



## **The Antimicrobial Resistance Hub**

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RCVS Knowledge:

Welcome to the Quality Improvement Boxset by RCVS Knowledge, a series of webinars, podcasts, and video interviews for practices and practitioners.

Pam Mosedale:

Hi everyone. Today, I'm talking to Lucy Coyne. Lucy is Project Manager VetTeamAMR at RCVS Knowledge. Hi Lucy.

Lucy Coyne:

Hi Pam. Hi, thank you for inviting me to talk to you.

Pam Mosedale:

No problem. So AMR then, antimicrobial resistance. Why do you think that's such a big issue for the veterinary profession?

Lucy Coyne:

So I think antimicrobial resistance is a huge threat globally for everybody. So it's for the veterinary profession, it's for human medicine and public health and environmental health. And I think vets are such a key component of that, which is why we kind of think of it under this sort of one health term, that it is a challenge for everybody. And the veterinary profession have got such an important role to play in using antimicrobials responsibly. Yes, from the public health point of view, we want to reduce the chances of zoonotic infections and resistant infections in human medicine. But I think also, very importantly, is we want to maintain animal health and welfare. So both from the farm animal perspective, obviously ill health causes a lot of productivity issues, so maintaining effective antimicrobials contributes towards having healthy animals with a high level of welfare and good productivity. And from the pet perspective, we've obviously got the need to have effective antimicrobials to treat companion animals and equines, but also it's really important to note that we need to use them in the right cases. So it's as little as possible, but as much as necessary, and I think that's something that every vet out there shares, that's what they want to do. And it's just about providing tools and support for the veterinary profession to support vets in that sort of responsible antimicrobial use, which very much links to the VetTeamAMR projects and the projects that RCVS Knowledge are focusing on around antimicrobial use and antimicrobial resistance and looking at putting that piece in for the vet profession as part of that bigger overall society responsibility.

Pam Mosedale:

So what is VetTeamAMR then?

Lucy Coyne:

So VetTeamAMR is the overarching term for our antimicrobial stewardship projects at RCVS Knowledge, which I'm lucky enough to be involved in leading, and VetTeamAMR encompasses the existing project we've got called Farm Vet Champions, which is a really exciting project that launched in May last year. And it includes 20 hours of free CPD on the online learning platform on Moodle, so it sits alongside the other RCVS Knowledge resources, and that has 20 hours of CPD around responsible antimicrobial use for farm animal species. So it has species specific modules, it's got stuff around the wider one health issues, responsible use of medicines, things like the cascade. And then it's got some really, really exciting material that makes it quite different around communication. So it's a hugely collaborative project. We've got specialists that have done areas of research and focused on communicating with farmers and some really exciting innovative ways of maybe questioning what your status quo is and making you think differently on how you communicate with farmers around antimicrobial use. And it also signposts to really important initiatives around things like the Medicine Hub, the existing electronic medicines book and covers the importance of collecting antimicrobial use data at a farm level. So that's Farm Vet Champions to date, and we are moving into a really exciting part of Farm Vet Champions, where we will be launching a SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) goal tool for use by both individual practitioners and teams. And this is a really exciting resource to look around what you are doing in terms of your antimicrobial use behaviours and maybe ways in which you can set yourself a target to do things, for example, like meetings with farmers to discuss responsible antimicrobial use and actually setting yourself these timebound SMART targets and goals as an opportunity to kind of audit your own behaviours and actually look at how you can work either as an individual or as a team around the sort of quality improvement.

Lucy Coyne:

So it fits very much under your benchmarking umbrella and VetTeamAMR as well as so successful the success of Farm Vet Champions is in its collaborative nature, all of the major species organisations, as well as around farming, NFU, AHDB to name just a few, the full lists are on the RCVS Knowledge website for your interested in who's collaborated on that, and the success in that project is their ownership and contributions towards the project. And off the back of that, we managed to secure some additional funding from the VMD to support moving into companion animal and equine, and that project is just about to start looking at development and launch in the summer. And the initial focus for companion animal and equine will be around an antimicrobial auditing tool. And this is a tool to benchmark your antimicrobial use, so links to benchmarking, and it's all around the kind of idea of quality improvement in clinical audit. So you as a veterinary practitioner will be able to benchmark your antimicrobial use against a group of anonymous aggregated data around similar veterinary practices. So it gives you an opportunity to actually evaluate what you're doing and how that compares with the average of other practices out there. And that will be total antimicrobial use, but also you can look specifically at the HPCIA's, the highest priority, critically important antimicrobials, which is something that is an area of concern particularly. So these are antimicrobials that we do need to particularly focus on reserving for those cases that we can prove with antimicrobial culture and sensitivity that they are appropriate.

