

## Editorial Board

### **Kate Bradley MA VetMB PhD DVR DipECVDI MRCVS**

Kate is a Senior Clinical Fellow in Veterinary Diagnostic Imaging for the University of Bristol/Langford Veterinary Services.

### **Giunio Bruto Cherubini DVM DECVN MRCVS**

Giunio is responsible for neurology/neurosurgery service at DWR and contributes to the undergraduate teaching programme at the University of Nottingham School of Veterinary Medicine and Science.

### **Iain Cope BSc BVM&S Cert AVP (Zoo Med) MRCVS**

Iain is an RCVS recognised Advanced Veterinary Practitioner in Zoological Medicine. He runs his own practice at Newmarket Vets4Pets.

### **Mark Craig BVSc MRCVS Cert SAD**

Mark runs Re-Fur-All Referrals, a veterinary dermatology referral service in the south of England and the Midlands.

### **Valerie Lamb BVM&S DipECVIM-CA MRCVS**

Val is a specialist in small animal internal medicine working at Southern Counties Veterinary Specialists in Hampshire.

### **Mark Lowrie MA VetMB MVM DipECVN MRCVS**

Mark is an RCVS and European specialist in veterinary neurology (ECVN). Mark works at Dovecote Veterinary Hospital, Castle Donington, part of CVS Group plc.

### **Anna Meredith MA VetMB PhD CertLAS DZooMed MRCVS**

Anna is Head of Melbourne Veterinary School, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia.

### **Paola Monti DVM MSc FRCPath DipACVP (Clinical Pathology) MRCVS**

Paola is an American Specialist and RCVS-Recognised Specialist in Clinical Pathology. She is a Clinical Pathology Consultant with Dick White Referrals, Cambridgeshire

### **Jo Murrell BVSc PhD(Bristol) DipECVA MRCVS**

Jo is a European specialist in Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia, primarily based at the School of Clinical Veterinary Sciences, University of Bristol.

### **Malcolm Ness BVetMed MRCVS DipECVS CertSAO FRCVS**

Malcolm is a European Specialist in surgery and heads up the surgery team at Croft Veterinary Hospital in Northumberland.

### **Matthew Oxford BVM&S GPCert(SAS) MRCVS**

Matthew is a referral Veterinary Dentist and oral surgeon with clinics at Lumby Park Veterinary Specialists, South Devon Referrals, Stone Lion Veterinary Hospital and Priory Veterinary Hospital. He is the Course Organiser for the British Veterinary Dental Association, included in which he lectures at Bristol University.

### **Karen L Perry BVM&S CertSAS DipECVS FHEA MRCVS**

Karen is Assistant Professor in Small Animal Orthopaedics at the Veterinary Medical Center, Michigan State University, Michigan, USA

### **Sarah Shull DVM CCRT**

Sarah leads the Veterinary Rehabilitation Service at the Michigan State University Veterinary Medical Center.

### **Kit Sturgess MA VetMB PhD CertVR DSAM CertVC FRCVS**

Kit is an RCVS Recognised Specialist in Small Animal Medicine and an Advanced Practitioner in Veterinary Cardiology; he sees clinical cases 3 days per week at Optivet Referrals in Hampshire.

### **Molly Varga BVetMed CertZooMed DZooMed (Mammalian) MRCVS**

Molly is an RCVS Recognised Specialist in Zoological Medicine. She works at Cheshire Pet, Cheshire.

### **Sam Woods BSc (Hons) MA VetMB CertSAS Dipl.ECVS MRCVS**

Sam is a European and RCVS Registered Specialist in Small Animal Surgery and is currently a Senior Lecturer in Small Animal Surgery (Soft Tissue and Orthopaedics) at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, University of Edinburgh.

### **Ian Wright BVMS BSc MSc MRCVS**

Ian has a Master's degree in Veterinary Parasitology and is a member of the European Scientific Counsel Companion Animal Parasites (ESCCAP UK and Ireland).

# An unintended consequence of rising pet ownership

Our May editorial highlighted the greatly increased demand for pet dogs during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as some of the consequences such as behavioural problems, rapidly increasing costs of dogs and even a surge in dog thefts because pets have become such a valuable commodity. The rising incidence of these crimes has led to organisations, from Dogs Trust to the Metropolitan Police, issuing advice on how to minimise the chances of pet theft.

The supply of puppies in the UK depends on registered breeders and casual breeders allowing their family pet to have a litter. Although, the latter are somewhat of a rarity now with the successful promotion of neutering. In normal pre-pandemic times, the supply of UK bred dogs is not sufficient to satisfy demand. In the current climate, where the demand for dogs is at an all-time high, we are not even coming close to supplying enough home-grown dogs. As a consequence, the importation of dogs has become a big business. This can be done both legally and illegally and there is little way of knowing the true number of animals being unofficially imported in to the UK.

Romania is by far the leading source of commercially imported dogs and official numbers have increased from around 19500 dogs imported in 2019, to nearly 30000 in 2020. The next highest number of dogs imported came from Spain, at around 5700 dogs. A growing concern to UK vets is the potential for the importation of 'exotic' diseases and parasites. Many UK practices will already have experience with cases of leishmaniosis, which is not infrequently found in dogs that have come from Spain or Greece.

The current and more pressing concern centres on cases of *Brucella canis*. The UK is officially a *Brucella*-free country, but it would appear that the disease is endemic in Romania and its neighbouring countries such as Moldova, Bosnia and Macedonia. Up until 2020, *B. canis* was a sporadic and rare finding in the UK. Since the summer of 2020, the Animal and Plant Health Agency has now been notified of over 40 cases of *B. canis*, prompting the Chief Veterinary Officer of England Christine Middlemiss to write to the *Veterinary Record* in order to highlight the situation.

Brucellosis is a zoonosis. It is also difficult to diagnose as the clinical signs are not pathognomonic and infection can be subclinical. There is no doubt that the reported cases are only a proportion of the infections present in the UK. *Brucella canis* causes reproductive failure in dogs but can cause a variety of other signs, especially lameness or spinal pain, as discospondylitis is one of the presentations. The organism is spread in semen, vaginal secretions and urine. The concern for human health is such that several laboratories are now requesting the travel history of dogs when potentially infectious samples are received. The European Scientific Counsel for Companion Animal Parasites have also renewed their calls for the screening of imported dogs for significant zoonoses.

The UK now has the opportunity to change its regulations on animal imports and it would be good have some legislative action introduced before we start to see the human health consequences of what began as an increased demand for pet dogs. [CA](https://doi.org/10.12968/coan.2021.0028)



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