

National Board Report

A Quarterly Newsletter of the National Board Examination Committee for Veterinary Medicine

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Office Staff Doubles

The next time you call the NBEC office, you may hear a different voice on the other end of the line. Since the NBEC became an independent organization in January 1996, I have served as the NBEC's only staff member, but the time has come for some assistance. On September 4, Mrs. Tonee Vander Vliet will begin working as a part time secretary for the NBEC. Tonee will also be working part time for the North Dakota Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners, whose records will be moved into the NBEC office on September 1.

Tonee is a 1996 graduate of Colorado State University, with a major in equine science. A native of Mandan, ND (the city across the Missouri river from Bismarck), Tonee grew up in Ft. Collins, CO, and moved back to North Dakota last year. She has worked as a veterinary assistant and office manager for veterinary hospitals in Ft. Collins and Mandan. Tonee will be assisting with a variety of NBEC duties, and will be taking on additional responsibilities as the NBEC office gears up to handle the NAVLE over the next two years.

John R. Boyce
Executive Director



Tonee Vander Vliet

Examination Development Subcommittee Appointed

At its meeting in Baltimore on July 28, the NBEC appointed ten veterinarians to the newly created Examination Development Subcommittee (EDS). EDS members will be responsible for coordinating the development and review of items for the new computer based North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE). The new EDS members are:

Canine: Dr. Cheryl Dhein, Washington State University; and Dr. Stan Rubin, University of Saskatchewan.

Feline: Dr. Alice Wolf, Texas A&M University; and Dr. David Rosen, Heska Corporation.

Bovine: Dr. James Thorne, University of Missouri; and Dr. Frank Welcome, a private practitioner from Cherry Valley, NY.

Equine: Dr. Christopher Brown, Iowa State University; and Dr. Nathaniel Messer, University of Missouri.

Swine: Dr. David Reeves, University of Georgia.

Public Health: Dr. Gary Gackstetter, US Air Force.

Collectively, EDS members are graduates of nine different veterinary schools, hold seven advanced degrees, and are certified by six different specialty boards. Some members have extensive experience with the present National Board Examination and Clinical Competency Test, while others are new to the national licensing examination program.

Dr. William Rosser chaired the NBEC task force that developed a job description for EDS members and prepared a list of persons invited to serve. Dr. Rosser, who represented the AVMA Council on Education on the NBEC until last month (see article on page 2), stated, "the members of the task force were

pleased that we were able to assemble such a distinguished group of content experts to help guide the development of the NAVLE."

The task force began by deciding that a 10-member EDS, with members representing various species practice areas, would allow adequate coverage of the majority of the content on the NAVLE, while yielding a committee of manageable size.

EDS members will be responsible for identifying individuals to write items for the NAVLE, and for helping to assemble panels of content experts for review of items and draft examinations. They will also be called upon to assist with NAVLE scoring key validation, and will be responsible for continual evaluation and maintenance of the NAVLE item bank.

The EDS members will meet with members of the NBEC in Philadelphia on September 25-26 for an orientation and planning meeting at the offices of the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME). At that time, NBME staff will review the status of the existing NAVLE item bank, and identify areas of the bank where item development efforts should be targeted. The NBEC and the EDS will also work with NBME staff to develop plans for implementation of the NAVLE beginning in November 2000.

EDS members were appointed to initial terms of one, two, or three years, and are eligible for appointment to a maximum of three terms.

Dr. Catherine Cross, NBEC Chair, noted, "we welcome these members to the EDS and look forward to working with them on the development of the new computer based examination."

Hawe Succeeds Rosser as COE Representative

At the end of the July meeting, Dr. Richard Hawe of Alexandria, VA succeeded Dr. William Rosser as the NBEC member representing the AVMA Council on Education. Dr. Hawe, who was elected to the Council in 1996 representing private small animal clinical practice, is no stranger to the NBEC. He served on the NBEC from 1988-97 as one of the two representatives of the American Animal Hospital Association. Dr. Hawe is a partner in the Alexandria Animal Hospital.

