This workshop seeks to open up an agenda for an innovative new field of study: veterinary anthropology. This new field has the potential to bring together scholarship in animal studies, animal welfare, veterinary sciences, multispecies anthropology, medical anthropology and the anthropology of ethics. The anthropology of human medicine has brought critical attention to the ways in which culture influences the experience of illness and the practice of medicine, as well as the medical objectification of the body, its commodification (biocapital) and governance (biopower). Veterinary anthropology promises all this and more. The complexity brought by the diversity of species under veterinary care and the multiple human-animal relationships which must be taken into consideration raise new analytical challenges. In this workshop we wish to explore the particularities that veterinarians’ care for different species of animals bring to the contemporary practice of medicine.

We ask: how can we bring into relief the differences and continuities that come from medical interventions where the animal is the focus of care? How far does the One Health paradigm go, when veterinary medicine involves interventions which are almost unthinkable in the treatment of human beings. Euthanasia, neutering and ‘slaughter-outs’ in the name of infectious disease control are just three examples. What are the historical and contemporary ethical dimensions of these procedures? How are veterinary practitioners divided on acceptable practice, and how are these differentiated in settings such as farms, domestic pets, and zoos, or across different species? What might ‘informed consent’ mean when dealing with animals? What kind of attitudes towards their patients and animal-owners must vets cultivate during their training, and how might this be different or similar to practitioners in the field of human medicine?
DAY ONE: 18th April

09:00 Coffee

09:30 Welcome and Introduction - Andrew Gardiner, Adam Reed, Beckie Marsland

10:00 Session One

Stephen Blakeway, Multi-dimensional Animals, between Quantal and Universal, where is ‘Veterinary’?

Pete Kingsley, A Century of Veterinarians and Cattle Disease in Nigeria – a History of Policy and Its Absence

11:00 Coffee

11.30 Session Two

Françoise Wemelsfelder, Caring for Animals as Whole Sentient Beings in Vet Nurse Practice

Samantha Hurn, Living and Dying Well Without Euthanasia: Vignettes from the limits of “One Health” and UK Veterinary Practice

Melanie Rock, More than Human Solidarity and Harm Avoidance in Canadian policies on dog-bites and rabies? Anthropological Contributions to the Conceptualization of Public Values and Collective Interests.

13:00 Lunch

14:00 Session Three

Chrissie Wanner, “Normal... for a Bulldog”: Pedigree Dog Breeding and Veterinary Care

Glen Cousquer, What is Healthy, What is Normal, What is Acceptable? What do answers to these questions tell us about who is responsible for animal health and welfare in the mountain tourism industry?

Robin Irvine, Veterinary Care and Animality: Routine and Extraordinary Interventions in the Lives of Fighting Bulls in Andalusia

15:30 Coffee

16:00 Discussion

17:00 Close

DAY TWO: 19th April

09.00 Session Four

Abigail Woods, Doctors in the Zoo: Connecting Human and Animal Health in British Zoological Gardens, c1828-1880

Irus Braverman, Zoo Vets: Bridging Welfare and Conservation?

10.00 Coffee

10.30 Session Five

Sue Bradley, Different Cases, Different Times? On the Farm, in the Home, and Down the Pit

Philip Robinson, One Health, One Welfare: Killing Animals to Control Disease

Frédéric Keck, Make Die and Let Live: Veterinarians Facing the Challenges of Avian Influenza in Hong Kong

12.00 Lunch

13.00 Session Six

Henry Buller, “We’ve Got to Keep Our Antibiotics To Ourselves”: Antimicrobial Resistance and the Veterinarian’s Dilemma

Ann Bruce, Gene Editing Animals and the Future of Food

Jamie Lorimer, Towards a Veterinary Anthropology of the Microbial

14.30 Coffee

15.00 Final Discussion

16.00 Close
Session One

Stephen Blakeway, The Donkey Sanctuary

Multi-dimensional animals, between quantal and universal, where is ‘veterinary’?

In this talk I contribute to the Workshop observations from my working life about three areas associated with Veterinary Anthropology: the relationships between human and non-human animals as they affect animal health and welfare; the content and emphasis of ‘veterinary’ (animal health and welfare) knowledge; and the ownership and appropriation of this knowledge by the veterinary profession.

