Editorial

"Veterinary Sciences Tomorrow (VST) is a refereed electronic 'current awareness' journal aimed at building a global community of animal health researchers with a sense of identity and quality. It will provide state-of-the-art reviews for scientists, academic teachers, graduate students and policy makers and will publish facts, interpretation and opinion on current issues of importance for comparative pathobiology and veterinary public health, encouraging interdisciplinary exchange."

As a mission statement, this is ambitious, and we like to think it is distinct from what we have seen on the Web. Indeed, there are many animal health-related publications available already. You only need to look at the Institute of Scientific Information (ISI) listings to find there are 138 paper journals ranked in the bibliometric category 'veterinary sciences' (1998) and a comprehensive search of the internet, using Copernic Pro 2000 yields 84 sites containing the term ' veterinary sciences' (there were 78 when we searched last, in September). So why start another publication? Is there a need for one?

We believe there is, for several reasons. First, 'veterinary sciences' is a highly indiscriminate category and consequently includes much practice-orientated information. Second, readers from within the veterinary scientific, that is the knowledge-generating, arena are segmented and often take little notice of events outside their own discipline, let alone in other fields of biomedical research. Third, the plethora of accessible information is forbidding, rather than stimulating, to most people, and searching for specific material has become a time-consuming chore. We wish to provide our readers with a one-stop site from where they can mine the information they are looking for, in an attractive and stimulating environment that is unique to the medium of electronic publishing. With the beginning of a new millennium and the overwhelming expansion in the use of computers, both in the home and place of work, there is an ever-increasing demand for rapid, easy access to information and we intend to fulfill this need for our readers. Our journal's objectives are complementary to those of the International Veterinary Information Service (IVIS), which publishes full-featured veterinary texts, amongst others.

Two of the review articles in this first issue are on virology - which is by no means representative - it reflects rather my scientific background than journal policy. As expressed by the term 'interdisciplinary exchange' in our mission statement, there will be articles from e.g. anaesthesiology, anatomy, behavioural science, biochemistry, biotechnology, cell biology, clinical chemistry, dentistry, dermatology, diagnostic imaging, endocrinology, epidemiology, ethics, genetics, herd health management, veterinary science history, immunology, internal medicine, laboratory animal science, microbiology, neurology, nutrition science, oncology, ophthalmology, parasitology, pathology, pharmacology, physiology, reproduction science, surgery, toxicology, tropical disease research, veterinary public health research, and virology. I am sure that this list is incomplete; as I am certain that it will grow.

Finally, I should like to thank our 'beta-testers', some 90 scientists, journal publishers, librarians, and PhD students, who provided constructive criticism. We will listen to you, our readers, and try to make Veterinary Sciences Tomorrow your favorite one-stop website for scientific information.

Enjoy the journal and please let us know what you think - we promise to react to your comments.

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