

Royal Veterinary College



At the Royal Veterinary College, we encourage the generation of impact from research at all levels from students to senior staff through commitment from the top of the organisation, co-ordinated support activity and the enthusiasm of our excellent research community.

The Royal Veterinary College (RVC) has a research programme of international quality, structured around themes of 'Infection and Immunity' and 'Lifestyle' (encompassing effects of diet, exercise and ageing on musculoskeletal, cardiovascular health and reproductive physiology).

Our approach extends from the molecule to the whole animal or population of animals. The disciplines that underpin these themes include animal welfare, biomechanics, genetics, bioinformatics, pathology and epidemiology and public health. Economic, social and policy impacts are realised from our research.



Networking with industry to develop research collaborations

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Delivering Impact

RVC encourages and facilitates delivery of impact through a co-ordinated approach:

All parts of the RVC research community are supported in delivering different aspects of impact through RVC Enterprise (RVC E), Marketing Group and Community Engagement Team. Training is separately targeted to PhD students, postdocs and academics, to support commercial, media and public engagement. Quantitative and qualitative approaches are used for assessing the impact delivered and deliverable from the research programmes. Existing incentives have been benchmarked and new competitions introduced to promote awareness and engagement.

All activity is supported by internal communications to emphasise impact value and reinforce impact messages, together with a proactive Press Office for external promotion of research findings and their implications.

We have worked to ensure that activity directed towards culture change has been distributed and embedded across the organisation. Impact is celebrated, but treated as the norm – recognised and appreciated by early stage researchers and senior staff alike. By establishing an annual survey of academic engagement in impact-related activity, we are now able to track, monitor and support involvement, in all forms, more closely.

Looking forward, RVC has commitment from the top of the organisation, the co-ordinated activity of the support functions, and enthusiasm throughout the research community to sustain the culture change of valuing impact alongside research excellence.

Reducing respiratory disease in kennelled dogs

Professor Joe Brownlie recognised that unidentified agents probably contribute to canine infectious respiratory disease unresponsive to conventional vaccines in kennelled dogs. Working with Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, he identified a novel canine coronavirus and other contributory agents. The research group established a long-term collaboration with a major animal health company and the College's knowledge transfer and business development team, RVC Enterprise, has negotiated terms for licence rights to the two patent families, protecting the novel work. A novel vaccine is in development and hoped to launch by 2012.



Canine blood collection

Is tail docking appropriate for working dogs?

Working dogs are exempt from the ban on tail-docking in England and Wales. Dr David Brodbelt and colleagues, in collaboration with the University of Bristol, undertook a study of the frequency of dogs' tail injuries to assess the possible benefit of docking. The research, which engaged with 52 veterinary practices and accessed data from 138,212 dogs, found that around 500 dogs would need to be docked to prevent a single injury. This research was supported by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), with DEFRA and the Scottish government. WAG has said the results will be fundamental to any review of tail docking legislation.



An examination at the RVC's Queen Mother Hospital for Animals

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The BBSRC Excellence with Impact 2011 scheme ran from 2008 to 2010. It was developed to reward and esteem those university departments most active in embedding a culture that recognises and values the achievement of impact alongside excellent research.