

National Board Report

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

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Visit to Chile

From May 9-11, I had the privilege of representing the NBEC at the Second International Seminar on Veterinary Sciences Education in the Americas, held in Santiago, Chile. The NBEC was invited to participate in this seminar by Dr. Victor Cubillos, President of COPEVET, the Pan American Council on Veterinary Sciences Education. I had met Dr. Cubillos, who is a faculty member at the veterinary school in Valdivia, Chile, at a meeting of the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges two years ago. He and Drs. Francisco Trigo of Mexico and Juan Espinosa of Peru were the organizers of the seminar.

Participants represented 13 countries in Latin America, North America, and Europe. The seminar focused on three broad topics: harmonization of veterinary education, accreditation of veterinary education, and certification of veterinary graduates. My presentation was entitled, "Professional certification of veterinarians in the USA."

The challenges faced by the veterinary profession in each of these areas are great. Harmonization of veterinary education is a major undertaking within a country, not to mention across several countries, each with a unique history, culture, and environment. Similarly, accreditation of veterinary schools is not easy when there are many schools and there is great variation from one school to another. Finally, in most Latin American countries, there is no system of licensure; anyone who graduates from a veterinary school in that country is eligible to practice in that country.

(continued on page 3)

NBEC Moves Forward on PAVE Examinations

Last year, the NBEC agreed to develop two new examinations for use by the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE), a new certification program for graduates of non-accredited veterinary colleges being developed by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB).

The Qualifying Examination is designed to test the candidate's knowledge of basic science or pre-clinical subjects. The examination includes five broad content areas: anatomy (including histology, principles of radiology and diagnostic imaging, and principles of surgery), physiology (including physiological chemistry/biochemistry, neurobiology, genetics, reproduction, endocrinology, and nutrition), pharmacology (including toxicology and principles of anesthesiology), microbiology (including bacteriology, virology, mycology, parasitology, immunology, public health, food safety, and epidemiology), and pathology (including clinical pathology). These areas are not covered adequately on the NAVLE, because all items on the NAVLE must be relevant to entry-level private clinical practice. The Qualifying Examination is being developed in cooperation with the National Board of Medical Examiners, the organization under contract to the NBEC to develop the NAVLE.

A panel of veterinarians met in Philadelphia last December to review items from the National Board Examination (NBE) item bank. They selected over 1,000 items that would be suitable for use on the Qualifying Examination. These items had been written for the NBE, but were deemed unsuitable for use

on the NAVLE because they were not clinically relevant. The panel then identified gaps in content coverage, and agreed to write new items to supplement the items already in the qualifying examination item bank. Additional item writers were also identified.

On May 14, the panel met again in Philadelphia to review and approve several hundred newly written items and to construct the first two draft forms of the Qualifying Examination.

Plans call for the Qualifying Examination to be administered twice each year at Prometric testing centers. The 2002 dates are January 3 and August 15. Like the NAVLE, the Qualifying Examination will be computer based, and will include some items with graphics. The examination will consist of 300 multiple choice items.

The AAVSB office will receive applications for the Qualifying Examination. Candidates will be able to apply to take the examination if they are graduate veterinarians or if they have completed at least 50% of the professional veterinary curriculum at their veterinary school. Candidates must also pass PAVE's English proficiency examinations before they are eligible to apply to take the Qualifying Examination.

Members of the Qualifying Examination panel included Drs. Franklin Ahrens (Pharmacology), Charles Short (Pharmacology), James Herman (Physiology), P. MohanKumar (Anatomy), Sheba MohanKumar (Histology), Diana Rosenstein (Radiology), Suzette LeClerc (Clinical Pathology), Jill McCutcheon (Pathology), Evelyn Kazacos (Pathology), William

(continued on page 3)

NBEC Membership Changes

Dr. George Cardinet, appointed to the NBEC last November by the AVMA Council on Education to replace the late Dr. Richard Hawe, resigned from the NBEC in April for personal reasons. In mid May, the NBEC was notified that the Council had appointed Dr. Douglas G. Aspros to succeed Dr. Cardinet. Dr. Aspros is a companion animal practitioner in White Plains, New York, and was elected to the Council on Education last July.

NAVLE Form Review Meetings

During two recent meetings in Philadelphia, NAVLE forms for administration to candidates in 2001-2002 were finalized.

