

Managing Veterinary Medicines episode 3: VetTeamAMR & Farm Vet Champions

Pam Mosedale

Hi everyone, today I'm going to talk to two SQP/RAMAs about RCVS Knowledge's Farm Vet Champions resources and how they're relevant for SQP Ramas. So I'm talking to Mark Pass, who's an RSQP, been an RSQP for quite a long time, and who did work at Willow's Veterinary Group and now works for Zoetis, and also Sophie Smith, who's also an RSQP and a WQP and works at Downland Agricultural Merchants and is involved in training of SQPs. So hi both. thank you very much for doing this. So we're going to talk about the RCVS Knowledge Farm Vet Champions resources and Farm Vet Champions is all about antimicrobial stewardship really and around reducing the use of antibiotics. So that might not seem very relevant to SQPs but do you think it is?

Sophie Smith

Yes, I mean, for me, think the content is extremely relevant to SQPs.

Obviously farm vets have a myriad of other daily challenges and I believe that by working closely with their local SQP they can approach the responsible use of antibiotics together, strengthening the messaging on farm. Obviously SQPs aren't diagnosing but particularly the section about evidence-based veterinary medicine I thought was really interesting and something that applies equally to POM-VS medicines as well as to POM-V. The principles are much the same and there's a lot of husbandry content actually in the materials, for example, what is the best bedding material to use for housing dairy cows? And the evidence-based process there, I think, is really useful for consideration and guidance for SQPs.

Pam Mosedale

Thank you, Sophie. Yeah, that's an interesting point you make. Yes, currently you have to be a very professional to actually become a farm vet champion, but that doesn't mean you can't access the resources. Anybody working in veterinary practice or in the veterinary field can access these resources and they're there and free. So that's a very interesting point. I'll certainly mention that to RCVS Knowledge going forward. Mark, what do you think about these resources?

Mark Pass

Yeah, I'd echo Sophie's thoughts on this, to be honest. Most of the content is very relevant to SQPs. Everyone working in the animal health industry has a

responsibility in a one health approach. I'm extremely passionate about encouraging greater link up between vets, SQPs and farmers. And the Farm Vet Champions content reminded me very quickly of my past 20 years working alongside farm vets as an SQP. CPD such as this can help grow the confidence of the SQP in my eyes, which you can then use in your day-to-day job, resulting in hopefully farmers seeing you more as an effective trusted advisor. In short space of time from working alongside vets and undertaking CPD such as this, I quickly found a real first in the SQP advisory role and became the Willows Vet Group leading advisor on POM VPS medicinal products, particularly in the full range of anti-parasitic medicines.

Pam Mosedale

Yeah, and in the FarmVet Champions resources, and you've mentioned some of the resources already, there's quite a big section about behaviour change, isn't there? And do you think that that's relevant to SQPs when you start to think about some of the issues around other resistance, not AMR, but around antelmintic resistance?

Mark Pass

Yeah, certainly. Yeah. I really enjoyed the behavior part of the CPD content as changing behavior farmers and your colleagues is a great passion of mine. And following setting up the sheep club that I did with the Willows Veterinary Group gave myself as an SQP and vet an opportunity to look at changing how we worked and ultimately how our farmers made decisions. Initially I found I quickly found that I needed to be a good active listener, touched on quite often within the FarmVets Champion CPD. It's vital to avoid confrontation with farmers. We can challenge to change behavior without causing confrontation, I believe. And understanding your customer farmer is key. And finding out what motivates him or hurt is vital in my opinion. This could be financial gain.

