



NZVA
New Zealand Veterinary Association
Te Pae Kīrehe



COMPLEMENTARY
MEDICINE
VETERINARIANS
of the NZVA

Complementary Veterinary Medicine Newsletter

Summer 2025

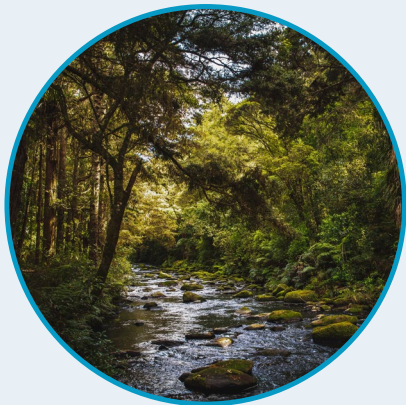


Special Interest Branch newsletter of the New Zealand Veterinary Association

Case Study:
Integrating
Acupuncture in the
Management of
Masticatory Muscle
Myositis

Integrative
Vet Student
Conference
October 2025

Integrative
Veterinary
Conference
Australia 2024 -
Part III

**President:**

Liza Schneider

Secretary/Treasurer:

Rose Unsworth

Editor:

Jacqui Snell

Committee:

Wendy Dixon
Viv Harris
Renate Haveman
Prabhpreet Kaur
Jacqui Snell

Sub-Committee:

Rebecca Brown
Rochelle Kerr

Contact - Email: holistic@vets.org.nz

In this issue**Presidents Report****Rose's Blog****Integrating Acupuncture in the Management of Masticatory Muscle Myositis: A Case Report****Monograph Acupuncture Point – LI 11 – Qu Chi (Pool at the Bend, He Sea, Earth Point)****Integrative Vet Student Conference October 2025****Integrative Veterinary Conference Australia 2024 – Part III****Celebrating our Success 2025 Amazing Achievers****SustainaVet****Important Updates****Liza's Strategy Day Presentation****Integrative Vet Students Member Perks – Please Spread the Word**

Complementary Veterinary Medicine Branch of the NZVA

Our mission

To provide educational opportunities and support vets, as well as the public to make use of integrative medicine, thus encouraging sustainable healthcare options and working towards a healthier planet.

President's Report October 2025

Our 2025 NZVA annual Strategy Day was one of my NZVA highlights for this year. Our NZVA leadership gathered in Wellington. The theme of our strategy day was collegiality, which is one of our branches' key priorities, the other being One Health. It was a wonderful opportunity to understand the challenges and opportunities of our various special interest groups and brainstorm strategies for our organisation and profession. In addition to representing our CVMB's priorities, I was invited to present One Health in the context of collegiality, which I was thrilled and honoured to be able to do.

One Health, although viewed by some as something intangible, is a model of healthcare that vets, especially integrative vets, apply consistently by considering the needs of the animal, the associated people and the environment. It presents an incredible opportunity for vets to drive positive change in our society, given that we are at the centre of this model, and many more including:

- › Our veterinary profession to take up and capitalise upon having a leadership role in society as acknowledged by Hon Andrew Hoggard at our 2025 annual conference with his words "Looking ahead, climate change and sustainability are rising priorities, not just here but for our trading partners too. Veterinarians, with your deep understanding of the interconnectedness of animals, humans, and the environment, are uniquely placed to be a part of this conversation, and I believe your insights are key".
- › Further collaboration and the integration of diversity and inclusion acknowledging kaitiakitanga/guardianship of our environment.
- › Inspiring (instead of just surviving!) our broader profession, especially our younger generation who hold environmental sustainability in such high regard which will help to unite our profession (including veterinary paraprofessionals).
- › Encouraging congruent values of collegiality/respect and kindness/philanthropy and capitalising on the role that our veterinary profession has as facilitators of care and compassion in our communities (which are integral to a sustainable future).
- › Application to contextualised/pragmatic care which is of increasing importance in veterinary practice acknowledging an individualised approach that respects the needs of the animal, the person/people involved and the environment in which they reside.
- › Evolving our current Climate Change activities to sustainable and ultimately Regenerative practices.
- › A framework to simplify our very complex world and stay united in our "rapidly changing veterinary landscape".

I am delighted with the positive feedback that I received about this presentation and look forward to working on this further in 2026.

Thank you to all our fabulous advertisers and contributors, to Jacqui and Rose for compiling this newsletter and to Samuel Maxwell, our NZVA Graphic Designer, for collating it so beautifully. Thank you for having the courage to "think outside of the square" and integrate health-care solutions to improve the health and well-being of animals, their people and our planet.

Wishing you everything of the very best for a superb festive season and peaceful and prosperous 2026! I look very forward to working together and driving further positive change in the new year.

Liza Schneider.

CVMB President.

Rose's Blog



Vet nurses, techs, animal carers. Possibly some of the most undervalued members of the veterinary workforce. As someone who has spent a number of years providing veterinary locum services I probably see a different side to their critical role in ensuring the smooth running and functionality of a significant number of clinics. When you take on a sole charge practice, often without having met the practice owner (the joys of the internet and recruitment agencies). You turn up and the practice owner has left for their desperately needed break then it literally all comes down to the rest of the team.

Nurses who have been up skilled and / or allowed to utilise their extensive skill base make the take over a piece of cake. The practice runs like clockwork. As the vet you are part of a well choreographed day.

Admissions, consent forms, laboratory submissions, frequency of follow ups, repeat prescriptions, current vaccination and Spey/neuter protocols are part of every staff members knowledge base.

Blood sampling, preparation for anaesthesia, X ray taking, all part of their role expectations. In many practices nurse consulting and post op check ups run in parallel with the veterinary consultations, ensuring good use of both time and resources.

The emergence and development of veterinary nursing skills and capabilities has been something that I have been part of throughout my career and it's teams that work together that make turning up for work a positive experience. Staff, clients and patients all benefit from being part of a team.