Dr. Rosser represented the National Association of Federal Veterinarians on the NBEC from 1984-93, and has been serving as the Council on Education's representative on the NBEC since 1993, making him the longest tenured NBEC member since the committee was restructured in 1980. Dr. Rosser, who is serving as Chair of the Council this year, has retired from the Texas Department of Health, where he was Chief of the Bureau of Food and Drug Safety. He and his wife recently moved from Austin to Lubbock, where he will be working part time for Texas Tech University as a consultant on public health and food safety matters.

The Council on Education is the body responsible for accreditation of veterinary schools and colleges, and also has oversight responsibility for several other AVMA programs, including the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates.

From the Past: History of the NBEC Tenth in a Series

When the NBE was first administered in 1954, it consisted of multiple choice questions, which represented a relatively new approach to testing at that time. Multiple choice examinations, in spite of their critics, remain the overwhelming choice for licensure and certification testing. The NBE was a national examination, but individual licensing boards continued to offer their own practical licensing examinations.

At the July 1972 meeting of the National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (NBVME), Dr. V.D. Stauffer discussed a new type of clinical simulation examination being developed to assess the competence of physicians. It was noted that, if such an examination were available for evaluating veterinary licensure candidates, it "would provide a potential replacement for some part of the current practical examination used by many state boards of examiners." A committee was appointed to "study methods of developing such an objective evaluation of clinical competence." Members of the committee, chaired by Dr. Stauffer, included Drs. R.K. Anderson, S.E. Strahm, R.C. Mobley, F.K. Ramsey, M.J. Swenson, and E.E. Saulman.

In 1973, the committee surveyed the licensing boards to assess their interest in a written practical examination. The boards were sent a sample of a "latent image self-evaluation test." Responses from boards were overwhelmingly positive.

Sample written practical examinations were offered to candidates in 1974 and 1975, and PES conducted studies comparing candidate performance on the NBE and the clinical simulation problems. A PES report submitted to the NBVME in January 1976 recommended that the NBVME "consider further development of clinical simulations." Justification for this recommendation included positive evaluations from candidates, apparent content validity of the problems, and a good correlation between candidate performance on the NBE and the simulation problems.

At the January 1976 meeting, a committee was appointed to "develop a proposal for research and development on the use of clinical simulation in veterinary medical licensing examination." Members of this new committee were Drs. R.B. Talbot, D.T. Albrecht, and S.E. Strahm. Dr. Talbot reported to the NBVME in July 1977 that proposals for the development of a Clinical Competency Test had been submitted to five companies. Four proposals were received, and the NBVME subsequently voted in July 1978 to select PES to develop the CCT using "linear patient management problems." Interestingly, the company that did not submit a proposal was the National Board of Medical Examiners.

Next issue: The CCT is developed and administered for the first time.

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The purpose of the *National Board Report* is to educate, to inform, and to communicate information about the objectives and programs of the NBEC. The opinions and views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official opinions, views, or policies of the NBEC or any of its members, unless expressly so stated.

Michael G. Groves, DVM, PhD, ACVM, *Chair*; R.B. Baker, DVM, *Chair-Elect*; Nancy L. Collins, DVM, *Secretary-Treasurer*; Catherine Cross, DVM, ABVP, *Past Chair*; Donald D. Draper, DVM, PhD, MBA; Dean Frey, DVM, ABVP; Richard S. Hawe, DVM, ABVP; Norman LaFaunce, DVM, ACT; Roger A. Magnusson, DVM, ABVP; Al Hopkins, DVM; Jenna Jones, *Public Member*; James Brace, DVM, ACVIM; David Sandals, DVM, MSc; John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD, *Executive Director*

Baltimore Meeting Highlights

One of the main items on the agenda of the NBEC's July 28 meeting in Baltimore was the appointment of the Examination Development Subcommittee, which is described on page 1. However, the meeting, chaired by Dr. Catherine Cross, dealt with several other issues of importance to the licensing examination program.