This is often top of the list with farmers. They want their animals to perform, don't they? For example, good growth rates in lambs and beef cattle and dairy heifers plus milk production in the dairy herd. So, however, maybe more, however, it may be more emotional or social motivates them, mightn't it? And this is something I picked up from this CPD. The farmer is often keen for their animals to look good and be proud of them. Or it might be another driver that allows change, mightn't it? This could be new rules, milk contracts or the environment or the animals presently just aren't performing how she would like. The farmer may also believe that he or she has always done what done correct or what the dad has always done has been correct. you know, following listening to the farmer, whichever behavior it is that comes through, we must always remember that we need to be polite, helpful, show empathy towards the customer, integrated care, teamwork and honesty. plus have a very good knowledge and up to date knowledge. And this is where a CPD like farm vet champions comes in of that particular subject. and this is what I could say. This is what you get from good CPD. I've always taken my role as an SQP very seriously. And I'm acutely aware of the huge responsibility it entails. yeah, I personally believe and

always I've always endeavored to give the best possible advice to each customer no matter how long it takes. I have a strong moral compass and I will strive always strive to promote responsible use of medicines and best practice. This creates trust and trust is everything and as I've just explained it's needed from both vets and SQPs and everyone working in farm practices.

And if you're going to change the mindset of farmers when considering advising on POM-Vs products and explaining, for example, about and fermented resistance and suggesting farmers undertake three collect counts, both pre and fermented treatments or post treatment drench checks, show you care and you want to help the farmer achieve success. And I think this comes through very much over the Farm Vet Champions CPD. So explain the benefits and the value and explain further about and fermented resistance issues, the issues of it in the UK, but don't pressure. Farmers often don't want to be pressured. Work together. I think that's vitally important. Change can happen and you can soon implement fecal egg counts into flock health plans and enhance animal welfare and increase profitability. As an SQP, for me, you need to offer more support, but you can always change ways and make a successful impact and be the farmer's trusted advisor.

That is key for me being that trusted advisor. Changes can occur on both sheep and cattle farms. And for example on sheep farms, sheep farmers may start to use a group four or five and fermented treatment as a quarantine dose and the mid to late season knockout dose on their lambs that they wouldn't have done beforehand. So change can happen if we all work together and show that care and trust.

Pam Mosedale

Thanks very much, Mark. And that actually resonated with me when you said we need to listen more. That's one of the things that I was working. That's one of my New Year's resolutions to listen more and talk less. But yes, I think that's so important, isn't it listening? And you also touched on there about it being for a whole team. I think that's super important too, that everybody in a veterinary practice and everybody in an SQP merchants, everybody can benefit because even the people who not SQPs can benefit from knowing the background to all this. So Sophie, you have this role in training, do you think this is useful for your SQPs?

Sophie Smith

Absolutely, I couldn't agree more with the issues raised by Mark. I think that SQPs really do need a special skill set to be able to challenge pretty long standing beliefs and farm husbandry practices with empathy and understanding. Obviously, it's kind of cultural change that we're going through at the moment, isn't it? Regarding the reduction of antibiotic use and the implementation of all the effect testing and the anti-mintic resistance. So training and CPD is key to this to be able to offer advice and best practice without causing offense or criticizing what's happened before. And I think particularly for SQPs in store at the counter or in the vet practice, there's a

real skill set to be able to have those conversations to be able to sort of tease out the information that you require in order to, you know, implement the change of protocol. So I think, yeah, it's really, really, really useful information and I think it's part and parcel of being an SQP is those are those personality, know, personal effectiveness, suppose is the word we would use. yeah, listening, absolutely, two ears, one mouth.

Pam Mosedale

Absolutely, yeah. it's, you know, we've always done it this way, it's such a hard thing sometimes to get over, it? And when I was, been an SQP assessor for AMTRA and I've always, you know, felt a little bit worried for some of the younger, new SQPs thinking when they start to meet a slightly older Yorkshire or Derbyshire or Cheshire farmer with a set views on things. It's good to have some backing, isn't it, of what they need to do. We've also got some species specific modules. Did you find those helpful?