You are probably wondering where this is going to. The worst locum roles are those where staff, all of whom are highly trained and skilled, are under-utilised to the

point where they could best be described as glorified handmaidens. Practice systems are often absent or minimal. The vet knows how everything works so protocols are lightweight if indeed they exist at all.

Reinventing the wheel scarcely sums it up. Every action or decision is reliant on you and you alone. Nothing happens unless you initiate and then complete the task. It's exhausting and stressful.

So, this is my shout out to every practitioner out there. Recognise the people you work with. Empower them, work with them, not over them. End result happiness, staff retention, and you actually will gain so much from them. Sharing and caring are the keys to actually wanting to go into work.

For those of you are wondering where this is coming from. I have just done the worst locum of my life where nobody apart from the vet knew anything. I am still in recovery. But I haven't lost my sense of humour.

And FYI, that is Desanka, a vet nurse in the Kimberleys working for Kane Wildlife Rescue positioning a wedge tail eagle for X rays. She has done this so many times and the reassurance of expertise and competence she provides is invaluable when it's your first time.

And equally importantly a vet tech who is happy to take on the enemas on a Friday night as you were hoping to go out but don't want to smell like sh*** she hasn't got plans and is a great team player.





totoniks

NEW ZEALAND.COM
Licence No.101020



Add nutritious hydration to every meal

Mix our irresistible natural formula with water and pour over your dog's food for optimal hydration + benefits. Refrigerate what's left in our reusable glass bottle



Functional formulas to suit your dog

Appetite and fussy eaters – **original** venison recipe
Hip and joint mobility – with **green-lipped mussel**
Gut health – with soothing **bone broth**



Suitable for all ages and breeds

Whether you've got a young pup, an active hound or a doddery dog, Totoniks is safe and easy on their system

BLOODY BRILLIANT!

Irresistible venison blood food toppers

Dogs instinctively love the taste and benefit from our hydrating, protein-packed nutrition



Protein powerhouse

Rich in essential protein that's often missing from dog food, plus IGF-1 for tissue repair, alongside a range of crucial vitamins, minerals and micronutrients



Good for the planet too

Ingredients are **natural** and **sustainably sourced**, plus we tread lightly on the earth by using recyclable packaging – looking after dogs and the planet at the same time



Outstanding value for money

We've made sure Totoniks is **great value** – add natural superfoods to your dog's diet without breaking the bank

Buisness for sale

Animal Health Limited in Marlborough is for sale for the first time in 23 years. This would be suitable as a part-time business for someone with an interest in nutrition and an holistic approach to animal care. There is an opportunity to increase the marketing of Joint Flex and extend the range of nutritional supplements to support animal health. Formulations to support the gut, liver, kidneys, Skin, bladder, mouth, ears and food supplements for growth and bone development are available with a potential for several other products. Information on cancer therapy using Helixor is also available.

Enquiries to Dr Chris Piper

Email: chris@greatandsmall.co.nz. Ph +64 274 985404

www.greatandsmall.co.nz

Note this is a business for sale and not a practice for sale as previously advertised in vetscript.



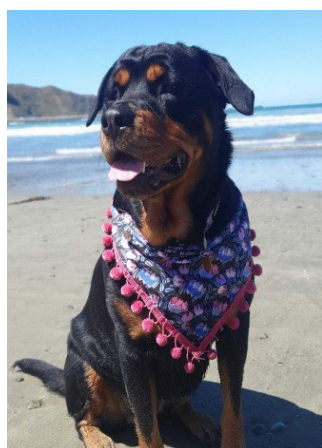
Integrating Acupuncture in the Management of Masticatory Muscle Myositis: A Case Report

Dr Prabhpreet Kaur BVSc, BSc (Vet Research)(Hons), CVA, MRCVS

Case Summary

Patient: Bonnie, a 3-year-old female spayed Rottweiler.

Presenting Complaint: Inability to open mouth fully (2 cm between incisors).



Pictures of Bonnie before MMM

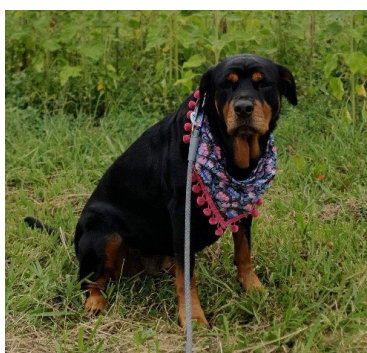
Bonnie presented with suspected Masticatory Muscle Myositis (MMM) following an episode under general anaesthesia where her jaw could not be opened.

On examination, she was bright and alert with symmetrical facial musculature, no palpable lymphadenopathy, and no evidence of swelling or pain. Oral examination was limited, however mild plaque was present.

Radiographs showed no abnormalities of the temporomandibular joints, ear canals, or sinuses. Bloodwork was within normal limits. Under GA, restricted jaw opening persisted, suggesting a muscular rather than mechanical or joint pathology.

The differential diagnoses included immune mediated MMM (most likely), TMJ ankylosis a retrobulbar abscess or neoplasia (less likely as they were ruled out by imaging).

A muscle biopsy was conducted and immunosuppressive therapy was commenced. The client chose to proceed with acupuncture as an adjunct therapy once the MMM was better managed using immunosuppressive treatment. Bonnie experienced adverse reactions to some of her medications, so they needed to be gradually reduced and carefully tapered to prevent further issues. TCVM was introduced to support and help accelerate her recovery.



Pictures of Bonnie before MMM

TCVM Evaluation

From a Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine perspective, Bonnie exhibited a Heat Bi syndrome

pattern. Her pulses were surging; the tongue was red and joints all felt hot. She had a long history of arthritic issues and skin lesions with redness, rawness, heat and moist pyoderma, which tie into heat signs. She would often pant and seek cool surfaces to lie on.