Score Reporting Service

Since the early 1960's scores from the national examinations have been reported by the Interstate Reporting Service, operated for the NBEC by the Professional Examination Service (PES) in New York. As noted in the last issue of the *National Board Report*, the NBEC agreed in May to authorize the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) to assume responsibility for the score reporting service. At the July meeting, the NBEC received an

update from the AAVSB on the development of the new score database and the transfer of the score records from PES to the AAVSB. Present plans call for PES to continue issuing score reports until mid-September, at which time, assuming that the new database is operating properly, all reporting will be transferred to the AAVSB. The NBEC, the AAVSB and PES will cooperate to ensure a smooth transition. Initial examination scores, for the NBE and CCT and the new NAVLE, will continue to be reported to licensing boards directly by the vendor. For more information on the new score reporting service, contact the AAVSB office at 816-931-1504.

Clinical Proficiency Examination

The Clinical Proficiency Examination (CPE) is a four day practical examination of clinical skills, used as part of the certification process of the Educational

Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (ECFVG). As presently structured, the CPE is quite expensive to administer, and it is presently offered at only two sites in the US. That has resulted in a backlog of approximately 18 months for candidates seeking to take the examination. The NBEC recently sent a letter to the AVMA indicating its interest in assuming responsibility for coordinating the CPE. If the NBEC becomes involved with the CPE, it would work with an outside testing organization on ways to enhance the reliability and efficiency of the examination.

New Officers

NBEC officers for 1998-99 include Dr. Michael Groves, Chair; Dr. R.B. Baker, Chair-Elect; Dr. Nancy Collins, Secretary-Treasurer; and Dr. Catherine Cross, Past Chair. The NBEC's next meeting will be January 14 in Phoenix.

NBEC Member Profile: Dr. Nancy Collins

Dr. Nancy Collins is one of four NBEC members designated by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB). Dr. Collins was appointed to her first term in 1995, and was elected NBEC Secretary-Treasurer in July.

A native of Terre Haute, Indiana, Dr. Collins and her family moved to California when she was a child. She received her DVM degree from the University of California at Davis in 1976. After one year in a small animal practice, she founded Collins Equine Veterinary Services which she has operated for the past 21 years. Collins Equine is a predominately ambulatory practice, caring for show, recreational and companion horses, and is located in Alta Loma, a suburb east of Los Angeles.

Dr. Collins was appointed to the California Board of Examiners in Veterinary Medicine in 1990, and served four years as the Board's President. Her interest in national issues led her to become actively involved with the AAVSB, which she

also served as President. Dr. Collins has spoken extensively on licensing board issues at a variety of state, regional, and national meetings. Never one to turn down an opportunity to serve her profession, Dr. Collins was recently elected to the Board of Directors of the American Association of Equine Practitioners.

Dr. Collins' husband Rodney, a classmate from UC Davis,

is a small animal practitioner.

In her spare time, Dr. Collins enjoys skiing and golf. Her "family" includes five horses (a 31 year old appaloosa, a 25 year old paint, a 20 year old thoroughbred, a 12 year old thoroughbred, and "Timely Caper," a nine year thoroughbred/Trakehner gelding, pictured with Dr. Collins below), two female German Shepherd Dogs, and two "aged" cats.



Audit Completed

The NBEC's annual audit, completed in June by Brady, Martz & Associates of Bismarck, was accepted by the committee in July. Copies were mailed on July 30 to each organization represented on the NBEC, along with a copy of the NBEC's 1997 Annual Report.

The audit shows total 1997 revenue of \$1,201,490, and total expenses of \$1,119,629, resulting in an increase in unrestricted net assets for the year of \$81,861. Main expense items were \$744,310 paid to PES for test administration, \$125,560 paid to the AAVSB, and examination research and development expenses of \$96,735.

Copies of the audit are available from the NBEC office.



NBEC members and staff at the Baltimore meeting. Left to right: John Boyce, David Sandals, Don Draper, Norman LaFauce, Jenna Jones, R.B. Baker, Roger Magnusson, Catherine Cross, James Brace, Michael Groves, Dean Frey, William Rosser, Nancy Collins, and Al Hopkins.

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