Mark Pass

Yeah, I certainly did. Yeah. But particularly, you know, on dairy cows and, you know, the antibiotic usage for sure, definitely. This communication came up a lot in this section, to be honest. And I think that is key. On the dairy side, vets particularly have a lot of routine visits. They're seeing their farmers regularly. And I feel I feel SQPs can relate to that quite a lot, to be honest. They're probably seeing the sheep farmers and beef farmers more than the dairy, know, SQPs can relate to this.

Sophie Smith

I think that's right, absolutely. And particularly, as you say, in that sheep sector, we've got such massive problems with with antelmintic resistance and real driving that kind of change there. Where vets perhaps don't have the opportunity to influence the use of those POM-Vs products as much as they might with obviously POM-Vs. So working together is really, important and understanding each other's role and singing the same song as it were.

Pam Mosedale

Yeah, yes, I mean, having worked a little bit in farm practice a long time ago, you definitely don't see your sheep farmers anything like as often as you see your dairy farmers. But Mark, it's interesting, you worked within a veterinary practice and a role

within a veterinary practice. So there obviously was collaboration there. So what do you think good looks like when vets and SQPs work together?

Mark Pass

Yeah, certainly good looks like. I think if everyone's working together, success can happen, whether this be on sheep farms or dairy farms. I know these words keep coming out my mouth, but we need everyone working together to ultimately achieve the same goals, more collaboration and join up with roads with lots of engagement, sitting down around the table around the kitchen table or in the farm office is perfect example. An example on herbacifid diseases is lungworm in cattle.

Lungworm for me continues to cause severe disease in all ages of cattle and has a significant effect on animal welfare as well as a major economic impact on farms. We have been seeing cases rise annually and outbreaks have grown significantly over last three decades, especially cattle in their first and second year grazing seasons.

However, outbreaks of lungworm in adult dairy cows have also been increasing over recent years. So for me, it's vital that the farmer discusses with their animal health advisor the implementation of a parasite plan. For me, it must cover full lungworm control, including grazing management, possible vaccination, which is a POM-V vet only and then fulminants. Winter time for me, this is what good looks like to me, winter time such as December and January is a good starting point for the vet and SQP and farmer to sit down and put a parasite plan in place. Your farmers will be thinking about it and the year ahead, they'll want to engage. Farmers will often want to plan their turnout date and as health planning has become a requirement over of health and welfare schemes in recent years, hasn't it? There is a need now to continue to explore how this can be more of success for dairy farmers in both short and long term. And a joined up approach on farm by both the vet and SQP, especially around parasitology is required for me. Both vets and SQPs are involved with controlling lungworm on farm. Therefore, would a vet have any contact with SQPs about lungworm with one of their clients? It's open isn't it? However, I believe on farms where there is a joined-up approach, significant success can follow.

Everything can come into place, like I say, a POM-V vaccine if needed for lungworm, anthelmintics, grazing management. Everything can be looked at. Housing can be looked at. A lot of animals are housed now more than they ever used to be. So everything's changing. So if everyone's talking together, more engagement for both SQP and vets is needed for me in the future to help lungworm stock getting lost between the vet and the SQP. I think that's a good example.

Pam Mosedale

Yeah, no, thank you. it's about a holistic approach, isn't it, really? It's about everybody being involved. And must be an advantage to the vets too, to know what

the farmers are using that comes from their own pay. That's right, because sometimes they wouldn't know that. So yeah, that's a very good point.

Mark Pass

And on sheep planning, on flock plans, it's crucial really, like we just touched on before, and safely mentioned, vets very rarely might not see the sheep farmer, sheep clients from one year to the next and one lambing to the next. So it's crucial if these meetings can take place and joined up meetings can take place, then before lambing, free lambing, post lambing, and say pre-tupping. And it brings everyone together and discussing all aspects that goes on on farm and what SQPs have learnt in their CPD and what vets have learnt from their CPD and it's bringing all the knowledge together joined up thoughts.

