



The Hong Kong Veterinary Association

The State of the Hong Kong Veterinary Profession in 2011

The recent announcement by the City University of Hong Kong that it plans to open a Veterinary School in Hong Kong in 2013 has raised concerns within the veterinary community about the impact which this school would have on the Hong Kong veterinary profession.

The number of veterinary surgeons registered with the Veterinary Surgeon's Board of Hong Kong between 1998 and June 2011 can be obtained from the VSB website www.vsbhk.org.hk I have reproduced it in Appendix 1. It shows that the number of registered veterinarians has quadrupled over that period of time.

However it should be pointed out that not all of these veterinarians are currently working in Hong Kong. Appendix 2 shows the breakdown of the registration list into those working in Hong Kong and those who are not. The group of veterinarians currently working in Hong Kong is further broken down to show which sector of the profession they are employed in. Of the 600 registered veterinarians in Hong Kong only 335 are employed full-time in small animal practice. A total of 184 veterinarians are either known or assumed to be not working in Hong Kong at present.

The current list of registered veterinarians was then broken down to show in which country veterinary degrees were obtained. The results are shown in Appendix 3. The two most popular places to study veterinary science were Australia (239) and Taiwan (139).

The Hong Kong veterinary profession is often thought of as being dominated by western vets however Appendix 4 shows that 345 of the 600 registered veterinarians are Chinese and 255 are from other races.

Many practice owners that I have spoken to recently have told me with some concern of the number of applications they are receiving from new graduates looking for work. Appendix 5 shows the number of veterinarians who registered with the VSB in each of the past four years

(2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011) and compares the number who are working in Hong Kong with the number who are not. The reasons why people may not be working here are quite varied but it is concerning that the graph shows an almost identical picture for years 2008, 2009 and 2010 however in 2011 both the total number of registrations and the number of veterinarians who are not working here increased significantly.

Government census figures have shown that the number of animals being kept as pets has increased by 39.7% (refer to Appendix 6). However the number of registered veterinarians has increased by 66.2% over the same period of time (refer to Appendix 1). The number of clinics has increased by 47% over the same period of time (refer to Appendix 7). These figures show a disturbing trend towards an oversupply of veterinarians in Hong Kong.

The increase in the number of registrations received by the VSB in 2011 raised concerns about the number of Hong Kong students currently studying veterinary science abroad. Veterinary schools where Hong Kong students traditionally studied were contacted and the results have been tabulated in Appendix 8. It can be seen that at present there are between 180-190 Hong Kong students studying veterinary science. This is obviously disturbing as it indicates that over the next five years these students will graduate and may be looking for employment opportunities in Hong Kong.

This year showed an approximate 25% increase in the number of registrations when compared to the previous three years. However the number of these individuals who were able to find work stayed the same resulting in a doubling of the number of those unable to find work here in Hong Kong.

The data collected would appear to indicate that the Hong Kong veterinary profession is heading towards an oversupply problem which can only be expected to get worse over the next five years as the impact of the current students coming into the work-force is felt.

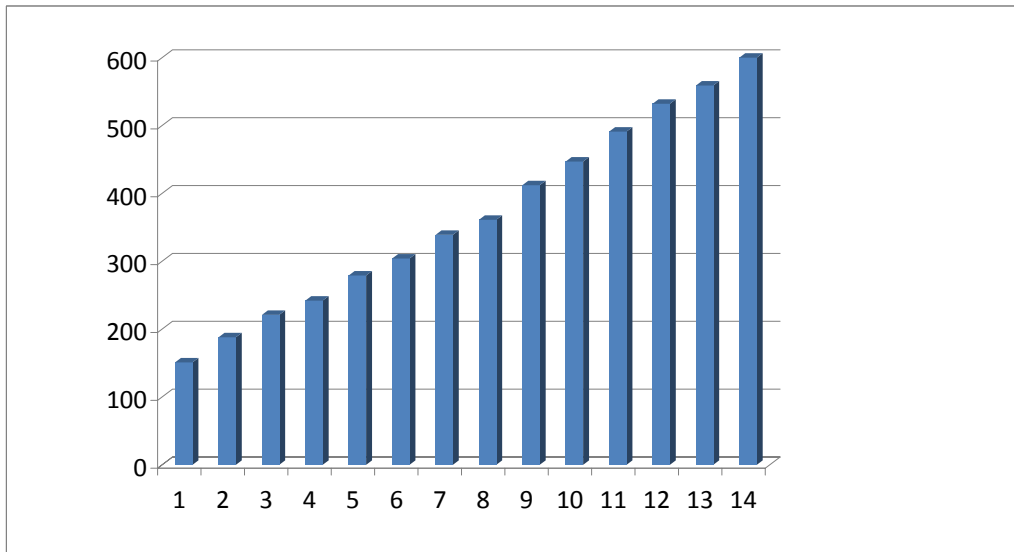
The HKVA views the plans to open a veterinary school in Hong Kong with grave concerns.