During community-based work in PNG, Sudan, Nigeria, Afghanistan, and more recently in a variety of countries in my work with The Donkey Sanctuary, it seems relationships between human and non-human animals, and human attitudes and empathy towards animals, can vary between individuals as much as between communities and cultures, while observed behaviour towards animals remains heavily influenced by what is possible within the social and economic constraints of the community. Local knowledge about animal health and welfare can be rich, particularly in pastoralist communities. In many communities, roles and responsibilities are gender defined, with women often providing broader, richer information than men, who tend to focus on the more economically catastrophic conditions such as acute fatal diseases generally, and colic in equines. Attitudes and treatment of animals appears to mirror attitudes and treatment of people within communities, though often more extreme. However, opportunities to communicate and manage their animals better are generally readily taken up.

The veterinary profession tends to reinforce more ‘male’ priorities. Welfare assessment, husbandry, animal behaviour, communications between people and animals, harnessing, footcare and farriery, generally come far below more dramatic manifestations of animal health in the veterinary curriculum, and vets students appear to lose empathy for animals during the course of their studies. Additionally, vet students come increasingly from cities and middle classes, not the countryside, which creates distance and skews priorities away from the needs of animal users in remote and marginalised areas, where most vets do not want to live or work.

Power and autonomy relationships between vets and paravets are becoming increasingly important in creating a vision of what ‘veterinary’ (sadly we only have an adjective, not a noun), animal health and welfare, is all about. While the OIE recognises the breadth of the paravet contribution to a national veterinary structure, effective integration of the different cadres of animal health and welfare workers requires sophisticated professional relationships which are in their infancy if they exist at all. Currently vets often appear to be taking a protectionist view of veterinary professionalism, over-emphasising the primacy of scientific knowledge.

In a world where animal production is rising massively with seemingly negative consequences for human and environmental health and welfare, the time is ripe for a wider debate on the social aspects of animal health and welfare.

Pete Kingsley, University of Edinburgh

A century of veterinarians and cattle disease in Nigeria – a history of policy and its absence.

Trypanosomiasis is one the most serious cattle disease in Nigeria, and indeed Africa in general. Attempts to tackle this disease are closely intertwined with the development of Nigeria’s veterinary profession and research institutions, from small-scale studies carried out haltingly by a handful of British veterinarians in the 1920s, to elaborate and well-funded initiatives from the middle of the twentieth century onwards. Despite the rapid growth of the veterinary profession, there has been no effective, systematic response to animal trypanosomiasis. This lack of planning is symptomatic of a broader lack of coherence as post-independence economic policy has consistently neglected livestock (and for that matter, agricultural) development. This neglect is compounded by a series of contradictions in the veterinary profession itself. Veterinarians are tasked with tackling problems of broad importance to health and livelihoods, yet financial incentives encourage other activities. Veterinarians oversee both para-professional animal treatment and unlicensed drug sales, yet often see such practices as hostile to their profession. And finally, veterinarians have long been committed to ‘One Health’-style approaches which cut across different areas of expertise in theory, but institutional structures have made such collaborations difficult to sustain.

Session Two

Françoise Wemelsfelder, Kirsty Young, Karen Martyniuk, Scottish Rural Agricultural College

Caring for animals as whole sentient beings in vet nurse practice

To care for the welfare needs of animal patients before and after medical intervention, it is essential that veterinary nurses effectively monitor them. In their day-to-day work they engage with animals as
individual sentient beings, gathering enormous practical experience in observing how animals respond to their environment and treatment. In vet nurse education there is increasing attention for such whole-animal care, however no formal tools are available to facilitate this in daily practice. Qualitative Behaviour Assessment (QBA) is a methodology that was developed in animal welfare science specifically to address animals as sentient expressive beings, asking people to holistically appraise animals’ body language using descriptors such as ‘relaxed’, ‘agitated’ or ‘lethargic’. Research has shown that such assessments are not mere anthropomorphic projection, but, with appropriate instruction and training, can be reliable and valid. To develop this method for use in the veterinary care of domestic cats, 7 professional vet nurses created a suitable QBA term-list, and used it to assess pre- and post-operative cat expressions from video. Analysis found a collective discernment of 4 meaningful dimensions of cat expressivity, and high agreement in how individual cats were characterized. This outcome is an encouraging first step in developing QBA to help support holistic care for animals in vet nurse practice, and we hope it will contribute generally to a culture of honouring animal sentience in veterinary medicine.

