

2009 Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Elections, Discussion Forum

Subscribers to the web discussion forums at www.vetsurgeon.org were invited to take part in discussions:

Voting opens for the [RCVS Council Elections](#) on Friday 13th March. Come and [meet this year's candidates](#), find out [what they can do if elected](#) to Council, grill them about their manifestos (either in the [discussion forum](#), or [privately](#), using the 'Start Conversation' feature within their profiles), and then decide who is going to get your vote!

Of the nine candidates, five were sitting members of the Council of the RCVS, including the current President Mrs J Nute and President Elect Mr P Jinman.

Below are the six questions posted by me. Perfunctory answers were provided by three candidates to two of the questions. None of the sitting members of the RCVS Council replied to any question.

Vets, vet students and suppliers to the veterinary profession can subscribe to www.vetsurgeon.org
RCVS discussion posts are at <http://www.vetsurgeon.org/groups/rcvs-elections/default.aspx>
N.b. Some of the links below will only open if you are online as a subscriber to www.vetsurgeon.org

1 Your comments please

Friday, 13 Mar 2009 at 11:30

Dear Colleague,

Your comments on the raw diet question would be appreciated.

Judging by the 112 messages (and counting) on the Raw Diet forum <http://www.vetsurgeon.org/forums/> veterinarians are taking an interest in the subject.

Where the majority of auto-mechanics are conversant with how to fuel the family car, many veterinarians appear unsure about the food (fuel) requirements of the family dog.

The British Veterinary Association policy and a rebuttal may be assessed here: <http://www.rawmeatybones.com/pol-brief.html>

The November 2006, RCVS statement and a rebuttal can be found here: <http://www.ukrmb.co.uk/showcontent.toy?contentid=78812>

Does the confusion about feeding pets concern you?

Do you believe that a committee of enquiry might help the profession to better understand and resolve the issues?

If elected, what might be your contribution?

Thank you for your consideration.

Tom Lonsdale

[replied on](#)

Wednesday, 08 Apr 2009 at 15:49

Dear Colleague,

I note that [your manifesto](#) contains no reference to the junk pet-food scandal and now after a month you have still not ventured a comment on the above three questions.

Are we to assume that you support Councillors [Nute](#), [Gorman, Hill](#) and [Partridge](#) in their current or past involvement with the junk pet-food industry?

Given your refusal to even acknowledge the biggest crisis facing the veterinary profession, I wonder how you can justify your candidacy.

Please give these matters your prompt attention.

Thank you,

Tom Lonsdale

2 Mrs Nute: Declaration of Interests

Sunday, 22 Mar 2009 at 14:38

Dear Mrs Nute,

‘Anything to declare?’ asks the [November 2008 RCVS News](#) regarding Declaration of Interests (DoI).

The article reported Sir Anthony Holland, the Chair of the Corporate Governance Group, as saying ‘present arrangements were perfectly competent to deal with issues as they arose but that compliance was an area of concern’.

RCVS Council has agreed that DoI should be regularly updated. A ‘name and shame’ policy has been suggested for those that fail to comply.

At this early stage [many Councillors have not yet filed their DoI](#). Of those that have, brevity seems to be the guiding principle!

Please indicate if a time limit has been set for compliance and whether the RCVS will be monitoring the information or lack of information in Councillors’ DoI.

[In your own DoI](#) you list:

Contribution to display shelving in practice extension from Royal Canin, Spring 2008.

Given the furore surrounding the junk pet-food issue please tell us why you *even considered* accepting contributions from a junk pet-food company.

Did you approach the company or did the company approach you?

Might your promotion and sale of junk pet-food and the acceptance of contributions from a junk pet-food company, whether now or in the future, create liabilities for the RCVS?

Thanks in advance,

Tom Lonsdale

[replied on](#)

Friday, 17 Apr 2009 at 14:35

Dear Mrs Nute,

As at today’s date, 17 April 2009, there’s no sign of your answers to the questions above. The following four topics also await your responses.

13 March 2009 [Your comments please](#)

26 March 2009 [Feed Roadkill, Win Best in Show at Crufts!](#)

3 April 2009 [Conflicts of Interest and Matters Arising](#)

8 April 2009 [What’s your view?](#)

The questions are addressed to you in your capacity as President of the RCVS and also to you personally as a candidate for re-election.

Please treat the issues, the forum and the forum members with respect and provide full and frank answers at your earliest convenience.