Dr Tom Mangan BVSc BAppSc MRCVS
HKVA President

Appendix 1

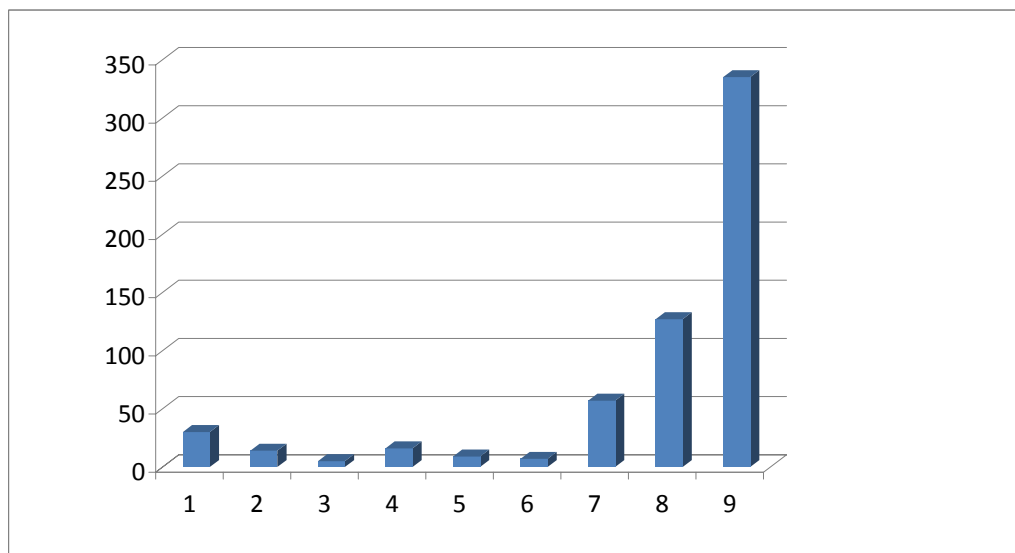
The Number of Registered Veterinarians with the VSB from 1998 to 2011



	Year	No. of Veterinarians
1	1998	151
2	1999	188
3	2000	221
4	2001	242
5	2002	279
6	2003	304
7	2004	339
8	2005	361
9	2006	412
10	2007	447
11	2008	491
12	2009	532
13	2010	559
14	2011	600

Appendix 2

Areas of Employment for Veterinarians Currently Registered in Hong Kong with the VSB

