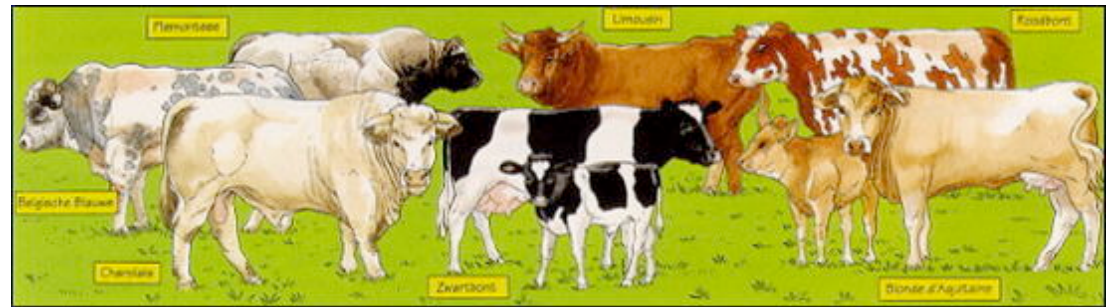


# How to attract applicants/students for a career in Farm Animals / Veterinary Public Health



Experiences of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine,  
Utrecht University, the Netherlands



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Peter van Beukelen and Jan Haarhuis  
*Chair Quality Improvement in Veterinary Education /  
Education- and Student Affairs*

# What I want to address

- Developments in demographic data: applicants/students
- Introduction of a tracked curriculum: FA / VPH track
- Development and implementation of an admission procedure, focused on FA / VPH
- Effects of the admission procedure
- Specific topics in the curriculum
- Relation with the professional organization



# Historic developments of demographic data

- In the past decades: a shift to more urban applicants and less rural applicants
- In the past decades a shift from male to female:
  - Till 1985: > 50% of applicants / first year students is male
  - 1986 / 1987: 50% female and 50% male applicants
  - Last 15 years: 70 – 80 % of all students is female
- In the past decades: a shift in motivation:
  - An increase in the % of motivated applicants for:
    - Companion animals / Sea mammals / Wildlife / Zoo
    - **EQUINE**
  - A decrease in the % of motivated and well informed applicants for a FA / VPH career: now 10-15 % of all applicants



**Introduction of a curriculum with  
different tracks:**

***implementation from 2001 on***

**Introduction of the Bachelor-Master  
curriculum with different tracks:**

***implementation from 2007 resp.  
2010 on***



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# Division of Tracks C-2001

<b>1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup> year</b>	<b>' Individually kept Animals'</b>  7 & 11 = 18 ects track		<b>Farm animals / Veterinary Public Health</b>  7 & 11 = 18 ects		
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> &amp; 4<sup>th</sup> year</b>	<b>Equine</b>  20 & 20 = 40 ects	<b>Companion Animals</b>  20 & 20 = 40 ects	<b>Veterinary Research</b>  20 & 20 = 40 ects	<b>Farm animals / Veterinary Public Health</b>  20 & 20 = 40 ects	
<b>5<sup>th</sup> year</b>	<b>Uniform Clinical Rotation Program and Research Externship = 0 ects track</b>				
<b>6<sup>th</sup> year</b>	<b>Equine</b> All:60 ects	<b>Companion Animals</b>	<b>Veterinary Research</b>	<b>Farm Animals</b>	<b>Vet.Publ. Health</b>
<b>Out of all Study Paths: Veterinary Administration &amp; Management</b>					



# Admission system, since 2001

- Weighted lottery (since decades; Dutch law):  
= at least 50 % of applicants
- Admitted automatically (high grades on high school; mean  $\geq 8.0$  out of 10; Dutch law)  
=  $\pm 12-15\%$
- Admitted by selection by the FVM:  
=  $\pm 30\%$



# Admission procedure\*

- Questionnaire based on 4 validated psychological tests  $\Rightarrow$  ranking of candidates
  - High number of applicants: first selection
  - Till 2006



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\* JVME, 36 (1): 2-6, 2009

# Admission procedure\*

- Pre-structured panel interview
  - Panel: FVM teacher / DVM practitioner / Student
  - Each year: 2 days training for new interviewers / 1 day training for experienced interviewers
  - The interview focuses on a) specific competencies for FA/VPH sector and b) general competencies for a veterinarian:
    - a) Motivation for and knowledge of the FA/VPH sector
    - a) Broad vision on the sector
    - a) Vision on organizations and organizational consciousness
    - b) Integrity
    - b) Resoluteness
    - b) Sociability



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# Effects of the FVM selection procedure

- FVM selected students study quicker than ‘weighted lottery students’
- FVM selected students are more involved in the student community / the veterinary faculty / the profession than the weighted lottery / automatically admitted students
- The vast majority of the students is persistent in their study path choice;  
FVM selected students are the most persistent



Students of the tracked/study path Curriculum 2001,  
after their 4th or 5th year of the study:

*“Which track would you choose if you were offered the possibility to choose again?”*

Respondents	Same choice when I could choose again	Other choice when I could choose again	Which choice?
All students	114 (95,0%)	6 (5,0%)	4 x FA 1 x VPH 1 x H
Selected by the faculty	21 (95,5%)	1 (4,5%)	1 x H
Non-selected	93 (94,9%)	5 (5,1%)	4 x FA 1 x VPH
Farm Animals/VPH	36 (97,3%)	1 (2,7%)	1 x H
Companion Animals	64 (94,1%)	4 (5,9%)	3 x FA 1 x VPH
Horses	14 (93,3%)	1 (6,7%)	1 x FA



# Specific topics in the curriculum

- First year:
  - Lectures and seminars on orientation on the veterinary labour market
  - Project: introduction in veterinary medicine and science:
    - the writing of an essay about the veterinary profession in all its aspects (strengths and weaknesses)
    - First experience with scientific knowledge: concerning a veterinary relevant subject
- In each year of the Bachelor curriculum:
  - One or two meetings in which information about developments in the labour market and career possibilities and challenges of the different sectors are discussed; involvement of practitioners and veterinarians employed in VPH is structural
- 2nd / 3rd year of the Bachelor curriculum:
  - Veterinary Profession and Career market: organized by the Student- and Education Affairs in close cooperation with the Dutch Students Society



# Relation with alumni and the professional organization

- Externships in the 3rd/4th year and Extramural training in the 5th / 6th year
- Annual discussion sessions of the Board of Studies with the Boards of all species-groups of the Royal Netherlands Veterinary Association (RNVA)
- Annual meetings of the Dean / Faculty Board with the Board of the RNVA



**Thank you for your attention !**

**Questions ??**

**I hope these topics give enough  
input for a discussion**



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