Treatment Principle:

Clear Heat, resolve Qi and Blood stagnation, and tonify Qi to support recovery and comfort.

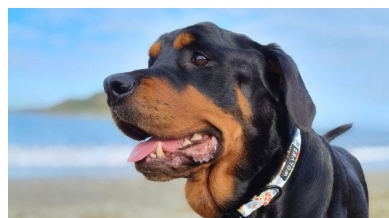
Acupuncture Protocol

Technique: Dry needle acupuncture (15 minutes per session).

Frequency: Once weekly for 4 sessions.

Acupuncture Point	TCVM Function
GV14	Clears Heat, Regulates Wei Qi
LI11, LI14	Clears Heat, activates circulation on the Yangming Channels
ST44	Clears Stomach Channel Heat
BL20, BL23	Tonify Spleen and Kidney Qi
Bai Hui	Tonifies Qi, Harmonises Yang
Haemoacupuncture: Er Jian, Wei Jian	Dispels Heat, Invigorates Circulation

Bonnie tolerated all treatments calmly and without distress.



Pictures of Bonnie during treatment with TCVM and Western medicine. Note the marked muscle atrophy in the temporal area.

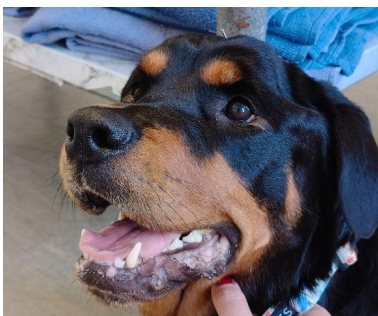
Clinical Response

After the first treatment, panting decreased noticeably, joints were cooler to the touch and the owners observed that Bonnie no longer sought cool areas at

home. By the second session, the musculature around her face started to fill out a bit more.

Over the four-week course, these improvements were sustained. Mechanical limitation of jaw opening continued to improve and Bonnie's comfort, thermoregulation, and demeanour improved

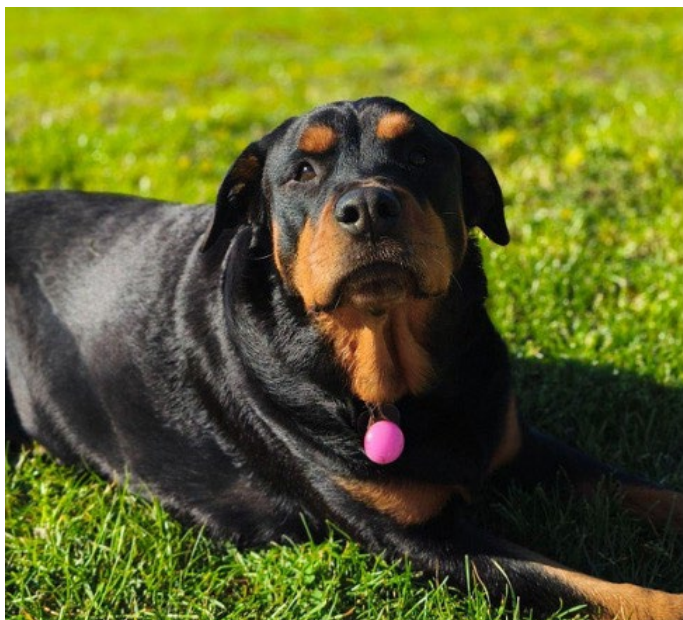
significantly. At the last consultation, aside from a small amount of muscle loss around the face, her jaw mobility had nearly returned to normal. Her behaviour was good, and she appeared generally very happy in herself.



No adverse effects were reported.

Discussion

MMM is an autoimmune, inflammatory myopathy characterized by antibodies targeting type 2M muscle fibres. Conventional therapy focuses on immunosuppression to control inflammation and prevent fibrosis. However, acupuncture may serve as a valuable adjunct to improve circulation, reduce inflammation, and modulate immune response.



Picture of Bonnie at the completion of treatment. The facial muscles have not yet returned completely to normal, but they have shown significant improvement.

TCVM Perspective

Acupuncture at points on the Yangming, Bladder, and Governing Vessel meridians helps:

- › Regulate Qi and Blood circulation to the masticatory muscles.
- › Disperse Heat and stagnation.
- › Support underlying Spleen–Kidney Qi deficiencies that predispose to chronic inflammation.

Conclusion

This case demonstrates that acupuncture, guided by TCVM pattern diagnosis, can offer a safe and effective adjunct to Western management of Masticatory Muscle Myositis and that when used in a complementary way, TCVM and western medicine combined can give you powerful results.

References

1. Melmed C., et al. (2004) Masticatory Muscle Myositis: Pathogenesis, Diagnosis, and Treatment. VetNeuromuscular Notes, UCSD.
2. Xie, H., & Preast, V. (2013). Xie's Veterinary Acupuncture. 2nd ed. Wiley-Blackwell.



Focused on Veterinary Diagnostics

FASTest® CDV-CPV Ab_{ad us. vet.}

Specific antibody and vaccination diagnostics

Fast test for the **qualitative** detection of antibodies against **Canine Parvovirus** or **Distempervirus** antibodies in whole blood, plasma or serum of the dog

TitreCheck – determination of the protective status

Core vaccination requirements

TitreCheck

Response to Primary Course Vaccination

TitreCheck before revaccination
(adverse vaccination event)

