night wrapped up with pizzas and Alta Vorback's creative mask session, giving us the chance to express both our outward identities and our inner selves.

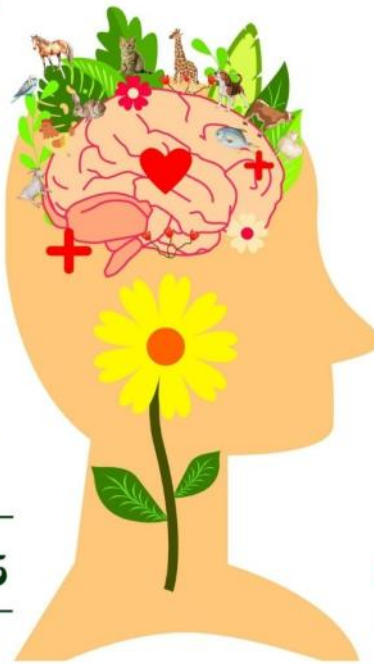
Saturday morning began with Dr. Kenneth Joubert offering an in-depth exploration of the pathophysiology of stress. Jimmy Carnes then guided us through practical strategies for noticing, naming, and diffusing anxiety. The day concluded with an enjoyable social evening.

We closed the weekend with a hilarious "fun run" obstacle course that energized everyone and set the tone for the final session. Helen Silver then guided us through practical strategies for coping under pressure, recognizing stress before it boils over and introducing meaningful techniques we can incorporate into our daily practice.

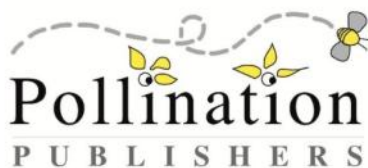
VAN would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to Dr. Minty Soni for her inputs, dedication, creative ideas, and tireless efforts, making this CPD a huge success.

VAN would also like to thank you all our sponsors!

THRIVE 2024



Thank you to all our sponsors!



Anonymous Pet Owners
Diani Serendipity Catering

THRIVE 2026



THRIVE 2026



Starting with the Foundation of our Future.

Spreading Awareness

On the 13th of February 2026, Dr Kristen Rajzman (member of VAN exco) visited Alexander's Private School in Walvis Bay to present an informal educational talk to learners ranging from Grade 0 to Grade 12. The session focused on the importance of animal welfare, responsible pet ownership, and the vital role that vaccinations play in protecting animal and human health. Rabies awareness was also highlighted, helping learners understand how the disease spreads and how it can be prevented. Dr Kristen also explained what a veterinarian is and the important work veterinarians do in caring for animals and safeguarding communities. The visit provided an opportunity to engage with learners of all ages, encouraging curiosity, compassion for animals, and a better understanding of how caring for animals contributes to healthier communities.

The students were inspired to become "Junior Animal Protectors" by following 5 simple steps,

- #1 Care for animals
- #2 Protect yourself and others
- #3 Respect nature
- #4 Vaccinate your pets
- #5 Tell others what they've learned that day



Rabies Education Booklets. Expanding our reach in 2026

Rabies remains a real and preventable threat in Namibia. Education is one of the most effective long-term tools we have to reduce human exposure, improve responsible animal ownership, and support the national goal of rabies elimination. The Veterinary Association of Namibia continues to invest in this approach through the national rabies education workbook project.

What we achieved in 2025

In 2025, the first print run of 2,000 rabies education workbooks was completed and distributed through veterinary school outreach activities across the country. These booklets were designed to give children practical, age-appropriate knowledge about:

- Rabies prevention and safe behaviour around animals
- Responsible pet ownership
- The One Health concept
- Basic antibiotic stewardship principles

Distribution was made possible through strong collaboration. Booklets reached schools through the **Gondwana Care Trust**, the **Ministry of Environment and Tourism** in schools surrounding **Etosha National Park**, the **N/a'an ku sê Foundation**, and several VAN members who visited local schools in their communities.

Through these combined efforts, approximately **2,000 children** received rabies education during 2025. The feedback from educators, partners, and communities has been overwhelmingly positive. Demand quickly exceeded the number of available booklets.

Why we are expanding in 2026

Because of this strong uptake, VAN will expand the project in 2026 with a target of **printing 4,000 booklets**. This increased print run will allow wider national distribution and provide more members with the opportunity to participate in school outreach.

Rabies education is not a once-off campaign. It must be continuous and visible. Every school visit contributes to safer behaviour, earlier reporting of bites, improved vaccination awareness, and long-term reduction of rabies risk.

Veterinarians play a central role in this effort. Communities trust veterinarians. Children listen to veterinarians. This places our profession in a unique and powerful position to drive prevention.

Why member involvement matters

The strength of this project depends on member participation. When veterinarians visit schools, the impact goes far beyond the classroom:

- Children become ambassadors for rabies prevention at home
- Communities gain trust in veterinary services
- Awareness supports vaccination campaigns
- The veterinary profession becomes more visible and accessible



How members can get involved in 2026

We invite all VAN members to participate in the next phase of the rabies education initiative.

Members are encouraged to:

- Plan and conduct school visits in their local areas
- Request rabies education booklets for outreach activities
- Help identify schools or community groups that would benefit
- Support the initiative by connecting potential sponsors

Whether you reach one classroom or many, your involvement contributes directly to rabies prevention in Namibia.

Sponsorship and sustainability

The continued growth of this initiative depends on sponsorship support for printing. Several organisations have already shown interest in supporting the 2026 print run, and additional partners are being approached.

This project demonstrates the profession's commitment to public health, One Health collaboration, and community education. With continued support and member participation, the reach and impact will grow each year.

Requesting booklets

Members who would like to plan school visits or request booklets for outreach are encouraged to contact the VAN Secretary.

Together, we can expand rabies education, strengthen prevention, and move closer to a rabies-free Namibia.







Veterinary Association of Namibia

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CONTACT US

We would love to hear from you!

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

Please send them to:

secretary@van.org.na