

National Board Report

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Deadlines

This month, Tonee and Anita were busy processing applications for the April NAVLE administration. The April application period is always challenging, because there is relatively little turnaround time between the receipt of scores from the November-December administration and the deadline for applying for the April examination. We appreciate the efforts of candidates and licensing boards to meet the deadlines.

When you're working up against fixed dates (the dates of the testing window), any failure to adhere to the established deadlines makes things difficult. The NBVME is always looking for ways to make the application process easier for candidates and for licensing boards. Last year, we proposed that the NBVME office handle all NAVLE candidate approvals, without having candidates apply through and be approved by a licensing board, as they do now. This proposal was not acceptable to some boards, which want to continue to review and approve their own applicants.

As an alternative, we are considering the idea of having boards approve candidates once for the fall administration, and to have that approval also apply to any candidate who does not pass and who wishes to take the examination again in April through the same board. This would make it easier for candidates to reapply for the April administration, and it would also reduce the workload on licensing board offices, because they would only have to approve candidates once each year. We welcome comments on this idea.

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD
Executive Director

Kansas City Meeting Report

The NBVME met at the Fairmont Hotel in Kansas City on January 18. Following are some highlights of the meeting.

NAVLE administration overseas

The NBVME received a report from the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) on administration of the NAVLE at select Prometric testing centers overseas (in countries where there is an AVMA accredited veterinary school). After receiving assurances that the security of the examination would be equivalent to that in US and Canadian sites, the board approved a motion to offer the NAVLE at Prometric centers in London (England), Arnhem (The Netherlands), and Auckland (New Zealand) beginning with the April 2003 testing window. The examination will be available at these three sites only to candidates from the five overseas accredited schools. Following the April administration, the NBVME will evaluate the process to see if additional sites should be added and/or if the overseas sites should be made available to other NAVLE candidates. In a separate action, the board approved a \$250 surcharge to cover increased costs associated with administering the NAVLE overseas.

NAVLE and QE score reports

The board voted to begin to provide NAVLE summary score reports to all AVMA accredited veterinary schools, not just to schools in North America. These reports indicate how the school's candidates perform on the NAVLE, compared with all criterion candidates. The reports provide only average scores for groups of candidates, and do not identify individual candidates or their scores. The board also voted to provide summary score reports for candidates taking the Qualifying

Examination (QE) to all schools who request them. These reports will follow the format used for NAVLE school score reports.

ECFVG candidate eligibility

The board voted to amend the annual letter agreements between the NBVME and individual licensing boards regarding the eligibility of ECFVG candidates to take the NAVLE. Licensing boards will be asked to verify that ECFVG candidates have completed ECFVG step 2 (English proficiency) before approving them to take the NAVLE. This requirement will be effective with the fall 2003 NAVLE administration.

VA benefits

The board agreed to proceed with plans to have the NAVLE approved by the Veterans Administration (VA) so that eligible veterans can receive reimbursement from the VA for the NAVLE fee.

Technician examination

Board members gave further consideration to a proposal for the NBVME to seek to assume ownership of the Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE). The VTNE is presently owned by the Professional Examination Service (PES) and sponsored by the AAVSB. Given uncertainties about the NBVME's role in owning an examination for which it had no responsibility for policies governing its use, the board agreed that the AAVSB should deal directly with PES on this issue.

Budget

In Executive Session, the board approved a proposed NBVME budget for 2003, including projected income of \$1,436,936 and expenses of \$1,392,414.

Next meetings

The NBVME will meet in Philadelphia on April 10-11 to participate in the annual NAVLE form review. The July NBVME meeting will be in Denver on Monday, July 21, and the NBVME will seek to meet at one of the AVMA convention hotels.

Job Analysis Nears Completion

Members of the NAVLE job analysis task force met in Kansas City on February 10 to review the results of the validation survey and make recommendations on the format of the job analysis report. At the meeting, which was facilitated by Dr. Steve Nettles and Jaime Walla of Applied Measurement Professionals (AMP), the task force reviewed a 159-page report containing data collected by AMP from the validation survey. Survey questionnaires were mailed in November and December to approximately 3,000 practicing veterinarians in North America; over 600 were returned to AMP by the deadline. Responses were received from a broad segment of the profession, representing all major demographic categories.

