



DAFFnews

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Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries



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Opening of a wildlife clinic

A dedicated wildlife clinic was opened on Friday, 6 March 2020 at the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Veterinary Science at its Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital (OVAH). The clinic consists of two buildings, herbivore and carnivore bomas which can accommodate carnivores the size of lions and herbivores from small antelopes to a young rhino. The clinic will provide facilities for all clinical specialists, diagnostics as well as services offered by the OVAH.

Previously, wildlife had to be released to the owner's farm after treatment. "With the new facilities, animals can be kept under close supervision and regular treatment is now possible. It also allows the wildlife clinicians to perform more specialist diagnostic procedures than would be possible on the farm," said Dr Paul van Dam, Director of the OVAH.

Professor Tawana Kupe, Vice Chancellor of the University of Pretoria, praised wildlife veterinarians for their good reputation in excellence and added that they play an important role in the conservation of endangered wildlife species.

Dean of the faculty, Professor Vinny Naidoo said in addition to managing

wildlife under hospitalised conditions, the clinic will allow new graduates to be more innovative in managing wildlife. The clinic's first patient was a seven year old tiger which was rescued by Animal Defenders International from a circus in Guatemala. Other patients come from South African game farms, zoos and other registered wildlife breeding and holding facilities.

The faculty, the only one of its kind in the country, is celebrating its centenary this year. It is ranked 43rd globally in the QS World University and placed 30th and 37th among all vet schools in the world on the international Shanghai rankings.

Legal Aspects of Brucellosis Control

The main purpose of the Animal, Diseases Act, 1984 (Act no. 35 of 1984) is to control important and dangerous animal diseases. The Act and its regulations have general control measures relevant to all diseases but also have specific control measures for certain diseases, such as brucellosis.

Livestock owners must inform certain people of presence of disease

Section 11 of the Act determines that livestock owners must take reasonable steps to prevent their animals from becoming infected and to prevent the spread of disease. This means that an owner is not allowed to knowingly buy infected animals and bring them into his herd. Where treatment is possible, and available owners are also obliged to treat infected animals. An owner who suspects that his animals are infected with a controlled disease must report it to the local responsible State Veterinarian.

These Regulations also stipulate that an owner who becomes aware of the presence of a controlled disease in his livestock must inform the following groups of people:

all his neighbours; all prospective buyers; all buyers who had bought animals from him within the preceding 30 days.

This is the case even if the disease has not been confirmed yet but is suspected.

Precautionary measures that are legally required

Table 2 of the Animal Diseases Regulations determines that all heifers between four and eight months of age must be vaccinated once with an effective vaccine for brucellosis (currently the only approved vaccines available are Strain 19 and RB51). Strain 19 may only be used in heifers between 4 and 8 months of age and it may not be repeated. Follow-up vaccinations with RB51 in female animals may be done, but only with the written permission of the responsible State Veterinarian. No bulls may be vaccinated, regardless of their age.

Animals may only be tested by a State Veterinarian or official or a private veterinarian. It is not compulsory to test all cattle at this stage, but it is highly

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recommended and it might become a legal requirement in the future. In specific circumstances the Director of Veterinary Services may compel an owner to test his animals.

Requirements for a positive herd

If there are any animals that test positive, the laboratory must immediately inform the responsible State Veterinarian and if the tests were requested by a private veterinarian, he will also be informed of the results. The state veterinarian will then place the farm under quarantine which means that no susceptible or infected animals may be moved from the farm without the permission of the state veterinarian. A quarantine notice will be given which will contain all the requirements that the owner will have to adhere to. These requirements in the quarantine notice may differ depending on the situation.

Every owner also has a duty to isolate infected and contact animals and keep them in isolation as soon as he becomes aware of the presence or suspected presence of brucellosis in his herd. An owner that removes his

animals knowing that there are positive animals on his farm commits an offence in terms of the Act, even if he has not been placed under quarantine by the State Veterinarian yet.

All contact animals must also be tested by an official or authorised person. Animals that test negative may be vaccinated for brucellosis with the written permission of the State Veterinarian.

Positive cattle must be branded with a "C" mark on the right side of their necks. Such animals may only be slaughtered with the written permission of the State Veterinarian and at an approved abattoir. Animals may only be moved to the abattoir under cover of a Red Cross permit and may only be moved to the specific abattoir indicated on the permit. Under no circumstances may such animals be sold to any other person or at any other place and a person that does that is guilty of an offence in terms of the Act.

For the rest of the article and photos, contact Mercia Smith at email: mercias@daff.gov.za and cellnr: 060 973 3816.

Adding value to groundnut production

An information session on agro-processing was held at the Maruleng Municipality in collaboration with the University of Limpopo. The theme was: “groundnuts production and beyond—extending agro-processing to rural areas where groundnuts are produced.”

According to Mr John Mthembi, an Extension Officer at the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the event stimulated the attendees and was a good effort to add value to the groundnut production industry. The session was attended by a group of youths representing a number of cooperatives around the Maruleng Municipality area who are engaged in agricultural projects.

By outlining the purpose of the session, Mr Erence Raseona, an Extension Officer said the Maruleng area has a high rate of unemployment, particularly among the youth. Areas of life affected by the high rate of unemployment include low self-esteem, poor health conditions and high levels of crime. “This situation could change as our area is endowed with fertile productive land where currently quite a number of crops are produced,” said Mr Mthembi.

The session focussed on adding value to groundnuts like making peanut butter. The method to make peanut butter was explained by Ms Maureen Mamabolo and Ms Mathosa. They explained the nutritional and health benefits of peanuts. The dangers of peanuts, such as allergies, were mentioned. At the end of the session the trainees were introduced to packaging and labelling requirements.

The group of youths was motivated to know that, while they are small-scale producers, they can also be processors on their own.



New Endangered Wildlife Trust Conservation Campus

On 26 February 2020 the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) officially opened its new EWT Conservation Campus. For nearly a decade the EWT has been dreaming, planning and deliberating a 'forever home' and this year they could finally move into it. The campus will provide them with a permanent base from which they can further conduct their conservation efforts. Dirk Ackermann, chairperson of the EWT board and honorary lifetime EWT member, Clive Walker, led the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Conservation is the word

The new EWT Conservation Campus is situated in Glen Austin AH, Midrand. The campus is built on a 6ha park with a protected wetland system running through it. This area is well known for its giant bullfrogs and the EWT will focus on the conservation of this species in urban areas. The new conservation hub will not only be a home for staff members but it will also be a refuge for creatures great and small. On the day of the launch guests were invited to see the Conservation Campus. The

EWT staff also showcased the various projects they are currently running or will be running in the future.

A green economy

According to Yolán Friedmann, CEO of EWT, the location is ideal because it is a world of wildlife in the heart of the city. "It will always be a green lung and economy in the centre of an urban area where friends and visitors are always welcome", she says. "The centre has large open spaces where children will be educated about environmental issues. We also want to provide training and become a service provider for conservation and environmental skills development in Gauteng."

The campus will also provide much-needed storage space for equipment such as the crates that are used for transporting wild dogs and cheetahs. There are also spacious kennels to house all the EWT working dogs when they are not out in the field tracking poachers. These canines are trained to track rhino horns, ivory and ammunition. For more information, visit www.ewt.org.za



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