Thank you,

Tom Lonsdale

3 Feed Roadkill, Win Best in Show at Crufts!

Thursday, 26 Mar 2009 at 13:10

Dear Colleague,

Might this [American video clip](#) offer a glimpse of our common future?

The Secrets Behind the Chicago IKC Dog Show!

Joe Giannini: We're at the International Kennel Club Show, where 8000 entries and 171 different breeds are competing to be the Best in Show.

Come with me as we discover what it takes to become the International Kennel Club's top dog.

So tell me, there's some special things that go into having a dog like this and keeping this dog looking as fresh as she does. . . .

2 Roadkill Diet?

Joe Giannini: You feed your dogs raw diet? But we're not talking about raw diet you get in the pet store?

Exhibitor 1: No

Joe Giannini: You're talking real fresh raw diet!

Exhibitor 1: Wild game, deer, ducks.

Exhibitor 2: Chicken backs and necks, burgers, beef.

Exhibitor 1: Chicken heads, chicken feet.

Exhibitor 3: Real chicken that I can have too, if I get hungry in the ring.

Joe Giannini: It sounds like the dog is eating a little bit better than you are.

Exhibitor 2: If you want that winning edge then you're going to go the extra mile.

Joe Giannini: Would someone call you up and say 'hey, I've got a deer'?

Exhibitor 1: Yep, they do that. We find someone with a dead deer. We go get it, butcher it and feed it to my dogs.

Are UK veterinary schools, veterinary associations and the RCVS out of touch?

Do they need damage control measures?

If so, what measures might be most appropriate?

Have you a role to play?

Any and all suggestions appreciated.

Thanks in advance,

Tom

Some readers passed comment.

Saturday, 04 Apr 2009 at 13:38

G'day *****,

Good to see that you're making an effort to come to terms with this. It ain't rocket science, but it does require the right frame of mind (honesty, integrity, common sense, that sort of thing).

A retired Professor of Psychology wrote on another forum about feeding her 12 Labradors and two Papillons:

After reading *Raw Meaty Bones*, I realized how simple it is to feed the best diet to my carnivorous Labradors — you just hand them large hunks of raw meaty bones, some organ meats, and some table scraps, as is convenient. As a . . . member wrote some months ago, you don't have to MAKE anything; you just have to SHOP. Ditto for my small carnivores, the 12-year old Papillons. I just hand them smaller RMB, liver or kidney a few days a week, and bits of our table foods.

The two hardest parts of feeding RMB are (1) getting past veterinary advice to feed only commercial kibble, and (2) unlearning everything you've been taught about '100% balanced and complete' pet foods. The rest is pretty simple.

About the roadkill, first make sure you don't get flattened by a car when out collecting food for your pets. I know it can be difficult over there, in the rain and the dark, so wear light coloured clothing and take a torch. Tasmanian Devils suffer high mortality scavenging carrion on the roads. Perhaps vets are not an endangered species, but nonetheless better to stay out of the statistics.

Of course, feeding whole prey animals of appropriate size to carnivores makes the most sense. And if that food is otherwise free and going to waste, then grab the opportunity. In the UK I'm thinking rabbits, hares, rats, pheasants, deer and wallabies (in the New Forest) all make for good carnivore tucker.

Wynne, thanks for assuming I get elected. I appreciate the positive vibe, but where am I going to find 1700 votes? Whether or not I get elected the RCVS are honour bound to look into the issues raised. If they've got an ounce of sense, and as a matter of urgency, they'll set up a committee to look into this. (It will be incumbent on them to screen out those with junk pet-food ties and others with predetermined views.)

In my view they would be well to seek my advice early in the piece.

In the unlikely event that I get elected, then I believe that will demonstrate a mandate for change. It's perhaps a bit premature to discuss exact mechanisms for ushering in the changes, but I suspect it will involve meetings with Deans of vet schools, Defra and other key institutions.

I think you may be taking things a bit far, raising the spectre of striking-off the ignorant and the obdurate. Somehow, we've got to turn round an education system that has been hoodwinked and hijacked. And from recent experience, do something about a political system that's unsuited to the task.

Any ideas how you can get the RCVS President, incumbent Councillors and other candidates to address important issues?

[Your comments please](#)

[Mrs Nute: Declaration of Interests](#)

[Feed Roadkill, Win Best in Show at Crufts!](#)

Conflicts of Interest and Matters Arising

Meanwhile I hope that you will keep an open and active mind. Or as Tom Hungerford the grandfather of the Australian vet profession [wrote](#):

Tell the people who won't review their views that: 'The foolish and the dead never change their opinions.' Maybe that is an overstatement - as the 'brain-dead' may also refuse to revise.

