

# National Board Report

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## Irregular Behavior

The NBVME conducted its fifth irregular behavior hearing following the January meeting in San Antonio. Irregular behavior is defined in the NAVLE Candidate Bulletin as "any behavior that undermines the application, assessment, or certification processes of the NBVME or that threatens the integrity of the NAVLE certification process." The hearing involved a candidate who had received and shared some board study materials that included questions and topics that matched NAVLE content. The materials were subsequently posted on an internet site. After reviewing all the evidence and testimony, the hearing panel voted not to take any disciplinary action against the candidate.

These five hearings have cost the NBVME and several NAVLE candidates a great deal of time and money. In most of the cases, the candidate's main defense was that they did not know that it was wrong to help other candidates prepare for the NAVLE. The NBVME finds this surprising, given the fact that all NAVLE candidates must agree to a clear statement of confidentiality in order to take the examination. In the coming months, the NBVME will be taking several actions to help candidates better understand the importance of maintaining examination security. The board appreciates the assistance of others in these efforts.

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD  
Executive Director

## NAVLE Self-Assessments Now Available

On January 22, the NBVME released new NAVLE Self-Assessments. The Self-Assessments were developed with the help of the National Board of Medical Examiners, using items taken from the NAVLE item bank. They are designed to help NAVLE candidates become familiar with the examination and to identify their strengths and weaknesses in the various content areas.

Two 200-item forms are available for a cost of \$50 each. Candidates have 30 days to complete a Self-Assessment once it is purchased. When they finish the examination, candidates receive a score feedback report.

Each accredited veterinary school may receive two vouchers allowing faculty members to view a Self-Assessment. Schools interested in receiving vouchers should contact the NBVME office.

The web-based Self-Assessments work on Windows or Macintosh computers using Internet Explorer, Firefox, or Safari. Detailed information on the Self-Assessments, and a no-cost sample assessment, can be accessed through a link on the NBVME's web site, [www.nbvme.org](http://www.nbvme.org).

## Species Specific Examinations Revised

In a memo dated January 16, the NBVME notified licensing boards of the availability of newly-revised species specific examinations.

There are two forms of the companion animal examination and two forms of the equine examination. Each 100-item form comes with an NBVME-recommended criterion referenced passing standard. The species specific examinations are printed in test booklets, and boards may order and administer them at any time. The examinations are scored as soon as they are received back in the NBVME office. The NBVME charges \$300 for each examination form; boards may charge candidates an additional test administration fee.

The species specific examinations were first developed by the NBVME in 1997 for use by licensing boards in disciplinary situations, but boards may now use them for other purposes. To date, they have been administered by ten licensing boards.

Licensing boards interested in using the species specific examinations should contact the NBVME office for ordering information.

# VETERINARY CLINICAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT

On January 5-6, 2008, the NBVME administered its Veterinary Clinical Skills Assessment (VCSA) for the fourth time. The VCSA is one of two options for the fourth step of the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE), a certification program for graduates of non-accredited veterinary schools operated by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards. The VCSA is given in the veterinary technology facilities at Cedar Valley College in Dallas, TX.

Four PAVE candidates participated, as did three reference candidates (senior students or recent graduates from accredited schools). The use of reference candidates helps ensure the validity of the examination and aids in determining the passing standard.

The VCSA includes 16 stations. Four of the stations evaluate clinical communication skills by requiring the candidate to communicate with an actor portraying a client.

Following the administration, the NBVME Executive Committee reviewed the evaluation forms and approved a passing standard. Three of the four PAVE candidates passed.

## From the Past: State Board Questions

*Number 23 in a Series*

This is the final installment of questions from the 1914 book, *Veterinary State Board Questions and Answers*, by V.G. Kimball. The book was kindly donated to the NBVME by Bismarck veterinarian Dr. Donald Hastings.

### Questions

1. Where and how would you look for "measly pork"?
2. Name some of the diseases that may be transmitted through the medium of milk.
3. Give the cause for (a) ropy milk, (b) blue milk, (c) bitter milk.
4. Name ten inflammatory and five non-inflammatory diseases.
5. State the advantages and disadvantages of a pair of mules over a pair of horses.

### Answers

1. With the naked eye the cysts may be seen in the intermuscular tissue of the heart, tongue, larynx, abdomen, diaphragm, flanks, jaws, neck, sternum, intercostal region, and adductors of the hind legs. In case of doubt, a microscopic examination will help in ascertaining the presence

or absence of the larva with its hooked scolex.

2. Typhoid fever, diphtheria, scarlet fever, tuberculosis, foot-and-mouth disease, actinomycosis, anthrax, cholera infantum, etc.
3. (a) Inflammation of the udder may cause ropy milk, but in the majority of cases it is due to *B. lactus viscosus*. (b) *Bacillus cyanogenus*. (c) Eating of certain foods by cows (lupines, ragweed, cabbages, Swedish turnips); it occurs in old milk due to growth of germs.
4. Inflammatory: Pneumonia, pleurisy, rhinitis, enteritis, gastritis, peritonitis, hepatitis, nephritis, arthritis, and pericarditis. Non-inflammatory: Pernicious anaemia, leukaemia, chronic hydrocephalus, nasal polypi, tetanus.
5. Advantages: less susceptible to digestive disorders, laminitis, azoturia, glanders, influenza, foot lameness, heat prostration, etc.; require less elaborate stables; longer period of serviceability; stand hard usage better. Disadvantages: practically none; many people are prejudiced against the mule for no valid reason; the mule is not adapted to heavy draft work because of size.

