



MVA Newsletter

15 December 2019

At this late time of the year, we might reflect on the several significant events which have occurred. Most significantly we have recently seen the historic moment that the veterinary profession in Malawi has long awaited, namely the graduation of its first group of 12 students from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at LUANAR. There have of course been other significant events: the finalisation and launch of the Animal Welfare Guidelines for Malawi, initiation of a review of veterinary legislation, a severe flood emergency, and, not reported in further detail, the continued follow up in response to anthrax in several districts, and outbreaks of FMD including the Central Region.

On behalf of the Executive, we wish all members a merry Christmas and a happy New Year and we look forward to a productive and prosperous 2020.

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The culmination of much work...



2019 Veterinary graduates recite the veterinary oath.

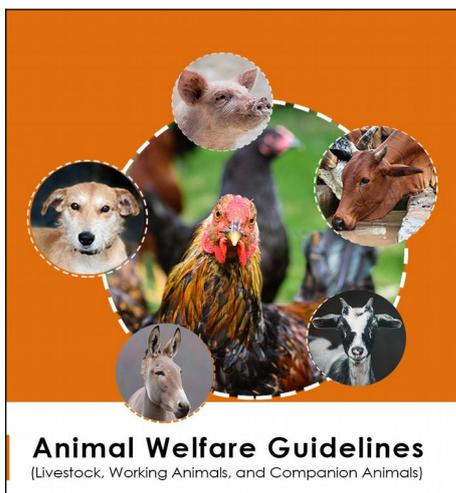
12 December 2019 will long be remembered in the veterinary history books of Malawi. On this day, the first ever Malawi veterinary graduates were awarded the degree of Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine at the Fourth Congregation of LUANAR held at the Bingu wa Mutharika International Conference Centre in Lilongwe. Like all such ceremonies, the occasion was one of joy and frivolity. The Association was represented by several of the teaching staff together with the MVA Chairperson and Secretary.

Dr Adam Tjolle, a long-standing supporter of the veterinary profession in Malawi, travelled from the UK specially for the occasion and in a touching and surprise move, distributed to each of the 12 graduates a nurses timer/watch and a Littmann stethoscope personally engraved with the graduate's name.



Dr Adam Tjolle, flanked by Prof Melaku Tefera, distributes stethoscopes

Animal Welfare Guidelines launched



The day following the graduation ceremony saw the culmination of an extended effort to develop national Animal Welfare Guidelines defining minimal standards and serving as a guide to animal owners and other players along the value chain in Malawi. A team including both members of the profession and colleagues in animal welfare has worked for several years to get to this point. The guidelines were launched by the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Water Development, Mr Gray Nyandule Phiri, in a ceremony at the Sunbird Capital Hotel in Lilongwe. The efforts of LSPCA, RSPCA, DAHLD and MVA were acknowledged during the ceremony.

The guidelines are available as a single document but also as specific chapters concerning particular categories of livestock. By this means, chicken owners for instance can have a document pertaining just to their enterprise, unencumbered by potentially superfluous information on multiple other species.

Review of veterinary legislation

On 25 October, DAHLD convened a workshop to review veterinary legislation in Malawi. The purpose was to continue to align the national veterinary legislation with international standards. The workshop was held in collaboration with AU-IBAR. The work covers a wide range of legislation relating to animal health and veterinary activities in Malawi, namely:

1. Repeal the Control and Diseases of Animals Act (Cap 66.02) to replace with Animal Health Act;
2. Repeal the Protection of Animals Act (Cap 66.01) to replace with a new Animal Welfare Act;
3. Enact a new Animal Feeds Act;
4. Amend the Veterinary and Para-Veterinary Practitioners Act (Cap 53.04).

Needless to say, the review drew attention to the critical absence of a fully established Board of Veterinary Surgeons in Malawi. MVA continues to promote the suggestion that an interim Board be set up while steps are being made to establish a fully functional Board.

Further work to progress these legislative issues is planned for early in 2020.

MVA participates in flood response

Intense Tropical Cyclone Idai in mid March was one of the worst tropical cyclones on record to affect Africa and the Southern Hemisphere. The long-lived storm caused catastrophic damage in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi, leaving more than 1,300 people dead and many more missing.



WAP officer demonstrating deworming during the launch of activities in Nsanje and Chikwawa

In response to serious flooding in several districts of Malawi early in the year, MVA took a leading role in coordinating with Humane Society International, an international non-profit working out of the United States. The work proposed by MVA focussed on vaccinations and treatments in Phalombe District, an area not covered by some other emergency response agencies. Implementation involved government livestock staff and the All Creatures Animal Welfare Trust.

A subsequent report by Dr Tichaona Murambinda indicated that 71.4% of the planned areas were covered during the implementation. Most of the animals received treatments, from lumpy skin vaccines, oxytetracycline, ivermectin, Newcastle disease vaccine, antibiotic sprays, rabies vaccinations and albendazole medicines. The full report is available on the MVA website.

Another report on activities in Chikwawa and Nsanje Districts was provided by Dr Edwin Nkhulungo, Chief Animal Health & Livestock Development Officer, Blantyre ADD.

"Shire Valley ADD experienced prolonged rainfall which resulted in serious flooding and wash away of farmers' property including livestock. Over 2,000 goats, 94 cattle, 3,200 chickens and 78 pigs were reported to have been washed away and most livestock were living in water logged conditions and such condition become a predisposing condition for multiplication of different pathogens. It was estimated that 62,000 cattle, 192,000 goats, 81,000 pigs and 560,000 local chickens were at risk of contracting various diseases."

Bachelors of Veterinary Medicine - 2019



Standing: Drs Joseph Nkhoma, Sam Mvula, Bright Nkunika, Love Kaona, Lawrence Banda, Kholiwe Mkandawire, Bonnie Munthali, Muonaouza Deleza, Benjamin Msesera, Peter Mwale, Prof Melaku Tefera, Dr Adam Tjolle.
Seated: Drs Watson Mbizi, Jones Mwamlima, Gift Mkanthama. (In absentia: Dr Amos Mhone.)

Guidelines for Contributors:

MVA Financial Members are encouraged to contribute articles or letters for publication in the newsletter. Articles should be brief, typically not more than 500 words, and preferably be accompanied by photographs or other illustrations. The MVA Newsletter is a forum for news rather than a scientific publication. It is not intended for circulation of academic advances. Articles of a commercial nature or otherwise irrelevant, will not be accepted.

To submit material for publication, please email the MVA Secretary at mva.malawi@gmail.com.