Samantha Hurn, University of Exeter

Living and dying well without euthanasia: Vignettes from the limits of 'One Health' and UK veterinary practice

The success of the One Health movement falters in the face of death or more specifically in relation to the division between what Butler has termed ‘grievable’ and ‘ungrievable’ lives. Nonhuman lives are ungrievable because they are not accorded the same legal protection as human lives. While palliative care is routinely offered to human patients in the UK, the converse is true for animals. Moreover, a recent poll of UK vets conducted by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons found that only 28% of those surveyed felt that hospice care should become a standard part of veterinary practice. Euthanasia is widely accepted by members of the profession (as well as legislative bodies and animal welfare organisations) as the appropriate course of action for terminally ill or seriously injured patients. Yet many human clients, for a variety of reasons (including ethical, religious, emotional) do not agree with euthanasia. These individuals often have to argue with consulting vets to overturn recommendations of euthanasia and obtain clinical support for palliative care, natural death or high-risk treatments. This paper details some of the experiences of human informants based in various locations in the UK who chose to challenge veterinary advice and seek alternatives to euthanasia for their nonhuman companions in both end of life and palliative contexts. Their experiences and some of the outcomes of their decisions provide grounds for challenging the normative status of euthanasia and encouraging the UK veterinary profession to consider hospice care more seriously.

Melanie J Rock & Dawn Rault, University of Calgary

More-than-human solidarity and harm avoidance in Canadian policies on dog-bites and rabies? Anthropological contributions to the conceptualization of public values and collective interests

Globally, dog-bites and less injurious forms of dog-aggression are neglected problems in public health. For over 150 years, preventive policies have emphasized rabies control, yet dog-bites also cause injuries and can involve trauma. In addition, dog-bites and “lessor” forms of dog-aggression may signal the presence of pervasive violence or social injustice. In Canada, human exposure to rabies rarely occurs, but dogs bite approximately 2% of Canadians every year. Nevertheless, data on dog-bites and “lesser” forms of dog-aggression are not consistently collected or analysed by any level of government. In 2014, the Canadian government devolved responsibility for rabies control to the provinces and territories. Indeed, a focus on rabies control shapes how provincial and territorial governments respond to reported dog-bites. Rabies transmitted via dog-bites is a legitimate concern in northern Canada, where dogs may contract rabies from wildlife. Public engagement, legislation and enforcement are matters left to the discretion of municipalities in routine dog-aggression cases, and our ethnographic research highlights differences in approach to implementation, disparities in organizational capacity, and tenuous links with public health authorities. Institutionally speaking, public health authorities emphasize procedural matters of governance in duly assessing the risk of rabies transmission from dogs, but seemingly at the expense of the “bigger picture” of dog-aggression, which includes surveillance and inter-sectoral collaboration regarding injury prevention, chronic disease control, mental health promotion and health inequity. Against this backdrop, we apply anthropological theory to consider the welfare of both humans and non-human animals, thereby expanding the conceptualization of ‘harm avoidance,’ ‘solidarity,’ and ‘collective interests.’

Session Three

Chrissie Wanner, University of Edinburgh

"Normal... for a Bulldog": Pedigree Dog Breeding and Veterinary Care

Based on ethnographic research with dog breeders and vets in the UK, this paper examines how the care of pedigree dogs is negotiated in the veterinary clinic. Publically, the relationship between breeders and vets remains fraught, with the two professions at odds over the question of what should be considered normal or ‘natural’ in canine bodies. Here, I consider how these tensions play out in day-to-day encounters in the clinic, examining the continual negotiations which take place between breeders and vets, and the adaptations and compromises which typify practices of care. Ultimately, I will argue that veterinary interventions often support selective-breeding practices and
treatment and extraordinary surgical interventions. I explore how the fierce nature of the fighting bull, as understood from within the bullfighting world, is constantly present when vets attend the animals on bull-breeding estates.

These estates are built around the animals. They both manage and reproduce the belligerent nature of fighting stock. Care in this context is care oriented towards the ultimate destiny of the bulls: the bullfighting arena. Here, a good care outcome is a healthily robust animal arriving at the arena having grown up as free from human interference as possible. However, bulls are also considered livestock, so this means that they are subject to regional, national and Europe-wide biopolitical regimes of care, which involve tagging & regular disease screening. Veterinary intervention is inevitable, but has to be carefully structured so as to minimise both the interruption in the lives of the animals and the risk to all parties involved.

In this paper, I look at two episodes of veterinary care of fighting animals on a bull-breeding estate in Andalusia: A surgery performed in the open countryside and routine tuberculosis screening in the corrals and stocks. My chief concern is to examine the nuances of taurine nature and local veterinary knowledge that are (re)produced in these encounters.

