

Community Engagement Newsletter



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
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Faculty of Veterinary Science

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Avuxeni Hluvukani

Kaylee Ferreira, Willem Engelbrecht, Marelize Greyling and Janine Lombard (BVSc IV)

04:00 am marks the wake up call at Hluvukani. The skies are still dark as we climb into the bakkie ready to set off through Orpen Gate to the Hluvukani Animal Health Clinic (HAHC). The peaceful cows dosing in the middle of the corrugated dirt roads, as well as the resident tyre-biting strays, stir life into the students as they swerve through the dawn towards the HAHC.

After a brief tour of the facilities and an introduction to the environmental monitors, the sun begins to rise higher in the sky and the soft jingle of cow bells in the distance grow louder. We depart to our first diptank.

School children bustle down the roads as local rush hour begins and herds of cows flood the road en route to the diptank. The speckled infusions of colours and horns blur by as the bakkie rattles on.

As we arrive at our first diptank, the clanging of bells, bellowing of cows, barking of dogs and whistling of herdsman fills the air with a buzz of activity. This is life at Mnisi and it pulses through the atmosphere – “Avuxeni” – a good morning indeed.



Mnisi herdsman bring their animals to the diptank

Here at Hluvukani we learn many things as students on a community clinic. The first lesson is a tough one. If you don't talk the talk, you can't even try to walk the walk. This is why our trusted Mr Siboniseni Godfrey Tsela, Environmental Monitor, gave us a crash course in Xitsonga and we enthusiastically began to greet the farmers with foreign words. The syllables stumble out, but the farmers reward us with a welcoming, warm smile in return. There are "Ni pfukiles" all around!

Without haste our first patient is wrestled down. As the herd dogs sniff at our heels, we begin our clinical. Upon palpation, we quickly learnt our second lesson – the trajectory of an abscess is not to be underestimated.



Herdsman help to urge the cattle through the diptank

As we observe the cattle amble through the crush, the herdsman and their dogs conduct the symphony song of a rural lifestyle. We are a privileged audience watching on, unobtrusively inspecting the ebb and flow of each cow's melodious movements.

This is the average start to each day and, as time rolls on, so does each call out and we are welcomed into the yards of locals seeking our services. The gratitude and warmth that we as strangers receive envelops the corners of each student's smile and you begin to appreciate the term "community clinic".

At Hluvukani, our third treasured lesson was "community". Lunchtime treks to the roadside stalls fed not only our appetites for vetkoek, chilli chips and flame grilled chicken, but also filled us with hospitable smiles and hearty laughs at our fumbled "ni kombelas" (pleases) and "inkomus" (thank yous).

Our school visits were a blessing in themselves, as we interacted with young minds beaming and ready to learn. We taught the youngest our cover version of old McDonald, which is carefully altered to be more culturally appropriate – "Bava Mnisi had an mbyana- e-i-e-i-oh!".

The lessons learnt at HAHC rewarded us both academically and practically, but we are most grateful for the experience in rural practice and the sense of community now ingrained in the soles of our gumboots and lined in the seams of our greens.

"As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself, the other for helping others."
Audrey Hepburn.

Keeping Mamelodi pets healthy

Dr Jeanne Rudman (Veterinarian)

I have been managing the Mamelodi Animal Health Clinic (MAHC) for nearly two years now. The work and people I have met have shaped me into a more complete person with a better understanding of the kind of basic animal health needed within a community.

With the help of good communication and education, we have quadrupled the amount of cases treated since I first arrived (my enrolling in a basic Setswana course has definitely assisted here). My right-hand man Mr Valley Gombo has been – and is – invaluable to me, as his personality, as well as his caring and friendly attitude towards our clients and their animals encourages community members to keep bringing their animals to MAHC.

Mixed breeds aside, some community members take pride in breeding pit bulls,

rottweilers, boerboels and greyhounds, and I must say, they breed some excellent specimens. Recently, we saw Blacky, a three-year-old greyhound, who was used by his owner to hunt small game in the veld near their home. He was unfortunately attacked by another dog and sustained severe muscle damage to his left hind leg. His committed owner walked him to the MAHC every day for two weeks for wound care and bandaging. The wound is now healing well and his grateful owner has invited me to join them one weekend to watch him back in action.



Blacky's healing hind leg wound

Another interesting case was that of Bobby, a four-year-old mixed breed, who arrived with a bone stuck over his bottom jaw and wedged firmly behind both lower canines trapping his tongue underneath it. Despite being like that for two days, he was still in high spirits and enjoyed a free dip to remove ticks and fleas after the bone was removed.

The MAHC is very busy throughout the day and the clients wait patiently to be seen. It is always heartwarming to be greeted by a friendly smile and a handshake as a show of appreciation for the work we do for the community. I note that the students also enjoy the "feel-good experiences" that abound at MAHC from helping the community with their animals. A special thanks must go to all students who visit MAHC and work so hard to help keep the clinic functioning as it does. Your enthusiasm is really appreciated.

Our last education drive focused on tick bite fever, parvovirus and the importance of vaccinations. It seems that it paid off, as we continue to be overwhelmed by the number of new and repeat clients coming in for dipping and vaccinations.

