**New era for BSAVA Congress gets underway in Manchester**

British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) welcomed veterinary professionals from across the UK and beyond when it threw open the doors at Manchester Central this morning.

The organisation’s commitment to its community permeated the event, with wellbeing taking centre stage not just in the dedicated zone but in the management module, the President’s welcome and Amar Latif’s keynote. The community also celebrated the success and commitment of the professions through the BSAVA awards.

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“It’s been a tremendous first day,” said BSAVA President, Sheldon Middleton. “I’m delighted to see so many members of our profession coming back together to exchange the latest research, knowledge and experience.

“What we do as a profession is amazing. It’s a unique combination of highs and lows, which ordinarily provides a balance. Over the last couple of years, however, that’s not been the case. Congress presents an opportunity to rebalance, being as much about community as it is about science and education.”

The day’s clinical highlights included the first ‘day in the life of…’ drama which followed ‘Rita the pug’, who’s owner was not keen to hear about the risks associated with brachycephalic anaesthesia for her elective neutering. A whole host of issues were discussed from obligations around informed consent, to anaesthesia management and communication skills.

Topics within feline medicine, ophthalmology, dentistry and orthopaedics were also debated, discussed, presented and voted upon. In the management module Ernie Ward, alongside, Richard Casey and Chris Gush discussed the price of service. Dubbed ‘America’s pet advocate’, Dr Ward, defended the rights of companion animal practices to make a reasonable profit from their labours.

“Sadly, the narrative around the conflict of making money isn’t brought to the forefront enough,” he said in a recent interview. “But it is essential that is addressed, as it has everything to do with career satisfaction, burnout, retention and ultimately, patient care.”

He advised business owners to share their practice’s vision to provide a shield against the disappointment colleagues feel whenever they experience a dissatisfied client, unfortunately an inevitable event, on occasions, in all practices.

Dr Ward also advised his audience on the importance of having other things in their lives besides work. In his case, endurance running was the activity that freed his mind of the cares of the working day. “If you focus all the time on your imagined failings and mis-steps you will find yourself at 55 years old hating your job, your life and your family,” he warned.

Those attending the next two days won’t miss out on wellbeing advice with sessions on how doing less can help you achieve more, making workplaces happier and healthier, feeding the busy person, energy saving life hacks, breathing exercises and a demo of bitesize techniques, that can be learnt in just 5 minutes. Delivered by organisations closely associated with the industry, the hints and tips are practical and realistic for even the busiest practitioner.

A sell-out exhibition boasts some of the industry’s leading organisations. With symposiums, a learning academy, lots of competitions and many freebies on offer, there are plenty of excuses to engage and discover the wealth of expertise and innovation.

The programme tackles some of the industry’s most challenging issues with modules including equality and diversity, clinical pathology, feline medicine meets behaviour, anaesthesia, cardiology and ECC. The ‘day in the life of…’ drama focuses on neurology when, not one but two emergencies put a practice’s team and their communication skills to the test. The session concludes with a discussion on how to cope with compassion fatigue.

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

Images attached:

**About Congress:**

BSAVA Congress 2022 is a hybrid event taking place on Thursday 24th March – Saturday 26th March online and at Manchester Central. To find out more visit: <https://www.bsavaevents.com/bsavacongress2022/en/page/home>

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**About BSAVA:**

The British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) is a professional membership association and registered charity, which exists to promote excellence in small animal practice through education, science, and community. Established in 1957 as an Association run by the profession, for the profession, the BSAVA is a not-for-profit professional body, and has a membership of more than 11,000 veterinary surgeons, vet nurses and students.

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