

Environment Policy
ALTERNATIVE VETERINARY MEDICINE CENTRE
Information Sheet WS013/07
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AVMC ENVIRONMENT POLICY

We believe that every business should have an environmental policy. At the AVMC, we have been concentrating on this aspect of our activity since the early 1980s. We welcome input from clients, on this important feature of our work, thereby helping to sharpen our policy. We are also happy to advise clients, by sharing our methods.

We aim to damage the planet as little as possible, by our activities. The following are the steps we have taken:

RECYCLING

We attempt to recycle as many items as we can, facilities allowing.

- Aluminium is sorted and goes to any compatible charity that can sell it for recycling, to augment their funds.
- Steel cans and other steel items are separated and taken to the local Council site, for recycling by the Local Authority. Even used office staples are collected, resulting in a surprising weight of steel per annum.
- Copper and lead are put for separate recycling.
- Rubber bands are returned to the Royal Mail, for re-use.
- Cardboard is put for recycling by the Local Authority.
- Packaging is made from blown wheat or potato and is composted at the Council site.
- Old car batteries are used for electric fencing, for a number of years, then properly recycled when useless.
- Non-rechargeable torch batteries are recycled at the Council site.
- Paper is separated and put in special containers at the Council site.

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- Plastic bottles are taken for recycling by the Local Authority, from our 'green box'.
- Glass containers are put in the 'green box', also for recycling.
- Clothing and textile items are put in a special container at the Council site, for sorting and distribution to recycling, to disposal or to needy causes, depending upon the item.
- Food waste is composted at home. All our food is [organic](#), so our vegetables are not grown in chemicals.
- Plastics are recycled at a special collection point.
- Tetrapak-type containers are recycled at a special collection point.
- Machinery and equipment, that has reached the end of its 'life', is minutely dismantled, useful parts being retained before useless components are separated out and distributed for recycling, as above.
- Timber is either stored for re-use or used as heating fuel.
- We have need of information on how to recycle used vehicle tyres.

CHEMICALS

All too readily, the modern culture allows us all to slip into the 'convenience' of manufactured chemicals. It is surprisingly easy, however, to find another way around most challenges for which we seek a chemical solution.

- We do not purchase chemicals, other than animal-friendly and eco-friendly household reagents and toiletries, buying organically-derived ones were possible, none of which have been tested on animals.
- We use no weed-killing (herbicides) or other chemicals in the veterinary premises, garden or small-holding. We leave certain areas to 'run wild' for conservation purposes and intentionally have a relaxed policy to weeds and plant life on the premises.
- We use no bleach.
- We vacuum-clean and steam-clean the premises, so disinfectants are not necessary. If we are visited by a case of parvo-virus, for instance, we do use a disinfectant that claims to be the most environmentally friendly one available.
- We use only natural odour control, on the rare occasions that it is necessary.
- We 'farm' and garden organically, although we have not applied for a [Soil Association](#) Symbol, as we produce no food for sale. Our animals

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(including cattle, pigs, chickens and horses) spend their entire natural lives with us.

- We are vegetarian and only eat organic food, so the household food waste is all safely compostable and cannot do harm if the free-range laying hens find it.
- Our surface drainage all stays on site, entering a septic tank.
- We use 'organic' and water-based paints, avoiding many of the problems associated with the solvents in 'normal' paints.
- We use recycled paper for all our headed paper, envelopes, and leaflets. We do not use coloured papers. We have arranged to use environmentally-friendly inks in printing work. Books are printed on recycled paper. Tissues, toilet paper and kitchen rolls are made from recycled paper and are not bleached or coloured.

OUR IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT

Clearly, many of the above measures impact favourably upon our immediate environment. In addition, we would list these points.

- We farm and garden [organically](#) and use no [chemicals](#) for weed or pest control.
- We have 1½ acres of 'nature reserve', which is mainly wetland woodland.
- We use dung and compost for returning natural fertility to the ground.
- We re-use our 'grey water'.

ENERGY USE

Reduction of energy usage is a vital measure to protect our environment.

- We have solar-heating panels fitted to our hot-water system.
- We have increased the loft/roof insulation on the premises.
- We are frugal with electricity (please ask for a light if the Waiting Room is becoming too dim in the evening!).
- We use environmental, long-life light bulbs, where possible.
- In the winter, we dress warmly, rather than turning up the heating too high.
- When purchasing equipment, e.g. refrigerators and freezers, we examine energy rating and manufacturer ethics as a high priority.

MEDICINES

- Wherever possible, we purchase herbs, aromatherapy oils and ointments that have been grown organically.
- We never knowingly purchase or sell products that have been tested on animals. We go to great lengths to check (our very occasional use of conventional drugs breaks this rule).
- If clients wish for vegetarian or vegan medicines only, we can advise on this.
- Our homeopathic pillules are not lactose (milk sugar).
- We research sources, to minimise ecological damage or threat to endangered species or eco-systems (e.g. sandalwood groves).

CARBON EMISSIONS

- We aim to be at least 'carbon-neutral', i.e. we arrange that sufficient trees should be planted each year, on our behalf, to compensate for our electricity, heating oil and motor fuel use. This is arranged by Future Forests. We still aim to minimise carbon emissions, nonetheless, since that is the most important way forward and the 'carbon-neutral' tag can be misleading.
- We purchase vehicles incorporating the latest environment-saving technology.
- We buy equipment (freezers, equipment, light bulbs, etc.) that are energy and environment saving and are ethically manufactured.

RESPECT FOR ANIMALS

- We do not purchase any products (except, of course, very occasional conventional drugs) that have been tested on animals.
- We purchase no leather products, clothing, shoes or belts.
- We have paid a large sum of money to have the luxury leather upholstery removed from the practice car, in order to make a statement to the manufacturers, that 'leather' is not necessarily 'good'. We seek change.
- We constantly review new products, whether nutritional or medicinal, for their positive or negative impact on animals. This applies as well to their source, manufacture or preparation as to their usage. In addition, we scrutinise a manufacturer's general ethics and global behaviour.

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