

IVNA 4th Annual Conference



The Mullingar Park Hotel played host for a second year to the IVNA's conference dedicated to Veterinary Nursing. This year was sponsored once again by Allianz, Royal Canin and Zoetis. Here, outgoing IVNA chairperson Georgina Self, reviews the weekend's programme and introduces the winners of this year's Nurse, Student and Support Staff Awards

THEMED SATURDAY

This year, most of the Saturday lectures were related to reproduction. This is a complicated topic we are often called on to give advice about to owners of breeding age animals. Opening the conference, in a change to the planned talk on cat neutering programmes, Gillian Bird of the DSPCA updated our knowledge of welfare topics and specifically the new Animal Welfare Bill, which is currently progressing to law. Gillian also gave us all an insight into the hard work carried out by Irish animal charities such as the DSPCA in educating pet owners regarding the care and responsibilities they have for the animals in their care.

Marijke Beltman DVM, PhD, Dip. ECAR, then gave the first of two talks on canine reproduction, refreshing our

knowledge of the oestrus cycle and discussing the various methods of detecting ovulation and pregnancy.

We had a short presentation on some new veterinary research from European surgical diplomate, Shane Guerin, who explained the theory behind and methods used, in a one-year Irish study on MRSA levels in veterinary staff. This included a 'CSI' moment when we all swabbed out our own nostrils for the survey. Our veterinary colleagues have already been sampled at VICAS and the survey hope to obtain more samples at other conferences later in the year. This is interesting research into the prevalence of resistant Staph. Aureus on veterinary personnel and will hopefully raise awareness of hygiene and judicious antibiotic use once results are analysed and published in 2014.

Following the IVNA AGM and the lunch break, during which, delegates got a longer opportunity to visit the well attended trade exhibition, Renagh Kelly DVM gave a well illustrated talk on parturition, including video footage of normal labour (something we rarely get to see in practice) and a practical guide to what is 'normal' and when intervention is required.

Claire Hemmings VN spoke on behalf of Royal Canin about the nutritional aspects of growth and changing requirements of animals post neuter.

Then Marijke was back for her second and the final lecture of the day where she explained the problems that occur in un-spayed bitches and the current advice and treatment.

SUNDAY PRACTICAL SESSIONS

This year, two practicals were run concurrently on the popular topics of anaesthesia and surgical skills. It was hoped that the seminars would give delegates practice-friendly advice on techniques and equipment that nurses could take back to work and try.

Grainne Lally MVB Cert. VA, led the anaesthesia session, which was all about monitoring aids and how to use them effectively. Delegates were given an overview talk and then were able to examine ECGs, pulse oximeters, capnographs and NIBP monitors and see how they are applied. Case scenarios were suggested at each station so that delegates could discuss abnormal readings, their causes and how to treat. Whilst not many of us are lucky enough to have access to a range of monitors in practice, knowing the information that can be obtained from correct usage and how to interpret it will hopefully assist nurses in encouraging their practice to invest in appropriate technology in the future.

The surgical skills session, sponsored by Boehringer, was organised and run by Sinead Sheerin RVN using a host of models she had constructed herself. These were used to demonstrate the correct nursing techniques in the use of chest drains, feeding tubes and urinary catheters. A range of helpful sponsors including C&M provided a full range of drains, catheters, tubes and other equipment for use on the day. Delegates were also able to see and try current recommendations for surgical site preparation for orthopaedic, ophthalmic and oral surgeries plus an easy and cheap method of providing local analgesia for soft tissue surgery sites.



Sinead Sheerin ran the surgical skills session.



Marguerite Treacy, Royal Canin (left), and Georgina Self, outgoing IVNA Chairperson (right), are pictured with Mairead Deasy who was announced as Veterinary Nurse of the Year.

SATURDAY EVENING SOCIAL

Over one hundred delegates, company representatives, committee members and award nominees gathered for an enjoyable evening of dining, dancing and celebration. The after-dinner guest speakers were representatives of the IVNA's chosen charity for 2013, Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland. Their fundraising manager, Una Griffin, introduced the charity and then gave the stage to Neil and Earl. Earl has been placed with Neil's family to assist his son. Neil gave a very personal and moving account of the difference Earl has made to their life.

The main event of the evening was the award ceremony. There had been plenty of worthy nominees to choose from in each category but the top six in each were selected by the IVNA committee and passed onto the sponsoring companies to make the final choice.

The IVNA is delighted to announce that the Veterinary Nurse of the Year 2013 is Mairead Deasy of Gilabbey Veterinary Hospital. Mairead was an easy choice as winner for Royal Canin who noted that as well as the content, the number of nominations she received made her stand out from the other nominees.

Allianz were the sponsors of the Veterinary Nurse Student award and their winner was Lisa Whyte, a student at Dundalk IT.

Finally Tina O'Brien was the outstanding finalist in the opinion of Zoetis and she wins the Support Staff of the year award.

The winners received a crystal trophy and an hotel break voucher. Those who had nominated the winners were placed in a draw to receive their own prize voucher.

Congratulations to all the winners and well done to everyone who was nominated. Their stories were inspirational. Check out the IVNA website for details of the winning nominations and more pictures of the weekend.

NEXT YEAR

The newly reorganised committee, chaired by Eilis Nichol RVN, plan to review feedback on this year's conference and start to plan next years shortly. If any members wish to join the committee or have any suggestions for topics and speakers we would be delighted to hear from them.