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## JANUARY NBVME MEETING

The NBVME held its winter meeting in San Antonio on January 25-26, 2008. Dr. Meg Glattly chaired the meeting.

In addition to actions reported elsewhere in this newsletter, the board reviewed updated financial reports, discussed test delivery concerns with NBME representatives, reviewed and updated a list of action items associated with the new Strategic Plan, discussed potential changes in the NAVLE school score reports, and reviewed proposals dealing with temporary test sites and possible revisions to the NAVLE application process.

The board accepted the audit for the 2006-07 fiscal year prepared by Brady Martz & Associates. The audit shows yearly revenue of \$2,888,257, expenses of \$2,134,105, and unrestricted net assets as of June 30, 2007 of \$2,737,921.

One of the new priority areas for the strategic plan is Outreach. That goal is being addressed by having NBVME members meet with representatives of constituent groups, and through planned visits by NBVME members to individual licensing boards. The visits will allow licensing board members to gain a better understanding of what the NBVME is and what services it provides to licensing boards.

The next NBVME meeting will be in Vancouver, BC in late July, prior to the World Veterinary Congress.

NBVME in San Antonio: Mike Thomas, Ellen O'Connor, Lila Miller, Rick Tubbs, Ben Franklin, Jim Dalley, Dennis Feinberg, Linda Blythe, Meg Glattly, Dale Boyle, Tom Hairgrove, and John Boyce. Not pictured: Sylvie Latour and Fran Kallfelz

## NAVLE and QE Item Writers for 2008

Each year, the NBVME invites content experts to serve as item writers for its examinations. The NBVME's Examination Development Advisory Board has primary responsibility for identifying NAVLE item writers. QE item writers are selected by NBVME staff, with input from NBVME members and present and former item writers. Experienced item writers are encouraged to serve more than one year if they wish, but the NBVME also involves new individuals in the item writing process each year.

New NAVLE item writers for 2008 include Drs. Alan Cober (canine); Fred Scott (feline); Amanda House and Fernando Marques (equine); Morgan Morrow (swine); and Karen Cornell and Nadine Hackman (professional behavior, communications, and practice management). They will join 14 returning NAVLE item writers to write and review questions to be used for the first time on examinations administered in 2009-10.

New QE item writers for 2008 include Drs. Kevin Anderson (anatomy), Pete Bill (pharmacology), Mary Hondalus (bacteriology), and Sanjay Kapil (viro-

logy and immunology). These individuals will work with returning QE item writers Drs. Ron Green (principles of radiology), Paul Davenport and Abdelfattah Nour (physiology), Ron Johnson (pharmacology), Susan Little (parasitology), Jon Patterson (pathology), and Elizabeth Spangler (clinical pathology) to write and review new QE items.

New NAVLE and QE item writers will participate in an item writing workshop at the NBME office in Philadelphia on February 26. During the workshop, participants will receive training from NBME staff, after which they will have the opportunity to write some items and review them as a group. This year, the NAVLE and QE item writers will be joined by eight members of the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine, who will receive training to help them write items for that organization's specialty board examination.

Forms of the QE to be administered in September 2008 and January and May 2009 will be reviewed and approved by all eleven 2008 QE item writers on February 27.



## 2007-08 NAVLE LETTER AGREEMENTS

Letters of Agreement between the NBVME and individual licensing boards covering the 2008-2009 NAVLE testing cycle will be mailed to boards in March.

The NAVLE candidate fee will increase from \$480 to \$500. The testing windows will be November 17 - December 13, 2008 and April 13-25, 2009. The application deadlines will be August 1 and January 3, which is approximately one week earlier than in previous years. This will allow scheduling permits to be mailed to candidates earlier and should, in turn, make it easier for candidates to make their desired testing appointments.

## Examination Statistics

### NAVLE

A total of 3,519 candidates took the NAVLE during the November 12 - December 8, 2007 testing window. This was about 300 fewer than last fall's record number. Scores were reported to licensing boards on January 29. There were 2,828 criterion candidates, 215 non-criterion candidates, and 476 foreign-trained candidates. Criterion candidates are senior students at AVMA accredited schools taking the examination for the first time.

The passing rate for fall 2007 criterion candidates, based on the passing standard approved by the NBVME Executive committee in mid-January, was about 92%, compared to 90% for the same group in fall 2006. At press time, the NBVME office has submitted 593 candidate eligibility records for the April 7-19, 2008 NAVLE administration.

### Qualifying Examination

The most recent web-based Qualifying Examination (QE) was administered to 148 PAVE candidates on January 17, 2008. The examination was offered in Grenada, St. Kitts, and Grand Cayman, at 19 sites in the US, and in Australia and Guam. Scores were reported to the AAVSB on February 25. The passing rate for the 114 first time test takers was 67.5%, which is similar to the passing rate for the previous two administrations.

A total of 113 third year students at Iowa State University and 87 third year students at the University of Minnesota also took the QE in January. Iowa State gave the exam for the first time last year. Minnesota is the third accredited school to use the examination; Western University has administered it to students at the end of their second year each May since 2005.