Cheers,
Tom

4 Conflicts of Interest and Matters Arising

Friday, 03 Apr 2009 at 15:27

Dear Colleague,

Certain matters arise in respect to the Declaration of Interests documents that can be viewed in the files.

[A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MANAGING POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST](#)

Conflicts of interest are not just things which you think may be a bar to objectivity, but should also include things which others, such as outsiders, may think give rise to bias. The ultimate test of when an interest needs to be declared is if it might be seen by an objective observer as something that might have influenced the decision arising from any discussion you participated in.

[CORPORATE GOVERNANCE GROUP REPORT TO COUNCIL NOVEMBER 2008](#)

The potential for judicial review and for adverse public and professional relations is addressed in the College's risk assessment exercises and in annual disclosures to its insurers. Cover currently extends to the College and to individual Council Members, acting in their capacity as Directors or Officers.

The junk pet-food maker Mars Corporation pays researchers to gather information on the [natural diet of wolves](#), the progenitors of dogs. The Mars Corporation pays UK veterinary schools to suppress natural diet information and to push the Corporation's industrial products. (Examples: [a](#), [b](#).)

University appointed RCVS Councillors, as at 3 April 2009, fail to record actual or potential [conflicts of interest](#) pertaining to direct and indirect involvement with and obligations to the Mars Corporation and other junk pet-food producers.*

- Might veterinary students, veterinary graduates and others question the apparent 'bar to objectivity' of UK veterinary teachers, veterinary schools and the RCVS?
- Are UK veterinary teachers, veterinary schools and the RCVS vulnerable to legal challenge?
- If and when veterinary teachers, veterinary schools and the RCVS suppress, distort and deny vital information, how might that affect legal outcomes?
- How might the actual or perceived [failure to declare interests](#) affect the outcome of legal challenges?
- Have the College insurers been advised of [potential legal challenges](#)?
- Have the College lawyers been consulted on ways to manage and or mitigate matters arising from past, present and future conflicts of interest?

Thank you for your opinion,

Tom Lonsdale

(* Professor Malcolm Bennett lists '[feed manufacturers](#)')

5 What's your view?

Wednesday, 08 Apr 2009 at 16:00

Dear Colleague,

Our veterinary students carry the profession's and the community's hopes for the future.

Unfortunately, as you know the veterinary schools have become [captives of the junk pet-food industry](#). The RCVS is a haven of [junk pet-food functionaries and fellow travellers](#) and [Defra are implicated in the cover up](#).

Clearly a most unsatisfactory state of affairs prevails. Students lured by false pretences into believing that they will receive objective, fair, up-to-date tuition on the origins, prevention and treatment of disease, queue up for admission to veterinary schools. But their vulnerability is exploited; they are duped, betrayed and fed junk pet-food inspired garbage. It's a [global disgrace of unprecedented proportions](#).

To my mind, it's incumbent on us not to stand idly by. We're obliged to help the students to help themselves and thereby help the animals and the wider community.

I suggest that veterinary students need to be diligent — take copious lecture notes, use their mobile phones and other devices to gather photographic, audio and video evidence. They can record range of junk pet-food company names and products in the store rooms and on display in public areas. They can check the library lists for the numerous texts on junk food feeding and the texts on treatment for modern (junk food induced) diseases. At the same time they can note the absence of books and journals that make mention of feeding carnivores according to the [natural standard](#).

Of course, they should gain access to faculty documents and discussions by any lawful means, including [Freedom of Information enquiries](#).

As students, they may feel somewhat at a disadvantage challenging the same teachers whose marks and approval they depend on. However, once they graduate they may feel better able to [launch legal proceedings](#). It's then that the accurate historical record will come into its own.

So, at this important stage, I strongly recommend that veterinarians of the future equip themselves for the professional and legal battles ahead.

What's your view?

Thank you,

Tom Lonsdale

Ps: Any reader who has a view, please let us know. Thanks, Tom

A reader asked a question

[replied on](#)

Friday, 10 Apr 2009 at 15:40

Hi *****,

Now we're getting to the exciting stuff — the crux of what I think is important.

Of course nature knows best, it's been practising for billions of years since the first inhabitants emerged from the slime. And what to me is intriguing, those same inhabitants are still here — quite likely regulating the planet as they always have.