Session Four

Abigail Woods, Kings College London

Doctors in the Zoo: Connecting human and animal health in British zoological gardens, c1828-1880

During the 19th century, zoological gardens were founded across Western Europe. Building on an extensive historical literature devoted to their scientific, imperial, commercial and educational functions, this paper will reveal that zoos were also important medical institutions that transformed animals into patients, victims of their environments, and pathological specimens. Focusing particularly on the London and Dublin Zoological Gardens (est 1828 and 1831 respectively), it will show that vets played only a minor role in this process. The management of zoo animal health fell largely to human doctors associated with the zoological societies that ran the gardens. Informed by long-standing beliefs in the biological relatedness of human and non-human animals, they imported three distinctive regimes from the human medical sphere: ‘public health’, whereby animal populations were managed through preventive and remedial interventions in their housing, feeding and wider environments; ‘bedside medicine’, an individualised system of clinical care applied to (valuable) animal patients; and ‘hospital medicine’, whereby dead animals were dissected in order to determine their causes of death and the nature and frequency of their diseases. The operation of these regimes illuminates the health experiences of animals within the zoo, and shows how, in ways shaped by...
institutions priorities, and the characteristics of the animals concerned, the ideas, practices and personnel of human medicine were brought to bear on them.

Irus Braverman, SUNY Buffalo Law School

Zoo Vets: Bridging Welfare and Conservation?

The shooting of a genetically “unsuitable” giraffe at the Copenhagen Zoo by the institution’s veterinarian in 2014 directed much public attention toward animal management in zoos. Although much less visible to the public, this incident also exposed an internal debate within the zoo community, and among zoo veterinarians in particular, about the ethics of caring for zoo animals. My paper will focus on the unique status, challenges, and responsibilities of zoo vets in the context of accredited zoos in the United States. I will situate the employment of vets in these zoos in a historical context, discuss their current marginalization, their invisibility even, at the zoo, and explore their (contested) status as the zoo animals’ exclusive welfare experts. I will finally examine some of the regulatory components of the zoo veterinarians’ work as medical caregivers generally, and as the sole providers of the zoo animals’ medications in particular.

Session Five

Sue Bradley, Newcastle University

Different cases, different times? On the farm, in the home, and down the pit

Veterinary surgeons in mixed practice work with a wide range of species in multiple socio-economic contexts whose elements change over time. In each case, the wellbeing of one or more animals is bound up in a specific nexus involving physical, emotional, and financial imperatives which the veterinarian is responsible for managing.

I am interested in how oral histories recorded with older vets can be used in considering issues that matter in practice today. In this presentation I will play three brief audio accounts of veterinary surgeons managing situations in different contexts where animal wellbeing was at stake – in the home, on the farm, and down the pit – from interviews with speakers who practised in the West Midlands, Northumberland and Cumbria between 1938 and the mid-1980s. While these accounts are historically specific, can they nevertheless help to elucidate the complex relationships between animals, vets and keepers that pertain today?

The interviews were recorded for Veterinary Lives in Practice, an oral history collaboration between Newcastle University’s Centre for Rural Economy and RCVS Knowledge, with support from the Wellcome Trust.

Philip Robinson, Harper Adams University

One Health, One Welfare: Killing animals to control disease

State veterinary authorities kill farm animals to protect animal or human health and welfare. The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) provides international guidelines for how killing for disease control should take place, and Regulation EC 1099/2009 provides legislative direction within the European Union (EU), enacted through national UK legislation. This killing may be part of a national crisis involving an epizootic disease such as Foot and Mouth disease (FMD), or may happen on a routine ongoing basis for an endemic disease such as bovine tuberculosis (bTB), and therefore varies in scale and intensity. But there is much more to consider than international guidelines and EU or UK legislation: this subject involves complex socio-economic and socio-cultural relations between farm animals and people. In this paper I will share personal experiences of what it means to be involved in disease control as a state vet using the examples of FMD, bTB and bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). I will also reflect on how such killing affects the farmers whose animals are removed, and whether killing for the greater good conflicts with a societal view of vets as people who make sick animals better.

Frédéric Keck, Musée du Quai Branly

Make die and let live: veterinarians facing the challenges of Avian Influenza in Hong Kong

Since the emergence of H5N1 in Hong Kong in 1997, domestic chickens have been regularly culled and wild birds monitored on the territory to prevent the spread of flu viruses from birds to humans. As preparedness for flu pandemics was applied at the avian level, veterinarians were involved in public health exercises and biosecurity interventions. I will look at the dilemmas it created from the perspective of the Kadoorie Farms and Botanical Garden, that was created after the Second World War as a centre for teaching zootechny and that has become a sanctuary for the conservation of wildlife after 1997. How does the implementation of early warning systems and sentinel devices transform relations between vets and the animals they care for? How does the anticipation of the possibility of culling create new possibilities of attention, even when birds are released from the farm into the wild?