Lucy Coyne:

And that's going to be such a fantastic tool for companion animal and equine practitioners to actually have a sense of what they're using. And again, we've had really fantastic support from collaborators, and to name a few BSAVA, BEVA, SAMSoc, RUMA, the Companion Animal and Equine Group are all key members of that project, as well as we've had a lot of wider stakeholders and amazing support from the veterinary groups, the corporate groups, the independent practices, we've just had fantastic support. And there is another really exciting aspect. So we've got that sort of basic benchmarking where we can look at our antimicrobial use and contribute towards the clinical audit, but the tool is also really unique in that it has this opportunity for the owner to actually interact. So an animal owner, horse, or dog or cat or rabbit can choose to interact with the tool, and this means that we can capture their information both before the consult and as a follow up. So that again gives you that more detailed information to have a look at your clinical audit and just to understand what is happening after the consultation. Is the owner of finding the antimicrobial easy to administer? Is it an antimicrobial that maybe you you've had two choices of tablets or an injection for a cat, and there's concern that owner compliance might be an issue? Actually, it's a really good opportunity to get the owner feedback on that, on how they've found tableting their cat. It may have been a daunting prospect. Actually, it might have been completely fine and something that's been easy to do. So that's VetTeamAMR in a bit of a nutshell, really. I think we've got the established Farm Vet Champions and the success of that has very much led on to, well, me joining RCVS Knowledge and the opportunity to move into companion animal and equine is just really exciting, I think.

Pam Mosedale:

I think the whole project's really exciting. So yeah, I looked at Farm Vet Champions and that's great. And I was really interested in all the information around managing change, because that's obviously a big part of all quality improvement and by improving, you usually have to change. So I thought that was really interesting. Can you just explain to us, Lucy, what SMART goals are?

Lucy Coyne:

Yeah, so that's a really good question, because that was something that when I joined Knowledge and they were talked about, it was something I'd heard of, but maybe was not so familiar around. So a SMART goal is a goal that you can set as an individual or a team and the SMART stands for specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timebound. So it's about making the goal as specific as possible, but something that is actually within your reach. So there's no point in setting a SMART goal that you never going to achieve because you're going to fall at the first hurdle. It's about setting a SMART goal that is something that is challenging for you, but equally attainable. And the timebound aspect of it is also really important because it actually gives you a target time to achieve something.

Lucy Coyne:

And I think everybody can agree with having a deadline, as much as we dislike them, for things is actually a really good way of getting you to kind of organise what it is you are doing, and I think that really adds to helping and supporting time management and the team aspect as well. So we thought a lot of around what is a team in veterinary practice and which was one of the reasons why VetTeamAMR is called VetTeamAMR. It's recognising that it isn't just the vet or the RVN in isolation, it's part of the wider team. You've got front of house staff, you've got supporting staff, you've got care assistants, veterinary technicians, that are all part of the need to look at quality improvement, looking to antimicrobial use, everybody plays a really important role. And we thought about teams and what a team might be, and a team we decided is not restricted to just a veterinary practice. It could be a smaller team within a particular practice. It could be a team within a branch practice. It could be a team

across a few different practices, for example. It could be a dairy specific team. It could be a team that that is including other members of your RVNs, your vets, it's whatever a team means to you to set your SMART goals. It's not a prerequisite that you must all be in the same location because it accepts veterinary practices are all very different, different species, different aspects, different areas of the country. So it's the idea of just encouraging collaborative working and however your team looks

Pam Mosedale:

That's exactly what we want to do with all our quality improvement activities, Lucy, absolutely. Make small changes, which in the end can lead to bigger change and bring the whole team along with it. That's really important, isn't it? Because some members of the team maybe don't get included as much in some of these things, like for instance, reception team, et cetera. So I think it's great that that you're including the whole team. So, how will this actually work? How will practices be able to submit data to this VetTeamAMR?

Lucy Coyne:

I'll just cover Farm Vet Champions first. So Farm Vet Champions is already there. It's something that's hosted on the Moodle platform, it's linked from the RCVS Knowledge website, and that is a learning platform that is available for anybody in the veterinary team to sign up to and benefit from the online CPD. We do have a slight distinction to call yourself a Farm Vet Champion, you need to be either vet or an RVN, but that doesn't mean that your reception staff can't benefit from some of the learning materials. There's things that are really relevant for things like the dispensing of medicines, for instance. In fact, Pam has done some fantastic modules on that as well. In order to access the SMART goal team, if you're already signed up to the Moodle platform, once that is live, then that will be something that you can automatically click on. You will have the opportunity to invite people to be a part of your team. So if they're not already signed up to the Moodle platform, this is a really good opportunity for them to learn around and access the online learning materials that are already there. So that's Farm Vet Champions. The antimicrobial auditing tool will be something that we will have an access very similar to the Canine Cruciate Registry. We will, once it is launched, we'll have a website available for you to sign up to, and that will offer as many options for data flow as is feasible. So we're aware of how busy vets are, that the whole team are, and the plan is to make this as easily accessible as possible with as many options for uploading data as possible. This is something that is likely to evolve over time as we're able to work with, for example, setting it up directly from practice management systems, if that's possible.