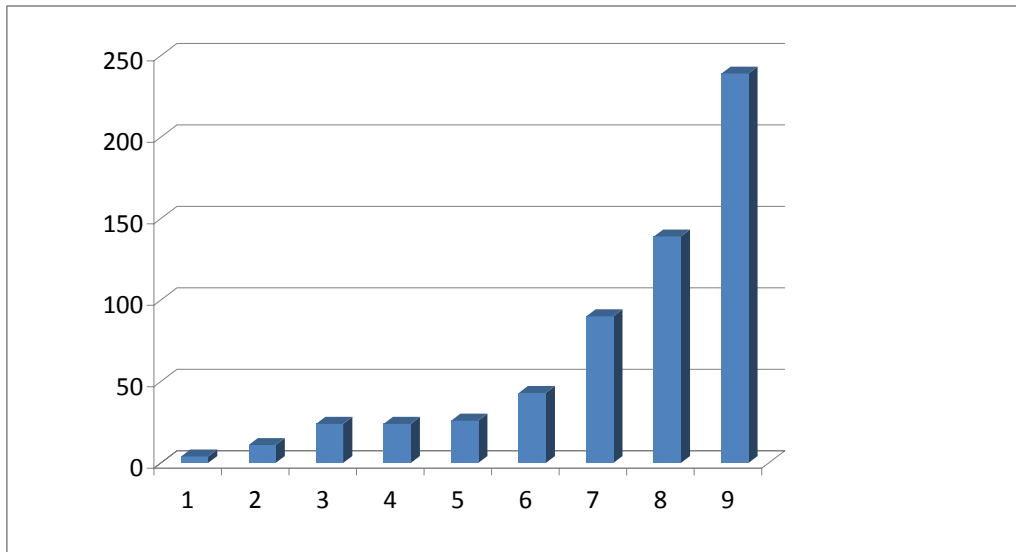


1	Government	30
2	Jockey Club	14
3	Ocean Park/ Kadorie Farm	5
4	University/Education/Industry	16
5	Locums	9
6	Visiting Specialists	7
7	Unknown	57
8	Not working in Hong Kong	127
9	Working in small animal clinics	335
	Total number of Veterinarians Registered	600

Note It would be logical to assume that the vets listed in the Unknown Group are not working in Hong Kong

Appendix 3

The Country of Graduation of the 600 Veterinarians Currently Registered with the HKVSB

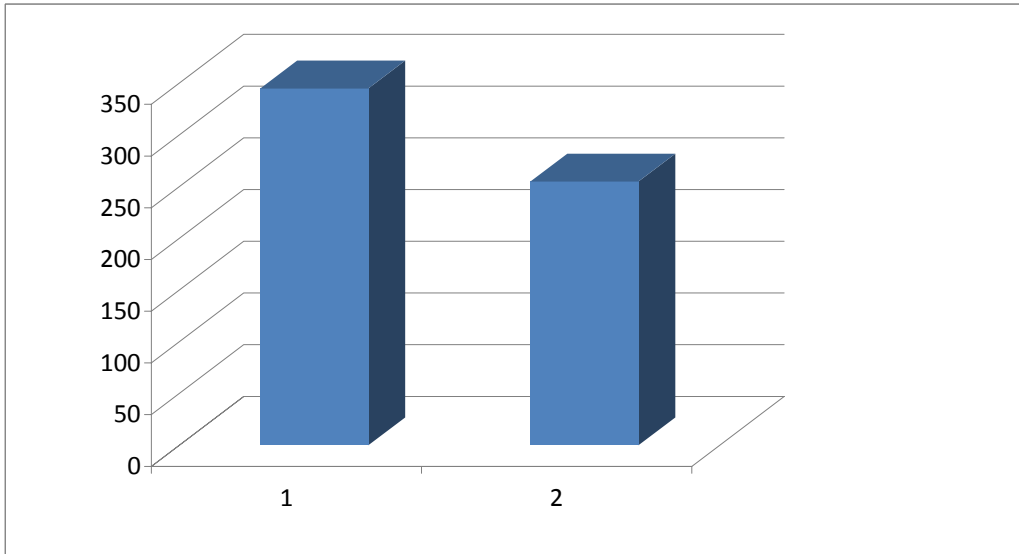


	No. of Vets	Country where Veterinary Science was Studied
1	4	Ireland
2	11	Others
3	24	Europe
4	24	New Zealand
5	26	USA and Canada
6	43	South Africa
7	90	United Kingdom
8	139	Taiwan
9	239	Australia

Note: Others included graduates from China, Zimbabwe, Philippines, Malaysia Japan, Kenya, Burma and Nigeria