Pam Mosedale

Definitely. And this CPD, as we said at the beginning, it's not got the points like a lot of traditional SQP/RAMA CPD has got, this you do an hour and you get eight points or whatever it is. This is all about you get your points by reflecting on this. Now, some people might find that a little bit scary, that idea. Sophie, have you got any tips about how people can reflect on this CPD?

Sophie Smith

Yes, absolutely. Personally, I take a kind four stage approach to CPD. One, make it regular, bite-sized chunks. Don't do too much. You do four hours, then it's very difficult to implement anything, isn't it? So set time aside on a monthly basis, make it a habit. Number two, diarise time then to review, note any actions to be implemented. And I would say don't choose too many actions. I say kind of one piece of CPD. Think about one or two things you can do differently or start to try and implement with your customers.

And then choose a mentor or a colleague to talk it through with. Personally, I find talking about CPD that I've taken part in makes it much easier to kind of pick out the key learnings, which then makes it easier to implement. Then the fourth point is implement it quickly. If you're to do something, do it before you start next month's CPD. Otherwise, there's chances of you implementing it. It's probably quite slim. So yeah, make it easy. Make it part of your routine, really, on an ongoing basis. And I think the important point is discussing with a colleague if you can. I think that's really useful. If you can have a tag team on it.

Pam Mosedale

That's a really good point and sometimes in veterinary practices people have to come back from CPD and tell everybody else what they've learned and I always think that's really good at concentrating your mind because you go, yeah I learnt three things, one and two, I can't remember what number three was. Just concentrate your mind.

I think that discussing it with a colleague points a really good point and then just make a few notes I suppose so that because you've got to satisfy AMTRA or whatever that you've done it.

Sophie Smith

Yeah, that's right. We actually had a presentation at our conference. One of our colleagues had done our calf academy training and that's exactly what she did when she got back was to share her learning and they have to have to go in and share it with their colleagues. So it's really, really, really good to see that in practice.

Pam Mosedale

Do you have anything to add about reflection more?

Mark Pass

Yeah, really, I'd like to touch on, yes, always be current in your learning. I think that is key. And having an in-depth knowledge of disease prevention and POM, VPS, medicinal products as an SQP ensures your customers use the right products at the correct time in the right way, doesn't it? You can then implement your action plan quite quickly and take pride in your pharma's businesses then and being able to exert a positive influence. For me, this is vital from what you're learning from your CPD, taking it actually onto farm and making an influence.

Pam Mosedale

Yeah, making some changes and, you know, CPD that's around life cycles of worms and that kind of thing, you know, it has obvious relevance, but I think you've both demonstrated that this CPD, which is a bit broader, still has relevance. Okay well thank you so much both of you for your time, that's been brilliant. just based on all that would you recommend your colleagues to have a look at this CPD?

Mark Pass

Yes, for sure. 100%. Yeah. You'll never stop learning and you'll learn so much from this CPD. If it's just even the communication skills and the behavior change and how you can communicate. Oh, now we can all work together. You'll never stop learning. So 100% I would say, go to it and learn from this CPD.

Sophie Smith

Yeah, yeah, yeah. And likewise, totally agree with Mark. I mean, I think there's some really fantastic content here and content actually that also that might not be directly relevant, for example, the piece on the cascade and, you know, actually understanding the broader picture about veterinary medicine. And I think it's really, really useful bringing the vet and the SQPs together, which is what we all want for the benefit of, you know, benefit of the animal health in the UK.

Pam Mosedale

Absolutely, and thank you. just reminded me of one thing I didn't mention about it is that the items in there around legislation are updated because obviously the MR changes, etc. But they are updated. So that's great, because that just reminded me of something I didn't say earlier, which was that these parts about the legislation that are in there are updated. All these webinars will be updated as things change. So it should always be relevant as CPD. So thank you both very much. That's been amazing. Thank you for your time. And I'm sure that your enthusiasm will have transmitted to your colleagues and that might have a look at the CPD. So thank you.

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