

Students favour FAVS conference

STUDENTS from across the UK's vet schools united at Langford, Bristol for the third annual Farm Animal Association of Veterinary Students (FAVS) undergraduate farm conference. The Bristol Farm Animal Veterinary Society (BFAVS) hosted the weekend, which attracted students of all academic years to the campus.

The congress was opened by Jo Price, reminding the delegates of the importance of farm animal clinicians in securing food provision for the future. The University of Bristol's on-site farm at Wyndhurst – which has recently been renovated, with management now provided by Velcourt and a new sand-based cubicle housing installed – was a venue for several of the practicals hosted over the weekend.

A first for the FAVS congress was the subject of the opening lecture. Pete Goddard from

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reports on the third dedicated farm vet student event where talks on the venison industry and foot hygiene, practical sessions and a ceilidh were on the agenda

the Deer Veterinary Society provided undergraduates with an insight into the venison industry, the challenges faced by the practitioner and the common infectious diseases limiting production.

Responsibility

Undergraduates were then reminded of their responsibility with regards to sensible and legal prescribing and the importance of antibiotic selection and rational application of use by David Barrett of the University of Bristol – a subject that would be pivotal in the subsequent lectures.

Roger Blowey proved to be a hit with his session detailing recent advances in foot care, foot bathing recommendations and management of chronically lame dairy cattle. Mr Blowey went on to stress the importance of regular foot

bathing and knife hygiene.

After a lunch provided by Waitrose, the students met industry leaders, pharmaceutical companies, veterinary societies and practitioners with the opportunity to discuss career objectives, securing extramural study placements and, for many of them, freebie hunting. FAVS also unveiled its new stand, sponsored by BCVA. With many internship deadlines looming, students used the opportunity to grill new graduates from Lambert Leonard and May, Nantwich Farm Vets, Synergy Farm Health, XL Vets and Westpoint Veterinary Group.

Nick Shorter from Velcourt described the company's perceived role of the veterinary surgeon. The vet's role as an integral part of the team was stressed and undergraduates were reminded



Gareth Foden from Synergy Farm Health giving a foot health and trimming session to undergraduate students.

IMAGE: Fincham.

they were not expected to be a Nostradamus, but someone who is prepared to ask for help and refer to colleagues when necessary.

The practical sessions included foot trimming, farm walks by training firm CowSignals, sheep lameness and performance analysis, pig postmortems and the five-minute camelid consult.

The students were then invited to join lecturers and practitioners for a three-course dinner and ceilidh on campus. A raffle raised £600 for the Somerset Levels Relief Fund and prizes ranged from body warmers to crates of cider.

The next day a slightly

worse for wear student body braved the wet for the 9am lecture given by Sara Pedersen of Nantwich Farm Vets. The importance of using a calving jack correctly was established and students were reminded of the importance of knowing their limits. The lecture was very well received and those students answering questions correctly were treated to resuscitation packs complete with bacon goods and energy drinks. These students, however, were not necessarily the ones most in need of sustenance.

Later, Oliver Tilling of Shepton Farm Vets stressed the importance of all aspects of calf production – from neonatal management to housing and preventive medicine. The closing lecture was provided by Shona Young from Westpoint Veterinary Group who detailed the sheep production calendar and the role new graduates can play in flock health planning and in minimising losses.

The FAVS annual meet-

ing was also held and the Nottingham Farm Animal Veterinary Society won the tender for the 2015 congress.

FAVS was established in 2012 to bridge the gap between veterinary school and life post-graduation. The demand for farm animal practitioners is recognised as a constant challenge for the industry and the congress provides the opportunity for students of all ages to engage with real-life farm vets. Since the formation of the association, each of the veterinary schools has individually formed a farm animal veterinary society, hosting regular farm walks, vet talks and charity work.

Congratulations to BFAVS for a highly efficient weekend. The students commented on the organisation and clear support of the farm department staff. Mr Blowey proved a real hit, and the fun factor was definitely captured by Bristol. Well done to all involved and best of luck to Nottingham – the gauntlet has been laid down.



SPRINGIER SPANIELS

