

Welcome to the British Veterinary Forensic and Law Association
Membership of BVFLA is open to anybody who is interested in veterinary forensic and legal matters. Our membership includes Veterinary Surgeons, lawyers and other people who are interested in the areas outlined above. We are all people who are interested in dealing with all aspects of litigation, mediation, arbitration and advocacy in subjects that affect animals, their owners or Veterinary Surgeons who are directly or indirectly involved. This will include aspects of disease and treatment, animal management, animal welfare, the Medicines Act or employment law.

History, Primary Aims and Objectives

1. To promote an interest within the Veterinary Profession in the study of all aspects of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and other areas where the law affects the Veterinary Profession.
2. To organise and promote meetings of Veterinary Surgeons, lawyers and others with the object of furthering such studies and training.
3. To promote the writing and publication of papers relating to these topics.

In 1992 it was realised by four Veterinary Surgeons, each of whom was interested in dispute resolution and forensic matters, that they had independently joined the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. They met informally, identified the common ground and the idea of the Veterinary Association for Arbitration and Jurisprudence (VAAJ) was developed.

In 1993 this group was joined by two more people with similar interests, and an ad hoc committee was formed. In November 1994 the embryonic VAAJ was launched with an Inaugural Meeting in the Library of Lincoln's Inn. The Foundation meeting was held in June 1995 at BVA HQ, when an excellent programme was followed by a lively business meeting.

This was followed with another meeting in November 1995, again at BVA HQ. The summer meeting in 1996 was in the RCVS library. In November that year the fifth meeting (theme **Certification**) was held at what was then the RAMC Millbank. The 1997 summer meeting was at the same venue and dealt with **Medical Negligence** and **The 1996 Arbitration Act** on day one. The second day was a training day for members who would be appearing as **Expert Witnesses**.

Since then meetings have been held at least once each year covering all the areas of the law that affect Veterinary Surgeons and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).

In 2008 it was felt that VAAJ would benefit from two changes.

- 1) The name Veterinary Association for Arbitration and Jurisprudence should be improved as it was not considered to be a suitable guide to the interests and activities of the association. At the Annual General Meeting in 2009 it was agreed that British Veterinary Forensic and Law Association would be a much more appropriate title for the association.
- 2) At the 2008 AGM it was agreed that the Association would benefit from collaborating with a larger organization with similar interests. After various meetings Council decided that the **Academy of Experts** was the most appropriate organization. The Academy has over 2,000 members consisting of a mixture of lawyers, expert witnesses from a wide variety of disciplines and people interested in ADR. This change was discussed at the 2009 AGM and it was agreed to proceed. In October 2009 BVFLA became affiliated to the Academy and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed to define the areas of common interest and actions. This arrangement will benefit BVFLA and its members in various ways including access to better training and a venue for meetings in central London.