TitreCheck

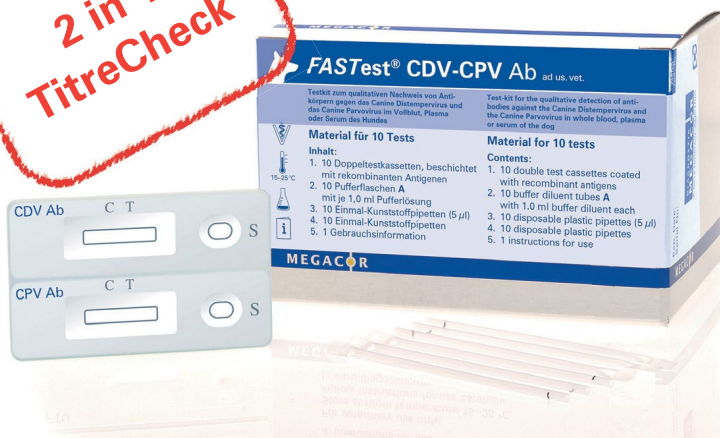
Management of disease outbreaks
in shelters

Annual health check concept



- Simple test procedure, fast and reliable results in 10 minutes
- Storage at room temperature (15–25 °C)
- Available in packs of 2 or 10 tests

**2 in 1
TitreCheck**



Distribution:

Animal Solutions Ltd.

Phone: 09 948 4701

Mobile: 02 2066 2075

www.animalsolutions.co.nz

**Animal
Solutions**



Monograph Acupuncture Point – LI 11 – Qu Chi (Pool at the Bend, He Sea, Earth Point)



Dr Jodi Van Tine, MA, DVM, GDVA, GDVCHM, California, USA

extensor carpi radialis and common digital extensor muscles, most easily located with slight flexion of the elbow. Its innervation is supplied by the cranial cutaneous antebrachial nerve, with the superficial radial lying underneath.

LI 11 clears Wind Heat in the entire body, cools and regulates Blood, regulates Qi, resolves Damp and loosens Phlegm, relieves itching and benefits tendons and joints.

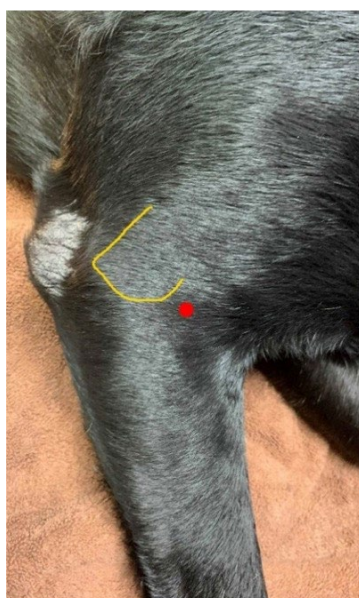
As a He Sea (Earth) and Mother (tonification) point, it can be especially useful in treating deficiencies.

Stimulating LI 11 with cold showed a significantly decreased pruritic response in a

Dr Jodi Van Tine is a professor for the CIVT acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine courses.

Large Intestine 11 (LI 11) is a quintessential acupuncture point for treating immune disorders with a wide variety of applications including immune deficiencies, inflammation, infection and fever.

LI 11 is a He Sea point, located in the lateral aspect of the transverse crease of the elbow, immediately cranial to the lateral humeral condyle between the



mouse model of chemically-induced histamine-mediated pruritis.

In a study on atopic dermatitis, needle stimulation of LI 11 resulted in reduction of serum IgE levels and production of pro-inflammatory cytokines suggesting its usefulness in moderating inflammatory reactions in an allergic immune response.

References

IVAS Canine Required Acupuncture points (January 2013).

Matern, C 2012, Acupuncture for Dogs and Cats, A Pocket Atlas, Thieme, New York.

Park, J-Y et al. 2013, 'Effects of Acupuncture on 1-Chloro-2,4-dinitrochlorobenzene-Induced Atopic Dermatitis', Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Volume 2013, Article ID 982095, 8 pages <http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2013/982095>.

Schoen, A.M 2011, Veterinary Acupuncture, Ancient Art to Modern Medicine, Mosby, Inc St Louis MO.

Tsai et al. 2014, BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine, 14:341.

<http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6882/14/341> viewed 12 March 2022.

Xie, H & Preast, V 2007, Xie's Veterinary Acupuncture (2007) Blackwell Publishing, Ames Iowa.

These videos, lecture notes, PowerPoint slides and other materials are protected under copyright in 2025 to the College of Integrative Veterinary Therapies PO BOX 352, Yeppoon, Queensland 4703, Australia. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, emailing or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher CIVT.



NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT FOR SKIN & COAT HEALTH



SUPPORT SKIN AND COAT HEALTH FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Biologically Appropriate ORIJEN™ Fish Recipes are packed with sustainably sourced, whole fish ingredients that provide balanced omega 3 and 6 essential fatty acids. Increased dietary intake of these fatty acids has been shown to support skin and coat health, along with many other aspects of overall pet wellness.

With fish as the only source of animal protein, these recipes are nutritious options for pets with diet sensitivities to common pet food ingredients such as chicken and red meats.

REQUEST FREE SAMPLES AND INFORMATION
To learn more and request FREE samples, please scan the QR code and complete your details.



RECIPE	Orijen Dog Six Fish	Orijen Dog Small Breed Marine Fish	Orijen Cat Six Fish
Crude Protein	38 %	40 %	40 %
Fat Content	18 %	15 %	19 %
Omega 3 (MINIMUM)	2.1 %	2 %	2.1 %
Omega 6 (MINIMUM)	2.1 %	2 %	2.1 %
Omega 3-6 Ratio	1 : 1	1 : 1	1 : 1
DHA/EPA	0.7% / 0.5%	0.5% / 0.5%	0.8% / 0.5%
Animal Ingredients	Fish	Fish	Fish

www.NaturesKi.co.nz

sales@NaturesKi.co.nz | 0800 ORIJEN

Integrative Vet Student Conference

October 2025

Our Integrative Vet Students Club hosted their annual conference in Palmerston North on 11 October. The event was very well attended by our enthusiastic students.



Thank you to Jojo Von Riserd and Leahni Ross, our student organisers who report "It was an incredible day that brought together passionate vet students eager to learn more about holistic and integrative approaches to animal health.