Survey respondents were asked to rate the significance of various activities performed by practicing veterinarians, and one or more lists of clinical diagnoses and problems organized by animal species. The survey also allowed respondents to provide written comments, which were collected and presented to the task force for evaluation. Finally, survey participants were asked to make recommendations on the NAVLE test specifications (how much weight should be given to the various content areas) and the task force carefully evaluated that information.

AMP is preparing a report for the NBVME to consider it at its April meeting in Philadelphia. Copies of the final job analysis report will be available to interested parties from the NBVME office.

From the Past: State Board Questions

Number 8 in a Series

This series features questions taken from *Veterinary State Board Questions and Answers*, written by V.G. Kimball in 1917. These questions are from the bacteriology section.

Questions

1. Define (a) spore, (b) flagella, (c) complement.
2. Name five common culture-media.
3. Define antiseptic and disinfectant and give examples of each.
4. What disease is produced by (a) Koch's bacillus, (b) Nicolaier's bacillus, (c) bacillus of Bang?
5. If unexpectedly called upon to do so, how could one properly collect tissues in the country for bacteriologic examination?
6. Define mallein.
7. Define immunity and give varieties.

Answers

1. (a) The reproductive element of bacteria. Spores are very resistant to the influence of temperature and the action or chemical agents.
- (b) Whip-like processes attached to the ends of, or all over, certain microorganisms. They impart the power of motility to the bacteria.
- (c) A thermolabile substance present in normal blood-serum, which influences the action of the immune body.
2. Bouillon, agar, blood-serum, potato, milk.
3. An antiseptic is an agent which prevents the formation of pus. Examples: corrosive sublimate,

phenol. A disinfectant is an agent which destroys bacteria. Examples: strong solutions of corrosive sublimate, formaldehyde, actual cautery.

4. (a) tuberculosis; (b) tetanus; (c) infectious abortion.

5. Procure a fruit-jar with a tight fitting cover. Boil same for thirty minutes. Open the animal and, with a sterilized knife, cut out and carefully place in the jar specimens desired to be examined; avoid contaminating with any other objects; seal quickly, using paraffin over the top.

6. A liquid extract from cultures of the glanders bacillus used as a diagnostic agent for glanders. It is prepared by growing glanders bacilli in a flask of glycerinated bouillon for 6 to 8 weeks; the growth is filtered off and the filtrate is concentrated by boiling; a small amount of a preservative, such as phenol, is added.

7. A state in which the body is resistant to disease. *Natural immunity*, possessed by all the individuals of a class, by reason of age or racial peculiarity. Cattle are naturally immune to glanders. *Acquired immunity*, obtained by having overcome an attack of a pathogenic microorganism (active), or as a result of the injection of a serum from an animal which has acquired an active immunity against the organism in question (passive).

Next issue: Theory and practice of medicine.

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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 NBVME. The opinions and views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official opinions, views, or policies of the NBVME or any of its members, unless expressly so stated.

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Qualifying Examination Updates

January 2 Administration

A total of 36 candidates took the NBVME's Qualifying Examination (QE) at Prometric testing centers on January 2, 2003. Key validation was completed by NBVME members on January 18, and the passing standard was approved by the NBVME Executive Committee on February 3. The same passing standard approved last fall for the August 15 QE administration was applied to the examination given on January 2. Using that standard (a scaled score of 203), 25 of the 36 candidates (69%) passed. The QE is a basic science examination used as part of the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE) of the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB).

ECFVG use of QE

Discussions continue on the possible use of the QE by the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (ECFVG). Members of the ECFVG reviewed a copy of the QE at their October 2002 meeting. Last month, the NBVME provided a detailed written response to the ECFVG regarding questions raised about the examination as a result of the October review.

California use of QE

At its January meeting, the NBVME reviewed correspondence received from the California Veterinary Medical Board regarding the possible use of the QE in California. California is exploring the possible use of the QE in lieu of its own state board examination as part of its licensure process for all candidates. The NBVME responded to California indicating its interest in investigating further the possible use of the QE by the California Board.