Appendix 4

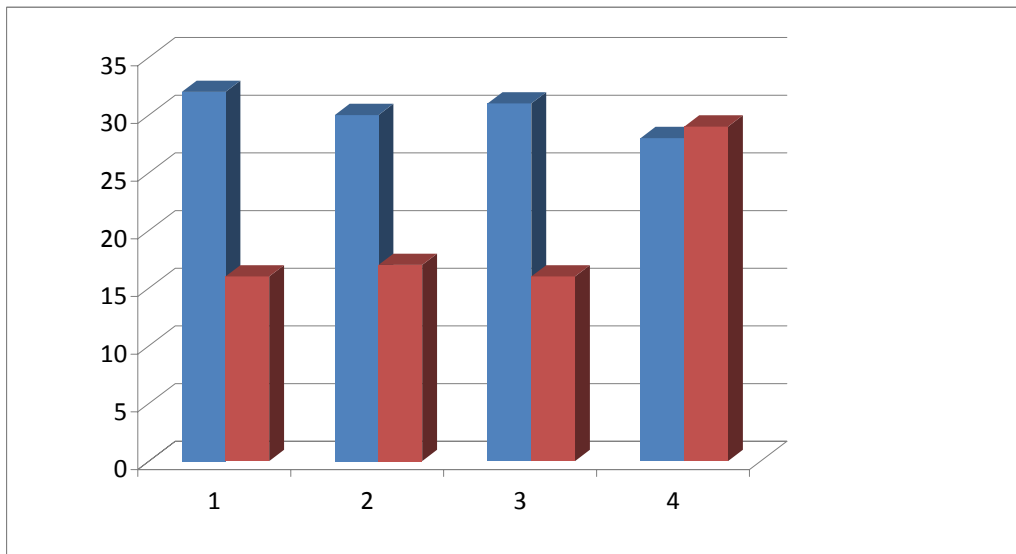
The Ethnic Mix of the 600 Veterinarians Currently Registered with the HKVSB



1	Chinese	345
2	Non-Chinese	255

Appendix 5

Employment Status of Veterinarians Registering with the VSB from 2008 to 2011



Year of Registration

1 2008
2 2009
3 2010
4 2011

Series 1 (Blue)

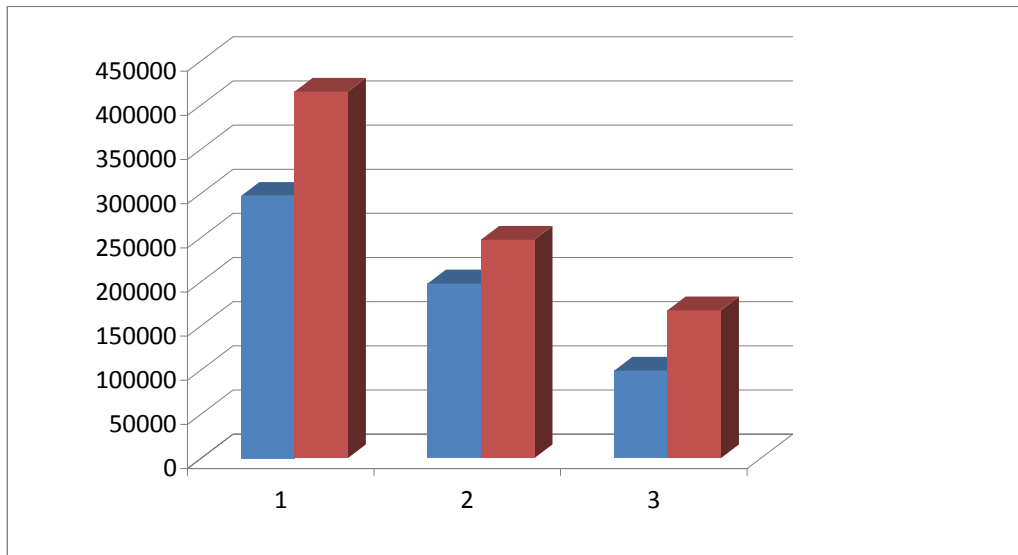
Working in Hong Kong

Series 2 (Red)