Lucy Coyne:

We will be providing certainly as many routes as possible to upload data. So there will be a manual option. There'll be a CSV file option where you can download from your practice management system and put it into a template to upload. We are working with some really supportive practice management systems that are really keen to set up that automated option. We've also got collaborations with other routes so that we can offer as many options as possible. And it's the case of if the option that you would like is not available now, hopefully it will be in the future and we will also make sure we've got enough information available for whatever route that you are choosing to put your data in, whichever route that is, make sure that we've got the supporting information around that. So that will be something to watch this space for, but the owner interaction option as well will be something that will happen again through an online portal. And they will then be given follow up questionnaires through email links, so that will all be automated. We've got fantastic collaborators working with us on that, who this is what they do and they've been fantastic. So I have no doubt that it will also have the support that we need. If there's any queries or questions as well, we can have that directed to software specialists or to RCVS Knowledge

where we've got a fantastic team. We've got some fantastic RVNs and vets actually within Knowledge, which is also really beneficial to help support vets in being able to use this. And it's the focus as well on this as a clinical audit. This is something for you as a practice owner, a vet at a practice to actually just go and say, right, well, we already do audit. This is something new that we can look at. This is different. We've not been able to benchmark antimicrobial use before. I think it's a really exciting opportunity.

Pam Mosedale:

Absolutely. And I think you're right that the key to it, as far as the practices are concerned will be for it to be as easy as possible to input the data because people don't have a lot of time, so I think that's great that you've considered that. And yeah clinical audit, they should be doing that. Practices now at general practice level who are in the Practice Standards Scheme should be doing clinical audit. So this is an opportunity for them to be doing some audits and as long as they're following up on and looking at their benchmarks and seeing where they can improve and then making improvements, that's exactly the kind of thing that they can show to the Practice Standards assesses when they visit. So, you know, it's a win-win and the CPD around it too, there's going to be the kind of things you said as for Farm Vet Champions, how to manage the change?

Lucy Coyne:

Yes. Yeah. So I think it's also really important to think you've got the antimicrobial auditing tool, and the plan is to move to doing educational material for companion animal and equine as well, that actually you've got the opportunity then to assess an intervention within a practice for your own clinical audit. So you can collect your data prior to that intervention, which may be undertaking additional CPD around antimicrobial use. And then you've got the opportunity to actually go through the clinical audit cycle and see the effect of that intervention, which is something that, to date, it's not been available to practices and it's worthwhile as well. I want to emphasize that this is a tool that is available to all companion animal and equine practices, and that's been a huge focus of RCVS Knowledge and our collaborators on making this as accessible as possible. It's not linked with one particular practice group or a particular buy-in group or whatever, it's for everybody. And I think that support has been shown. We've just had a couple of really exciting stakeholder group meetings to show the SMART goal tool and the attendance we had was just fantastic. People are interested in this as a resource, which is free to use for practices, and I think it's just something that will just grow with time and will evolve with time. We will, as I say, continually, look at how we can make things easier for practices to engage with this.

Pam Mosedale:

It's being able to measure it, isn't it? In the past, we've maybe thought, oh, are we using too many of this particular antibiotic, but when you can actually measure it, then you can make the changes and measure it again. And then teams can see how these things are helping. And that's the important thing, or even see when things aren't working too.

Lucy Coyne:

In the conversations around this, I've had really interesting conversations with really proactive practitioners that have actually gone and done this over their own time and have historically looked back and have said, oh, we thought that we were using less of a particular antibiotic. We thought we were focusing around this and they found that data has either shown yes, that the changes they thought have happened or have actually shown, oh, actually our antimicrobial use has been quite static. So it's then given them that information to say, okay, so we thought we'd done an intervention, but maybe we

didn't do it as we thought. Let's see if we can do this again. Let's see if we can do better. Let's see if we can change how we are using antimicrobials? Let's see if we can be that champion. We want to be that practice that can stand up and say, look what we've achieved. And it's for your own clinical audit. But I think there's just nothing better than being able to see how you as a practice and as a group and as a team have evolved with time and how quality improvement and clinical audit has played such an important role in that.

Pam Mosedale:

Yeah. I mean, definitely having the information is giving you the power to do these things, isn't it. But I'm also really interested in the idea of getting clients involved. I think that's quite novel really. So the clients will get emailed, will they, is that how that will work?