We were so privileged to be joined by two amazing veterinarians, Dr. Viv Harris and Dr. Prabz Kaur, who shared their wealth of knowledge, experience, and genuine enthusiasm for integrative veterinary medicine.

Attendees received two generous goodie bags filled with fantastic products from some incredible companies. A huge thank you to all of our wonderful sponsors, and a very special thank you to Raw Essentials and My Beau for your key role in

helping us host this event.

Your generosity truly brought the day together (and the goodie bags were definitely a crowd favourite!) Overall, it was a wonderful reminder of what our club is all about, connecting curious, forward thinking veterinary students who are passionate about exploring different ways



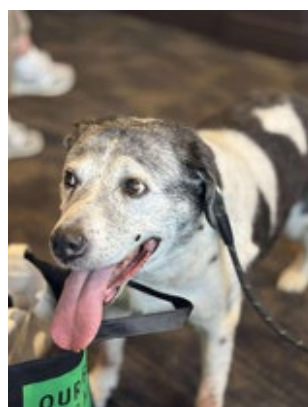
we can enhance animal wellbeing through integrative medicine."

Post-treatment reassessment revealed:

- › Improved spinal mobility, including restored lateral flexion symmetry.
- › Resolution of spinal discomfort upon palpation.
- › Normalised proprioception in the left hind limb.
- › Improved gait with consistent weight bearing on the affected limb.



Lexy has since continued with follow-up treatments and maintained full use of her left hind limb. She has returned to normal daily activities, including walks in the park and playtime with her sister.



Integrative Veterinary Conference Australia 2024 – Part III

Nutritional Medicine for Small Mammal Herbivores

Dr Megan Kearney – BVSc
MVS (Conservation Medicine)
VetMFHom DipHerbMed.

Nutritional medicine is the use of food as medicine, particularly for small herbivorous mammals like rabbits, guinea pigs, koalas, possums, and wombats. Plant fibre is key to the health and wellbeing of hindgut fermenting herbivorous mammals. Inappropriate nutrition can lead to severe issues like dental disease, malnutrition, dysbiosis, gut stasis, enterotoxaemia and other diseases.



- › Herbivores are animals that primarily eat the fibrous parts of plants. Their diets are high in fibre and low in protein. Monogastric herbivorous mammals are hindgut fermenters.
- › Small hindgut fermenting herbivores have gastrointestinal tracts adapted to their diet that is poor in quality, high in fibre and low in protein. For example guinea pigs are coprophagic and need dietary vitamin C, rabbits are caecal fermenters, have a rapid transit time and produce caecotrophs, koalas have the largest caecum relative to body size and wombats have a gut transit time of 3 to 8 days.
- › Hindgut fermenters have a highly diverse microbiome that is essential for the digestion of cellulose.
- › Caecal fermentation releases volatile fatty acids (VFA), providing energy, while coprophagy and caecotrophy allow small herbivores to consume volatile fatty acids, amino acids, and certain vitamins.

Common Nutritional Diseases associated with inappropriate nutrition:

- › **Dental Disease:** Low-fibre or high-carbohydrate diets and nutritional deficiencies can lead to malocclusion, molar overgrowth, abscesses, and osteopenia.
- › **Gastrointestinal Stasis:** Various health conditions and poor diet (e.g. insufficient fibre reducing VFA production, high carbohydrates) can cause gut

dysbiosis and gas build up.

- › **Dysbiosis & Enteritis:** Excess carbohydrates, plus lower fibre can cause bacterial overgrowth of coliforms and a potentially fatal enterotoxaemia, enteritis or Tyzzer's disease.
- › **Obesity:** High-energy diets can cause hepatic lipidosis, gut stasis, pododermatitis, osteoarthritis, lower urinary tract disease, and pregnancy toxemia.
- › **Urolithiasis:** Legume hays (**high in calcium**) may increase bladder stone risk in rabbits.



Nutritional Medicine Approaches

- › Dietary Recommendations:
 - » High-fibre (minimum **25% fibre**), low-carbohydrate diet.
 - » **Ad libitum** grass, hay, and fresh greens for rabbits and guinea pigs.
 - » Small controlled amounts of **high-fibre pellets** (>18% fibre) for growing, pregnant, or lactating animals.
- › Supplements:
 - » **Vitamin C** (essential for guinea pigs) – 10-30mg/day of Sodium ascorbate.
 - » **Probiotics:** Limited evidence; Lactobacillus may help guinea pigs but not rabbits. Dietary fibre plays the key role in microbiome support.
 - » **Assist Feeding:** Critical care herbivore formulas (finely ground grass based supplements) aid in post-op recovery, weaning, and anorexia cases.
 - » **Faecal Microbiota Transplant (FMT):** Used for dysbiosis treatment and koala joeys (must be fed PAP – caecum contents, or a poo shake) when transitioning to Eucalyptus.
 - » **Herbal Medicine:** Nutritional and mucilage-rich herbs can support gut health.

Conclusion

A species-appropriate, high-fibre diet is essential for the health of hindgut fermenters. Gut microbiome stability is crucial, especially during stressful periods like weaning or hospitalisation. Proper nutrition is key to preventing and managing disease. Fibre is both medicine and nourishment.

Bowel Nosodes in Veterinary Medicine

**Dr Megan Kearney – BVSc
MVS (Conservation Medicine)
VetMFHom DipHerbMed**

Bowel nosodes originated from research into chronic disease over a century ago. Modern medicine is now recognizing the significance of the gut microbiome in health. Homeopathic bowel nosodes are used in treating chronic conditions in animals, either to 'start' or 'finish' the integrative treatment of animal.

Homeopathy and the Law of Similars

Homeopathy is based on the **Law of Similars** where 'like cures like'.