It's inconceivable that you missed the wildlife documentaries showing wolves in the Arctic, dingoes in the Outback, or hunting dogs in the Savannah. Everywhere you look, where man's influence is minimised, there's an exquisite balance of nature. And that balance, whilst multidimensional over time, can be seen in somewhat linear fashion as descending from the carnivore's tooth.

So to my mind, the question should be rephrased: What are the influences that regulate the regulators? The answer I propose is contained in the *Journal of Veterinary Dentistry* paper [Cybernetic Hypothesis of Periodontal Disease in Mammalian Carnivores](#). Thus far; I believe Cybernetics provides sound explanatory and predictive powers.

To flesh out the story some more, you can read [RMB](#) Chapter 14. It helps if you read the other 13 Chapters [about five times](#) — also beneficial to be acquainted with the [supporting texts](#).

There's a *RMB Newsletter* that expands on certain aspects [here](#).

And in case you didn't see where James Lovelock FRS and Professor Lynn Margulis endorsed the information, then have a look at [Introduction from Tom Lonsdale](#).

OK, so now you've got more reading material than you bargained for. Can you take a month off work? When you're done reading and re-reading please give me a call and let's chat.

Cheers,

Tom

H: +61 2 4574 0537 ([Sydney time](#))

6 Dr Malik's Cat

Thursday, 23 Apr 2009 at 17:54

Dear Colleague,

How are you feeling? Have you given an adequate account of yourself and your policies during the course of the vetsurgeon.org forum?

Are you not a tad ashamed of your cowardice when asked some straightforward questions?

- 13 March 2009 [Your comments please](#)
- 22 March 2009 [Mrs Nute: Declaration of Interests](#)
- 26 March 2009 [Feed Roadkill, Win Best in Show at Crufts!](#)
- 3 April 2009 [Conflicts of Interest and Matters Arising](#)
- 8 April 2009 [What's your view?](#)

As you know the veterinary profession has dug itself a huge hole by collaborating with the junk pet-food makers. To my mind, a vote for you would be a vote for the person with the spade.

Anyone with an ounce of nous knows that when in a hole the best course of action is to stop digging. If you keep on digging — and you look like you have every intention of doing so — then please note that the deeper the hole the more likely that the walls will cave in.

In the event that happens, I won't be sending flowers. But I do have a good epitaph from the BSAVA/Mars Corporation propaganda pamphlet [Scamp's Diary](#) 2003 Edition:

Don't worry if your vet says one or more of your cat's teeth need to be removed. Cats' gums are hard and tough, and even a toothless cat can eat crunchy dry food.

Too many Scamps have died toothless and in agony eating 'crunchy dry food'. They relied on you in their time of greatest need. You failed.

To better understand your failure, please take a look at [two photos](#) featuring [Dr Richard Malik's](#) 19 year old cat.

How do you feel now?

Best wishes,

Tom Lonsdale

Ps. All subscribers welcome to voice their opinions. Ta, Tom

Readers posted comments

Friday, 24 Apr 2009 at 16:27

Dear all,

Apologies are due. I wrongly assumed that those suffering a troubled conscience would not respond to the message.

Tom Lonsdale:

Ps. All subscribers welcome to voice their opinions. Ta, Tom

[Ms Barbour-Hill](#) tells us she founded the British Veterinary Dental Association and that she edits a scientific journal. (Does anyone have a copy they could lend?) She also says she got fired from some early jobs and that she runs her practice on idiosyncratic lines. Not surprisingly her editorial style and knowledge of the long-running Raw Meaty Bones debate are somewhat idiosyncratic too:

[E B-H] [24 April 2009](#) Bullshit

[E B-H] [22 April 2009](#) Have you stopped beating your wife?

[E B-H] [11 March 2009](#) Mr. Lonsdale might get on better in the UK if he published scientific papers, made scientific presentations at meetings and so on, instead of utilising the free publicity he gets by standing as the Monster Raving Loony candidate for RCVS. That is why some veterinary surgeons choose to "ignore and ridicule" him: he invites that response.

Are there any veterinary school principals on this forum who would care to comment on the secret contracts with food companies?

Did you notice that last paragraph? Yes, out of swirling delirium bursts accurate commentary on the [nexus between vet schools and the junk pet-food makers](#).

What a strange world we live in!

As ever, it's an honour to seek your vote in an attempt to make the world a better place.

Best wishes,
Tom

If you are a vet, vet student or supplier to the veterinary profession you can subscribe to www.vetsurgeon.org
To read all discussion posts go to <http://www.vetsurgeon.org/groups/rcvs-elections/default.aspx>