QE item writers

On February 24, four new QE item writers for 2003 participated in an item writing workshop at the NBME office in Philadelphia. The new item writers are Drs. Lola Hudson (North Carolina State University, anatomy), Patricia Heine (formerly of the University of Illinois, histology), Earl Dixon (Tuskegee University, physiology), and Paul Gibbs (University of Florida, virology).

On February 25, the new item writers and five of the six item writers returning from last year reviewed forms of the QE to be administered in August 2003 and January 2004. The returning item writers include Drs. P.T. Purinton (University of Georgia, anatomy), Walter Hsu (Iowa State University, pharmacology), Melissa Kennedy (University of Tennessee, immunology), Cliff Monahan (Ohio State University, parasitology), John VanVleet (Purdue University, pathology), and Amanda Fales-Williams (Iowa State University, clinical pathology).

NBVME Member Profile: Dr. Sylvie Latour

The NBVME's newest member is Dr. Sylvie Latour, appointed last November to replace Dr. David Sandals as the NBVME member designated by the Canadian National Examining Board (NEB). Dr. Latour attended her first NBVME meeting in January.

A native of Montreal, Dr. Latour received her DVM degree from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Montreal in 1983. After completing an internship at the FMV, she opened a small animal practice near Montreal, where she worked from 1984 until 2000.

In April 2000, Dr. Latour left private practice to join the staff of the Ordre des médecins vétérinaires du Québec, the licensing body for veterinarians in that province. At the Ordre, she serves as Director of Professional Development, and the duties of her department include admission, continuing education, professional

inspection, and organizing the annual meeting. For pleasure, she occasionally works weekends in a small animal hospital.

Dr. Latour has been active in organized veterinary medicine in Quebec and nationally in Canada. She was appointed to the NEB as the Quebec representative in 1998, and presently serves as NEB Chair. She is also the Canadian representative to the AVMA Council on Education. She is serving as Treasurer for the 23rd World Buiatrics Congress, to be held in Quebec city next July.

Her interest in the NBVME and the NAVLE stems primarily from her role as a proofreader for the French versions of the examination, a responsibility she has had for the past three years. The NAVLE, as evidenced by the words "North American" in its name, is one of a very few examinations that is used for licensure in both the US and Canada, and Dr. Latour is committed to ensuring the



continuing quality of the examination.

Dr. Latour loves cats. She and her husband enjoy traveling, and playing golf and tennis. She is presently taking Spanish lessons to become proficient in a third language.

Species Specific Exams Updated

On January 17, six NBVME members met with four representatives of the AAVSB to complete work on updating the NBVME's two species specific examinations. The review teams evaluated each form of the examination to ensure that the items were appropriate for use, and that they reflected current practice. Items were replaced or revised as necessary. An additional form of the small animal examination was also developed.

After the forms were finalized, the review teams participated in a content-based

standard setting exercise for each form, under the direction of Dr. Raja Subhiyah of the NBME. This work will result in a recommended passing standard for each form of each exam.

The companion animal review team consisted of Drs. Doug Aspros, Jim Dalley, Meg Glattly, Al Hopkins, Georgie Ludwig, and Mike Thomas. Members of the equine team included Drs. Nancy Collins, Sonny Corley, Lynn Lawhon, and Roger Magnusson.

The revised species specific examinations should be ready for use by licensing boards this spring.

Reports

The following reports have been completed recently:

- 2001-2002 NAVLE Technical Report. This report, covering the fall 2001 and spring 2002 NAVLE administrations, was mailed this month to each licensing board and veterinary school. A pdf version of the report was also posted on the NBVME's web site.
- Technical report on the August 2002 Qualifying Examination. This report was mailed this month to the AAVSB and to each licensing board that accepts PAVE certificates. A technical report on the January 2 administration is being prepared.
- Report on the September 2002 QE validity study. This report was sent to the six veterinary schools that participated in the study, along with summary score reports for the student participants. A copy of the validity study report was also sent to the AAVSB and to the ECFVG.

Copies of these reports are available from the NBVME office.

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