A substance causing symptoms in a healthy being can treat similar symptoms in an ill one, when highly diluted. Treatment

is individualized, focusing on the **similimum**, the homeopathic remedy most closely matching the patient's symptom pattern. There is an evidence base for the effectiveness of homeopathy in humans and animals.



What Are Bowel Nosodes?

Bowel nosodes are a specialized branch of homeopathy derived from non-lactose fermenting Gram-negative bacilli found in stool samples of patients with chronic

disease. You would only use Nosodes for 3-5 days and not repeat the treatment for some time.

Indications for Use in Veterinary Medicine

New Cases:

- › When multiple remedies match symptoms without one clear choice.
- › To support a single high-potency remedy.
- › To treat gastrointestinal dysbiosis, particularly after excessive antibiotic use.
- › To allow time for a clearer symptom pattern to emerge.

Old Cases:

- › To clarify symptoms when multiple remedies have been tried with mixed results.
- › To improve the effectiveness of a remedy that acts weakly or temporarily.
- › To help sensitive patients tolerate a well-matched remedy.

Conclusion

Bowel nosodes are a valuable tool in veterinary homeopathy for managing chronic disease and balancing gut microbiota. They can be used as a standalone remedy or to refine treatment strategies. Their use highlights the complex interactions between the gut microbiome and overall health.

The Microbiota of the Equine Gut and what it can tell us about Feeding Horses

**Dr Christine King – BVSc,
MANZCVS (equine), MVetClinStud**

Composition and Diversity

- › Bacteria predominate, but the equine gut microbiota also includes archaea, protozoa, fungi, and viruses.
- › There are an estimated 2-4 quadrillion bacteria in the healthy equine gut; 99% are found in the hindgut (caecum and large colon).
- › There are >10,000 different bacterial species/strains and >500 different fungal species per horse in the healthy equine hindgut.
- › Microbial diversity is facilitated by a natural diet, which for horses is high in fibre, low in starch, and comprises a diversity of plant types and parts that change with the season.
- › When natural grazing is unavailable or inadvisable, feeding a variety of hays and herbs can add diversity to a compositionally limited diet.

Establishment and Stability

- › The gut microbiota is established in the first 1-2 months of life (when coprophagy peaks), being most similar to the foal's dam than to any other horse; thereafter, it resists much change.
- › Each individual has their own unique microbiota that is distinctly different from their herd mates.
- › Each individual's microbiota is not entirely knowable because it is not entirely fixed. (static); e.g. the faecal microbiota may change by 25% over a single grazing season.
- › Each individual's microbiota is conserved, even in the face of massive challenge; for example, cows restore their original microbiota after near-total ruminal exchange.



Probiotics: Challenges and Efficacy

- › Commercial equine probiotics typically contain only a handful of strains (often *Lactobacillus*, *Bifidobacterium* or *Saccharomyces*), none of which are dominant or even consistently present in the healthy hindgut.
- › Dosages (billions of colony forming units) are negligible relative to the quadrillions of resident microbes, and independent studies show limited benefits or potential adverse effects (e.g. diarrhoea in foals, exacerbation of gastric ulcers).

The equine gut harbours **two distinct microbial communities**:

- » **Luminal:** transient, variable, and more susceptible to dietary and environmental shifts.
- » **Mucosal:** stable, host-regulated, and foundational in preserving individual microbial identity.

Microbial Diversity and Equine Health

- › Microbial diversity, defined as the richness and evenness of the microbial community, is a key marker of gut health.
- › Although complex communities are inherently unstable, diversity enhances resilience through interspecies competition, reducing vulnerability to ecological disruption.
- › Greater diversity is consistently associated with healthy, high-performing horses, while reduced diversity is linked to:
 - » Colic and diarrhoea
 - » Gastric ulceration
 - » Laminitis (especially carbohydrate-induced)
 - » Equine metabolic syndrome (EMS) and obesity
 - » Behavioural issues
- › Factors affecting microbial diversity include:
 - » **Diet:** abrupt changes, high-starch content, low fibre, or overly mature forage
 - » **Medications:** antibiotics, NSAIDs, anaesthetics
 - » **Parasites and anthelmintics**
 - » **Stressors:** transport, training, social hierarchy, confinement
 - » **Biological variables:** age, breed, pregnancy, and gender
 - » **Environment:** geography, climate, seasonality
 - » **Glyphosate?**



evidence underscores the importance of early-life colonization, microbial diversity, and the limitations of generic interventions like probiotics and faecal microbial transplants. Future research should prioritize functionally relevant, host-specific strategies to support microbial health in horses.

Domestic horses' microbial ecosystems are often **"impoverished"** due to diet, limited plant variety, hygiene practices, and antibiotic use. While pasture is ideal, microbial diversity can be supported through varied forages when grazing is restricted or inadvisable.

Key support strategies:

- » Feed multiple types of hay (especially native grasses and legumes) to approximate natural variation.
- » Avoid high-non-structural carbohydrate forages (e.g., cereal hays) in horses at risk for laminitis, colic, or metabolic issues.
- » Incorporate fresh or dried herbs that are palatable and safe.
- » Select seasonally appropriate plant parts.
- » Choose plants aligned with the geographic or genetic origin of the breed, when possible.

Glyphosate concerns: Although understudied in horses, glyphosate has known antimicrobial effects and has been detected in equine digestive fluids, with higher levels associated with gastric ulcers.

Diet is both the foundation and modulator of the equine gut microbiota. Maximizing diversity — through pasture access, variety in forage, and safe, microbiota-friendly herbs — offers the best chance to foster a resilient, health-promoting microbiome in horses, especially in the absence of access to their natural environment.

To obtain the full proceedings please email: contact@ivca.com.au.

Summarised by Dr Jacqui Snell.



The equine gut microbiota is a complex, individualized, and highly resilient ecosystem that plays a central role in health and performance. Though still poorly understood in many aspects — especially concerning non-bacterial taxa and mucosal communities — emerging

Are you looking for more treatment options to tackle your most challenging cases?