Not working in Hong Kong

Appendix 6

The Number of Pets in Hong Kong Obtained from Government Census Data measured in 2005/06 (Blue) and 2010/11 (Red)

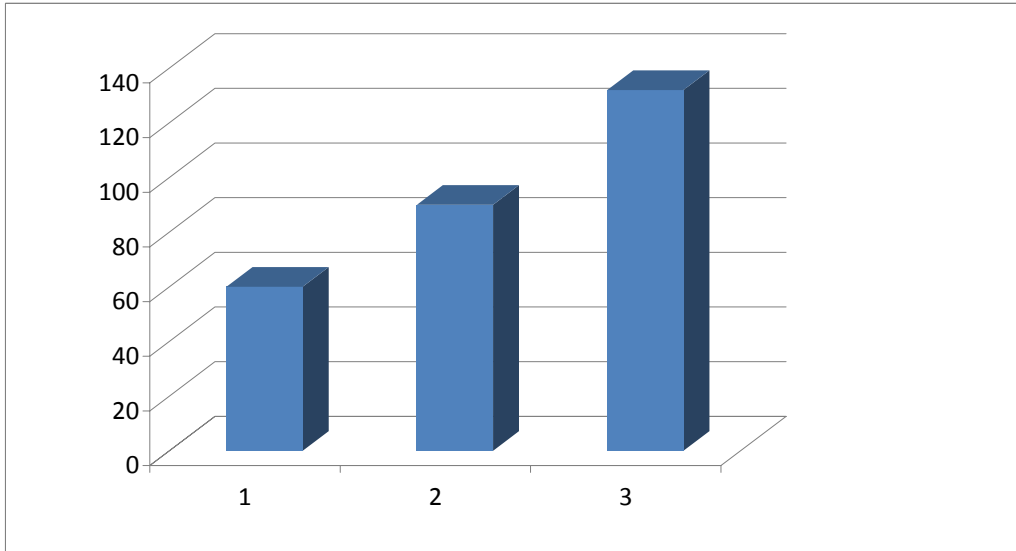


Series 1 (Blue) Pet population 2005/06
Series 2 (Red) Pet population 2010/11

	2005/06	2010/11
1 Total numbers of Dogs and Cats	297100	415100
2 Number of Dogs	197900	247500
3 Number of Cats	99200	167600

Appendix 7

The Number of Veterinary Clinics in Hong Kong in the Years 2000, 2005 and 2011



Year	No. of Clinics
1 2000	60
2 2005	90
3 2011	132

Note These figures are estimates obtained from the pet food industry

Appendix 8

Summary of Current Numbers of Hong Kong Students Studying Veterinary Science Overseas

University	Year					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Sydney	11	14	18	7	5	55
Melbourne						18
Murdoch						15
Brisbane		8	7			30-40 (See note 1)
Adelaide						2
Charles Sturt Uni						0
James Cook Uni						No Reply
Edinburgh	7	6	7	3	2	25
Glasgow	5	2	2	0	2	11
Liverpool						8 (See note 2)
RVC						1
Cambridge						No Reply
Nottingham						10
Bristol						1
Dublin						0
Pretoria						0
Massey (NZ)	2	0	1	2	0	5
Canada						(See Note 3)
USA						(See Note 4)
TOTAL						181-191

Note 1 - Brisbane officially said that they had 130 overseas students and did not state how many were from Hong Kong. I spoke to a student in 2nd year and one in 3rd year and obtained those numbers. One of my vet friends lectures at UQ Vet School and he estimated there were 30-40 Hong Kong students in the faculty.

Note 2 – Liverpool did not officially reply. At the meeting with Cornell Uni and CityU one of the Cornell representatives said that Liverpool had told them that they had 8 Hong Kong students

Note 3 – Only one of the Canadian vet schools replied and said that Canadian vet schools only accepted Canadian citizens. This does not help as we all know that there is quite a large number of Hong Kong citizens who have dual citizenship.

Note 4 – I did not contact any of the US schools because there were so many and very few Hong Kong students have studied there in the past.