Lucy Coyne:

So, yeah, clients will be invited by the practice. The practice can say, this is something we are doing and give them information around it. We will do a detailed information sheet so that clients can fully understand clinical audit and the quality improvement that the practice is wanting to be involved in. And then clients can choose to sign up. They can choose not to, but if they choose to sign up, then they will be sent a questionnaire to fill out with additional details. And it enables the practice to collect a bit more detailed information. So for example, a practice is interested in antimicrobial use around diarrhoea in dogs, and they're potentially flagged that as an area that they would like to review what they're doing currently. It gives you the opportunity then to capture the owners reported information of what their concern is, what's their history that's brought them to the consult.

Lucy Coyne:

You've then got the data from the consult, and then you've got the follow up questionnaire so that you can find out did the symptoms resolve in the dog? Did they not? Did they have to come back? And you can then link that dog's journey through their treatment and their antimicrobial use. And that then gives you a bit more information around quality improvement. You can have a look at that and say, oh, actually perhaps in some cases, antimicrobials are prescribed for dogs that maybe we could review and they're not necessary. Or you can then look back and say, okay, we've had better clinical resolution using antimicrobials in X, Y and Z cases. So it's just an opportunity to collect a bit more qualitative information, to reflect on that. And I think it's quite an exciting opportunity. And certainly there are some really, really enthusiastic proactive owners that I think will be really excited to contribute towards clinical audit and quality improvement in their veterinary practices.

Pam Mosedale:

Certainly when I've spoken to owners about that, they've been keen. And when I spoke to Ross about using the Canine Cruciate Registry, he said that he hadn't had any clients that he'd asked to get involved in that refuse, so far. So that's great. And I think there is a potential there with clients, because in human medicine, they're using patient reported outcome measures a lot more these days, PROMS they call them. So I think that's a whole new area for us to, to get involved in, which is great. And it'd be really interesting to know what the compliance is with some owners when they have to give antibiotics.

Lucy Coyne:

Yes. And I fully appreciate the difficulties in tableting a cat and I, as a practitioner, probably sympathised less than now I am a cat owner. And I think it's a really good way of sort of capturing that

information around how owners are finding administering antimicrobials at home, which is something we don't have that information about at the moment.

Pam Mosedale:

No. And as a dog owner, I can easily tablet my dog, but remembering to carry on and finish course is a whole different thing, once the dog is apparently better and I can sympathise with clients on that one as well. Oh, that's been amazing, Lucy, thank you so much. Your enthusiasm for all this really shines through. And I think it's such exciting times, so everybody just have a look on the RCVS Knowledge website at the AMR Hub and we look forward to you all joining in soon.

Lucy Coyne:

Yes. Thank you. And we're also always more than happy and really excited to hear directly from anybody that wants a bit of further information about the project and watch this space, because there will be a lot of exciting news coming out in the coming months on this project.

Pam Mosedale:

And we'd love to have some case examples too, won't we, from the people that have applied that knowledge that they've gained from AMR Hub.

Lucy Coyne:

Absolutely. And that is a key component as we are moving forward on Farm Vet Champions and will be on companion animal and equine as well. One of the best ways to learn is to learn from others. We held a workshop at BCVA recently and just having vets coming up to us and saying, oh, from Farm Vet Champions, I saw this and then I thought about this and I implemented this change and it's been really positive and we want to hear those from practitioners. Because one of the best ways to learn is actually to learn from people who have done that on the ground and can tell you the success, and the failures in some cases, but it's about those successes and celebrating those and looking at different ways of working, just questioning the status quo. It's very easy to get into habitual behaviours. But it's really quite exciting, I think, to have these tools from Knowledge, to actually use those to move forward and look at how you can change what you're doing and think about things in a different way

Pam Mosedale:

And all our QI tools from Knowledge, they're all there free and that's what gives us job satisfaction, isn't it Lucy, knowing that people are using them out in practice

Lucy Coyne:

Oh definitely. Yeah. And I love when we, and I get feedback. I had feedback, just an email saying how wonderful Farm Vet Champions is this week. And it really does lift you because you just think this is fantastic. Everything that we are doing and we're building and we're working with. And I think, as I say, I want to emphasise the collaboration on the projects is absolutely fantastic and it's absolutely essential to their success. So yeah, we're also, any further interested stakeholders in either projects as well, more than happy, please get in touch

Pam Mosedale:

And VMD have been amazing, haven't they, funding a lot of this.

Lucy Coyne:

Oh, absolutely. VMD are super, super keen and interested and really excited about the use of the tool around clinical audit. It's exactly their area of interest, but they're also just there to support the veterinary profession. And it's fantastic that we can work with them and we can deliver as RCVS Knowledge because we sit in such a unique position, that we can sit and work with everybody to deliver such exciting learning materials and tools for clinical audit and quality improvement.

Pam Mosedale:

That's lovely. Thank you Lucy. Thank you so much for your time.

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