Our continuing education webinars provide accessible, inexpensive, targeted learning

- Gain new skills through our extensive catalogue of webinars presented by leading veterinary educators from around the world
- Covering a broad range of topics suitable for beginners to advanced practitioners
- Average cost \$70, providing CPD learning opportunities
- All webinars include lecture notes and/or a PDF of the slideshow and a personalised CE Certificate
- Recorded webinars can be accessed immediately and viewed multiple times
- Browse our webinar catalogue by visiting www.civtdu.org/webinars



| civtdu.org



Enrolling Now for Course **Starting 27th January 2026**

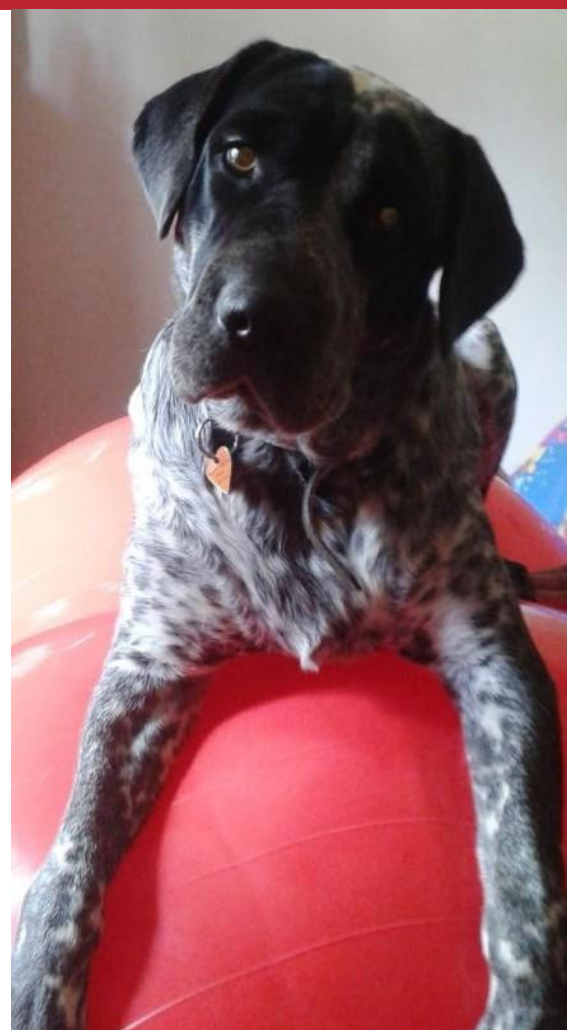
Certification in Clinical Integrative Canine Rehabilitation

Would you like to improve surgical outcomes, manage pain and enhance quality of life for your patients? Veterinary rehabilitation does all this and more!

This 12 month, part-time, online course is designed for rapid clinical integration of new skills and knowledge. You will learn strategies to develop therapeutic programs for frequently occurring conditions. You will progress through the course with a cohort of fellow students, lively case forums and continuous case support. CE 20 RACE Credits.

Click [HERE](#) to learn more.

| civtdu.org



Celebrating our successes 2025

Amazing achievers



College of Integrative Veterinary Therapies
25 Feb · 🌐

...

the integrative veterinarian



Dr Jacqui Snell, New Zealand
BVSc GDVWHM

15



30

civtedu.org

Our next podcast is live! Today's episode is with Dr Jacqui Snell, an integrative veterinarian from Nelson, New Zealand. Please enjoy this conversation with Dr



College of Integrative Veterinary Therapies
30 May · 🌐

#civtedu

#veterinaryacupuncture

#integrativeveterinarymedicine#vetmed



Dr Barbara Royal Guest Lecturer for New Zealand Veterinarians

CIVT Principal, Dr Barbara Royal, recently travelled from Chicago, USA, to Auckland, New Zealand, to present an acupuncture talk to an enthusiastic group of veterinarians. The event was hosted by the President of the Complementary Veterinary Medicine Branch of the NZVA, Dr Liza Schneider. Dr Schneider commented that Dr Royal's talk was inspiring and she believes it is just the start of great things for acupuncture, integrative veterinary care and the NZ veterinary profession.

CONGRATULATIONS

The following students have recently graduated from CIVT courses



Certification in Veterinary Natural Nutrition

- Dr Wendy Dixon, New Zealand

Certification in Veterinary Western Herbal Medicine

- Becky Hadfield, New Zealand



College of Integrative Veterinary Therapies
5 May · 🌐

Our next podcast is live! Today's episode is with Dr Viv Harris, an integrative veterinarian from New Zealand. Please enjoy this conversation with Dr Harris as we discuss her education, clinical practice, holis... See more

the integrative veterinarian



Dr Viv Harris, New Zealand,
BSc (Zoology), BVSc (Massey), Cert IVAS, Cert NAET

15



30

College of Integrative Veterinary Therapies

civtedu.org

Important Updates

NZVA Conference Auckland 23-25 June 2026

We are delighted to have confirmed Dr. Huisheng Xie as our main speaker for the Complementary Branch at the NZVA Conference in Auckland. Dr Xie is a very prominent and well-known international teacher having trained over 11,000 veterinarians to practice Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine. For more information about Dr Xie see <https://chiu.edu/faculty/huisheng-xie>. We will share more details about this event and additional speakers in due course.



CVMB Newsletter

Do you have an article to share or even just a short case study, snippet or tip? Is there a business or resource that you find helpful that would be useful to share with our members? Please let us know, we would love your input!



Would you like to be listed on our NZVA website CVMB Page?

We are excited to have this page <https://nzva.org.nz/public/pets/complementary/> now available to help vets and people access vets who are proficient in complementary therapies.



