

British Veterinary Association Day Speech

Dr. Elizabeth Mullineaux, BVA President

26 September 2024

AS DELIVERED

Thank you

Some of you are thinking that's a bit soft for her. For me, this perfectly encapsulates what being a vet is all about. We get up in the middle of the night to calve a cow; support our clients as they say goodbye to their beloved dog; and share the excitement of a family with young children when they bring in their new kitten for the first vaccination. We do all this because we . It's therefore incredibly difficult to see our motivations questioned in the way we have seen as a result of the CMA's investigation.

In our interactions with the CMA we're constantly reminding them that the veterinary profession puts the health and welfare of the animals we care for at the centre of everything we do. This is regardless of whether the animals are wild or domesticated, owned or unowned, or an owner's financial position. Any recommendations coming out of the investigation must fully consider animal welfare as well as owner choice and ensuring that is understood by the CMA is a key priority

I'm a bit of a glass half full person though, and the CMA investigation does present us with opportunities. One of these is an increased chance of securing a new Veterinary Surgeons Act in the next parliament. The 1966 Act is not surprisingly unfit for purpose for a modern profession. It's about as old as I am. New legislation needs to include the regulation of those responsible for the veterinary industry - the businesses and the practises - as well as the professionals working within it. We also hope our colleagues who work alongside us, as part of a multidisciplinary team, will also become properly recognised, particularly important to me, our valued Registered Veterinary Nurses.

In its manifesto, the new Labour government highlighted a number of potential opportunities for the profession and for animal welfare. We will continue to lobby for a solution to the

None of us of course get anywhere like this by ourselves. As many of you know, I'm one half of a crazy veterinary couple, and the other half is currently on Shetland scanning sheep. Phil is what keeps me sane most of the time and I couldn't do this role without his support. I'm however really pleased that my sister Kirsten and my brother-in-law Simon could make it today as they are also both a big part of my life and its very special for me to have them here.

And so, there's nothing left to say other than - let's just get on with this.