Session Six

Henry Buller, University of Exeter

‘We’ve got to keep our antibiotics for ourselves’: antimicrobial resistance and the veterinarian’s dilemma.

Current scientific and societal concern over antimicrobial resistance is increasingly turning its attention to medicine use in livestock agriculture that,
it is claimed, directly and indirectly adds to the potential of human pathogen resistance. Farm animal veterinarians, who have long prescribed such medicines for on-farm use, are faced with a choice; to push for on-farm reductions in medicine use amongst their clients and risk possible increases in animal disease and mortality alongside falling farm revenues or to continue to prescribe levels in quantities or for reasons that are less and less justifiable in the face of the wider concerns over resistance. Drawing upon interviews and observations of veterinarians involved in disease control undertaken over the last three years, and drawing in part on the work of Mol (2010) and others, this paper will explore veterinarian responses to this emerging ‘post-pharmaceutical’ scenario, looking in particular at the ways in which the seemingly inflexibility of farming systems, husbandry technologies and animal bodies in modern livestock systems might be contested to achieve more holistic health and welfare goals.

Ann Bruce, University of Edinburgh

Gene editing animals and the future of food.

The last few years have seen a resurgence of interest in genetically modified (GM) animals. This paper will explore how these developments interact with current systems of producing food.

A combination of events has breathed new life to the prospects of GM animals: including the US Food and Drugs Administration approving the marketing GM salmon (the first GM animal in the world to be approved) and novel gene editing techniques offering the prospects of more sophisticated and easier ways of modifying animals. In the rapidly moving animal science world, these technologies have been used to produce cows without horns and pigs resistant to a fatal pig disease, African Swine fever. Perhaps more significantly, a global commercial pig breeding company has announced it has used gene editing to produce pigs resistant to a serious respiratory and reproductive disease.

I will examine these developments from four, innovation-related perspectives:

• Innovation: animals produced by gene editing offer the promise of precision modification to DNA, which older methods also offered, but failed to deliver. How well does gene editing achieve this ambition?

• Regulation: advocates of GM (and some regulatory authorities) argue that gene edited animals are not GMOs and therefore should not be subject to regulation. But in doing so, there is a tendency to elide genetic modification with transgenesis. This is not the only way of understanding genetic modification.

• Public acceptance: gene editing has been applied to animals in ways that are perceived to provide welfare benefits, but do publics recognise these applications as beneficial?

• Commercialisation: it is not enough just to produce 3-4 GM animals for the application to become viable. To produce a commercially viable product, they need to be multiplied, and accepted by a range of stakeholders, including farmers, vets and supermarket chains.

Early products are important in determining technological trajectories. Frivolous or controversial applications have the potential to strangle all gene edited products at birth, although gaining experience from more trivial applications may help conceptualise more important future applications. However, competition to be the first on the market is more likely to drive technological developments in the absence of ‘carrots’ that would drive the technology in directions with the greatest opportunity for social or environmental benefit.

Jamie Lorimer, University of Oxford

Towards a veterinary anthropology of the microbial animal

Recent work on the microbiome suggests that a great of human and animal difference is microbial. We are only 10% human, if our essential identity is pinned to the quantity of ‘human’ genes in our genome, and the microbes that make up the remaining 90% have been linked to the successful functioning of key bodily systems like immunity, metabolism and cognition. A new figure is emerging of the microbial animal, configured as a dynamic superorganism in which both the presence and the absence of microbes can be pathological.

For example, recent increases in allergy and autoimmune disease have been linked to ‘epidemics of absence’ resultant from our ‘missing microbes’. While the mismanagement of antimicrobials threatens the emergence of ‘superbugs’.

This paper begins to explore of the implications of the figure of the degraded microbial animal for the proposed field of veterinary anthropology. It has two broad aims. The first is to develop existing work on the biopolitics of governing animal health and disease, to offer useful trans-species concepts for attending to situations of both microbial presence and absence. The second aim is to begin to identify the situations of greatest import and interest for future enquiry. Here the paper will briefly reflect on the scope for new work on allergy and auto-immunity and on anti-microbial resistance.

This workshop is organised by Rebecca Marsland (Social Anthropology, University of Edinburgh), Andrew Gardiner (Royal Dick Vet School, University of Edinburgh), and Adam Reed (Social Anthropology, University of St Andrews). It is sponsored by the University of Edinburgh’s College of Humanities and Social Science Challenge Investment Fund, and the School of Social and Political Science Strategic Research Support Fund and hosted by the Edinburgh Centre for Medical Anthropology.