SustainaVet

Considering our environment and having a regenerative approach to health and well-being is an important aspect of integrative veterinary care. To this end, our CVMB has been instrumental in establishing and supporting SustainaVet, that works collaboratively with the NZVA and NZVA's Climate Change Ambassador Jane Ough to drive positive change in this area in our industry.

The NZVA's Climate Care Programme has recently launched and is a wonderful opportunity for vet clinics to embrace a more environmentally minded and sustainable mindset.

Jane Ough, NZVA's Climate Change Ambassador, hosts regular meetings for our Climate Champions (anyone in our veterinary profession who would like to help drive positive change!).



SustainaVet: Join us on Social Media!

Environmental health is imperative for a sustainable future but sadly our natural resources are being depleted and we all need to do everything that we can to help make a difference and ensure that we preserve our planet for future generations.

Our One Health model, which reflects the inter-dependence of human, animal and environmental health, has vets perfectly positioned to make a difference and lead the way. But for our profession to lead we also need to be socially and financially sustainable and know how to look after our people.

The **SustainaVet Practice Group** has recently been established to help facilitate this and invite you to be a part of helping to drive positive change in our vet industry and out. Please have a look at Facebook and Instagram pages:

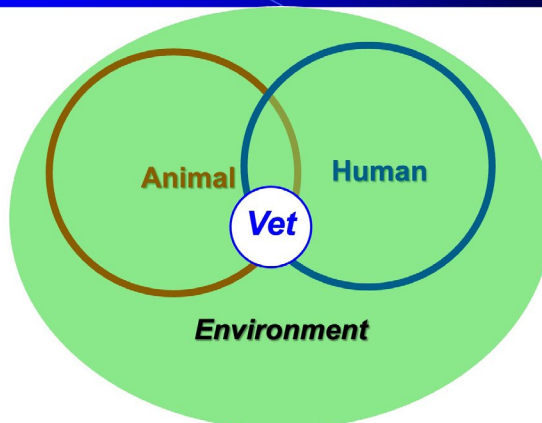
<https://www.facebook.com/SustainableVetPracticeNZ> and
<https://www.instagram.com/sustainavetpracticenz/>

We would love to have your input!

If you have a specific project or strategic interest in **SustainaVet Practice**, please e- mail liza@holisticvets.co.nz with an outline so that we can work together and leverage win- win outcomes.

Liza's Strategy Day Presentation

Bigger Vision



Vets are perfectly positioned to lead the way to a healthier and sustainable future

Position Statement Opportunity

- Encourages the responsible use of all complementary therapies facilitating professionalism and a high standard of care.
- Ensures that **vets remain the primary healthcare providers** as unfortunate **animal welfare** outcomes can occur with no regulation in NZ to prevent laymen from treating animals
- Respects and appreciates the diversity of all vets and doesn't impact on the mental health well-being of vets who go the extra mile to learn therapies that add to the quality of life of their patients and adds value for their clients
- **Respects the rights of vets** to practice veterinary medicine how they choose within the health and welfare needs of their patients and in compliance with veterinary council code of professional conduct.

COMPLEMENTARY Branch

Together we **complement** sustainability, inclusivity, and resilience as well as champion One Health to strengthen our future!

We do this by:

- complementing and enhancing conventional veterinary medicine and surgery with an inter-disciplinary, collaborative and Holistic approach **improving patient outcomes, client and job satisfaction therefore veterinary well-being**
- promoting the concept of **One Health**
- increasing awareness about integrative veterinary care and its importance in the future of **sustainable health care**
- educating the public about **responsible animal ownership** and the broad range of options available for veterinary care
- advocating for **contextualized/pragmatic** care to facilitate practical and innovative approaches
- encouraging veterinary professionals and businesses to adopt **environmentally sustainable practices**
- facilitating a **culturally inclusive approach** to encourage awareness of indigenous practices, including traditional Māori medicine, integrating native plants into veterinary treatments and **kaitiakitanga/guardianship** of our environment
- **collaborating** with like-minded overseas veterinarians and their respective associations.



mybeau[®]

VET COLLECTION

Scientifically Formulated Nutraceutical
Pet Health Care Supplements



Product of New Zealand



Dental & Breath



Skin & Hair



Vision & Optics



Bone & Joint



SCIENTIFIC ANIMAL NUTRITION

palaMOUNTAINS[®]

www.mybeau.info

Integrative Vet Students Member Perks – Please Spread the Word

Please encourage new members to help us grow a veterinary profession that values complementary therapies as an important part of animal health care so that we can help to improve patient outcomes, client and job satisfaction.

IVS membership includes:

- › Free student and new grad membership.
- › Regular newsletter and info snippets showcasing successful outcomes with integrative care and information from internationally respected Integrative Vets.
- › Access to our IVS Member Resources Directory: **where to resource complementary therapy products or access contact details of vets with specific skills to refer to or be listed!**
- › Special member promotions from various businesses aligned with our values.
- › Facebook discussion group.
- › Alliance with the Integrative Vet Students (IVS) who host an annual vet student conference (known for the best goodie bags) and lunchtime talks often with FREE lunch!
- › Collegial support and learning.
- › We aim to create a fear free environment for vets to express their ideas, share innovation and encourage open minded discussion.
- › Complementary therapies are a growing trend. For improved patient outcomes, greater client and job satisfaction, join our SIB (Special Interest Branch) to learn more!

Join IVS Members on Facebook

www.facebook.com/groups/260730070711007/

Integrative Vet Students (IVS)



Our vet student group are a very important part of our special interest branch and we look forward to working together this year to create more learning opportunities for vet students about integrative veterinary care.

Join www.facebook.com/groups/813434878763355/

for info about student talks (usually with prizes and free giveaways).



The content in this newsletter has been provided by representatives of the Complementary Veterinary Medicine Branch (CVMB) of the New Zealand Veterinary Association Te Pae Kīrehe (NZVA). The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of the NZVA and the NZVA does not necessarily endorse any products or services advertised.