The education drive going forward is to make the community even more aware of the need for sterilisation and proper home care. The MAHC also continues to educate the community on proper canine nutrition plus the use of a harness, rather than a chain around the neck. To this end, we stock an affordable but reputable dog food and a small range of harnesses, leashes and collars.

In closing, the MAHC is committed to teaching students the principles of good basic veterinary care, supplying sound community education regarding animal health and well-being as well as treating



Bobby arrived at MAHC with a bone stuck over his bottom jaw

every patient to the best of our ability – a win-win for all concerned!

Veterinary outreach still going strong in the Mountain Kingdom

Tarryn Fergasson (BVSc IV)

And so the great adventure began... A team of seven vet students, four vets and three professionals set off in the early hours on 7 December 2014 for the beautiful area of Semonkong in Lesotho. Our mission was to provide primary animal healthcare to as many animals as possible while giving all the glory to God and making His name known.

Every morning we awoke to the sounds of cattle bells, sheep bleating, dogs barking, donkeys braying and horses neighing. The people of Semonkong brought their animals from far and wide. In five days, a total of 7 981 animals were treated. This included 5 260 sheep, 1 160 cattle, 1 050 horses/donkeys, 480 dogs, 30 pigs and one cat. This year, a number of castrations were performed – four equines, five bulls, three dogs and there was one spay. We definitely believe that is an area for growth and will hopefully have a surgery station in the future.

The equine station was headed up by Dr Arnold Mahne, Dr Hildegard Setzkorn and Ms Dawn Mansfield. The animals were treated for internal parasites and were given



Every morning, the people of Semonkong brought their animals to be treated

tetanus vaccinations. There were many saddle sores, which were treated and tack was either adjusted, fixed or new tack was given.

Dr Nicky Lemmer and Dr Caro Labuschagne took turns overseeing the production and small animal stations. The sheep were given a pulpy kidney vaccination and were dosed for internal parasites. The cattle were all treated for internal and external parasites and were given a rabies vaccination. We would love to start an education station for the farmers and animal owners to explain basic animal health care. This includes teaching animal owners to see when an animal is not well and what they can do. We would also like to have pamphlets in Sesotho for those who are able to read.

At the small animal station, each dog was treated for ticks and fleas, dewormed and were given a 5-in-one vaccine plus a rabies vaccine. Any sick animal that came along was treated to the best of our ability. We were able to take some time to pray for the owners and it was so beautiful to see the faith that many of them have to be healed. Through all the hardship that they face, they trust our Father for provision, love and unity in the community.

On behalf of the Lesotho outreach team of 2014, we would like to say a huge thank you to all of our sponsors and to each and every person who contributed in any way. Without you, the lives of many people and animals would not have been able to be touched.



OP students help animals and their owners wherever they can

MEETING

Community Engagement Committee meeting will be held on Monday, 27 July 2015 at 13:30.

Bush, bovines and bravado

Kirsty Pearson, Tania Vermeulen, Rishani Narainsamy and Karen Nizsl (BVSC IV)

It's 06:00 and the sun has already peeped out over the horizon. The veld is filled with the sounds of cattle bells, barking dogs and chitchat.

All the farmers have gathered at this early hour of the morning to support their most prized possession, their cattle. An elderly man approaches our two white bakkies and whispers, "I have a sick cow" through chaos surrounding us.

The ropes are wrangled and the thermometer is quickly fetched. We all have our "first production patient" looks on our faces, which is a mixture of huge smiles and utter fear. The cow is examined and treated and the farmer is incredibly grateful.



Op students talk to farmers about caring for their cattle

Our initial attitude of getting as much veterinary science exposure as possible has now shifted to a more holistic view. Something else drove us over these two weeks. Our seven years of studying could not prepare us for seeing the bigger picture and making such a positive impact on a community. What seems a trivial abscess lancing to us makes a significant difference to the farmer; that farmer and his cow are beyond grateful. In this moment one experiences the essence of happiness.



OP students talk to learners about caring for their pets

DONATIONS: All donations received will be used for community engagement purposes, specifically in less-fortunate communities. Please contact one of the following people if you would like to donate money, dog food, collars, leashes, blankets or your time:

Dr Rebone Moerane	012 529 8464	Chairperson: Community Engagement Committee	rebone.moerane@up.ac.za
Sr Sarah Johnson	012 529 8387	Liaison and Communication	sarah.johnson@up.ac.za
Mr Eugene Machimana	012 529 8100	Community Engagement Coordinator	eugene.machimana@up.ac.za

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Event	Venue	Date
Production Animal Outreach Clinic	Makapanstad and Ratjiepan Project	Wednesdays
Mamelodi Animal Health Care (MAHC)	Mamelodi Campus	Mondays to Fridays
Loate Community Veterinary Clinic	Winterveldt	Twice a month on Wednesdays



DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO PUBLISH?

The Community Engagement Committee invites you to submit short articles to be published in the next Community Engagement Newsletter (Winter 2015). The article should not be more than one page long. Contact person:

Eugene Machimana
Tel: 012 529 8100 (w)
Email: eugene.machimana@up.ac.za

Visit the UP Community Engagement website regularly for updates about projects and funding opportunities.