

**POLICING WELFARE AT UK REPTILE SHOWS – FINDINGS FROM THE LAST THREE EVENTS**

**Dr Tariq Abou-Zahr** BVSc ECZM(Avian) Resident MRCVS

Vets Now Exotics (Formerly Great Western Exotics), Swindon, [ta9797@my.bristol.ac.uk](mailto:ta9797@my.bristol.ac.uk)

Exotic animal vets with a knowledge of herpetoculture have a key role to play in the policing of animal health and welfare at reptile/amphibian breeder's meetings in the United Kingdom. Currently, the largest such meetings are organised by the International Herpetological Society (IHS) and take place three times a year, in Doncaster. Under the Pet Animals Act 1951, no sale of livestock in the course of a business is permitted at these events and sellers are non-commercial private keepers disposing of surplus stock. The main welfare issues seen at the last three shows include: containers which do not allow animals to turn around comfortably, lack of perching for arboreal species such as tree boas/pythons, lack of suitable substrate provision and lack of security for shy animals. The main health concerns seen include necrotic digits, poor body condition score, dysecdysis and "morph related" health defects. The proportion of animals deemed to be in need of veterinary attention at these events has been very low (<0.1%).