

Being a BCVA Board Member – what it means to me



Nicky Bowden, grew up on a dairy farm on the England-Wales border and graduated Glasgow vet school in 2007. She has since had success in a varied career in both clinical and non-clinical roles, here and abroad. She is currently a senior dairy consultant with Kite Consulting.

How I got here: I don't really remember wanting to be anything other than a vet and jumped straight into a mixed practice job the week after I graduated. In hindsight I wish I had given myself more time to consider things – it was a lovely team, with an amazing first boss, but I did not enjoy the small animal work and by Christmas I was pretty unhappy.

I spent some time overseas on an internship, but when I came back to UK practice it just didn't feel like what I wanted to be doing for the rest of my life. It was a real moment of crisis. Then I saw a job with AHDB. It was here that I widened my knowledge base - everything from soil health, grass growth to business management. Later, I joined Boehringer, ahead of the launch of their BVD Vaccine Bovela, and for the first few years most of my time was devoted to this.

My current role with Kite Consulting means I work primary with Dairy Retailers and processors to support there farmers groups on topics such sustainability and animal health. I also lead the Health and Fertility Network which allows me to collaborate with colleagues from around the UK and the wider business.

What I get out of being a BCVA Board member: Something I loved from my time in industry was having a network of contacts. Sat in my office, particularly during lockdown, I realised how much I missed this. This was the main reason I joined BCVA and is one of the things I love about being on the Board. There is such a great team and I sometimes feel I get more out of it than I put in. Being able to run things past the other board members has helped me so many times – it's a very useful WhatsApp group to be on!

I am also loving been able to use some of the skills and knowledge I have picked up along the way. For example, when getting involved in BVD eradication at a national level it really helps to have had the opportunity to dive deep into the technical aspects as well as getting to know key stakeholders.

Each Board member will contribute to an aspect of the association – so I sit on Education, Herd Health, and Medicines groups, plus I contribute to the Congress Programme. But when Board meets (four times a year – in-person at the Gloucester HQ whenever possible), all members are welcome to comment on any aspect of development and decision making. There can be the occasional third-party meetings (expenses covered), contributions to government consultations, and then much of the business of running the association is done via email, with the support of the small, dedicated HQ team. I really would encourage other vets to consider joining the BCVA Board, it is really exciting to do something outside of your day-to-day work and to have contacts throughout the whole cattle vet world.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO NICKY OR ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE TEAM: OFFICE@CATTLEVET.CO.UK