During the first meeting in late March, the ten members of the NBEC's Examination Development Subcommittee worked with four recent graduates to review NAVLE items by content areas. The recent graduate participants were Drs. Brett Bower, Franklin KY (AUB 00), Mara Doughty, Marinette WI (ISU 96), Erin Fierheller, Leduc, AB (WCVM 00), and Alice Marie Gerty, Britton SD (CSU 00).

At the second meeting a week later, NBEC members were joined by two licensing board members, Dr. Susan Chadima of Maine and Dr. Georgie Ludwig of Illinois, to review and approve the final draft forms of the NAVLE.

From the Past: State Board Questions

Number 1 in a Series

Since the second issue of the *National Board Report* back in May 1996, we have included a series of articles on the history of the NBEC. The 17th article in the series, in the November 2000 issue, pretty much brought things up to date. Therefore, this issue marks the beginning of a new historical series.

A Bismarck veterinarian, Dr. Donald Hastings, recently donated to the NBEC a book entitled *Veterinary State Board Questions and Answers*, by Dr. V.G. Kimball, an Assistant Professor of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. The book was published by Lippencott in 1914; the second edition, which we have, was published in 1917. This series will present some sample questions from this book, and I hope that readers of the *National Board Report* find them interesting.

In the Preface, Dr. Kimball states, "Being intimately associated with veterinary students, the author is fully aware of the feelings of fear and mysticism with which they are possessed when confronted with the ordeal of taking a State Board examination. Partly to dispel those fears, but more to provide a means of self-quizzing, this work was undertaken."

Dr. Kimball selected these questions from actual state board examinations used in "ten or more of the more representative eastern and a few of the middle and western States."

Questions in the book are divided into ten chapters: Chemistry, Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology, Theory and Practice of Medicine,

Surgery, Obstetrics, Materia Medica and Therapeutics, Sanitary Science - Meat and Milk Hygiene, and Zootechnics.

Here are some questions from the Chemistry chapter, selected from 43 pages of chemistry questions and answers. As you read them, remember that these are from a book designed to help candidates prepare for state board examinations required to practice practice veterinary medicine.

1. Give the formula and chemical name of each of the following: a) washing soda, b) saltpetre, c) blue vitriol, d) corrosive sublimate, e) Glauber's salt, f) Rochelle salt.
2. What is lunar caustic? How is lunar caustic prepared and what is its medicinal use?
3. Name the compounds of mercury used in medicine.
4. Describe with explanation the manufacture of plaster of Paris.
5. Compare wine and brandy in respect to composition.
6. Name the antidotes that should be prescribed in case of poisoning by a) caustic alkalies, b) mineral acids, c) mercuric chloride.
7. Give the Pennsylvania State requirements for milk composition.
8. Describe a test for sugar in urine.
9. Name the principal salts of acetic acid and state which of the salts named are used in veterinary medicine.

The answers are on page 4.

Next month: test your knowledge of anatomy.

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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.

Douglas G. Aspros, DVM; R.B. Baker, DVM, *Past Chair*; Nancy L. Collins, DVM, *Chair*; Catherine Cross, DVM, DABVP; James Dalley, DVM, MS; Donald D. Draper, DVM, PhD, MBA; Michael G. Groves, DVM, PhD, DACVM; Al Hopkins, DVM; Jenna Jones, *Public Member*; Jan Krehbiel, DVM, PhD, DACVP; Norman LaFauce, DVM, DACT, *Chair-Elect*; Roger A. Magnusson, DVM, DABVP, *Secretary-Treasurer*; David Sandals, DVM, MSc. John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD, *Executive Director*

PAVE Examinations (continued from page 1)

Lawrence (Virology), Dieter Schifferli (Microbiology) and John Boyce (Microbiology).

The second examination for use in the PAVE program is the new Veterinary Clinical Skills Assessment (VCSA). The NBEC has appointed a panel of veterinarians to develop the new examination. The panel will meet in June to outline skills that need to be measured by the VCSA. The panel will be assisted by a professional psychometrician who will provide input on techniques that can be used to measure those skills in the most valid, reliable, and efficient manner. The panel will prepare a report to the NBEC for consideration at its July 17 meeting in Boston. Plans call for the VCSA to be available for administration beginning next year.

Visit to Chile (continued from page 1)

The European Union and Mexico have made the most progress in these areas, although the large number of veterinary schools (91 in the EU and 40 in Mexico) makes the work quite difficult. Dr. Rafael Hernandez, who heads Mexico's equivalent to the NBEC, gave an update on his country's remarkable progress in this area in recent years. The certification process in Mexico is voluntary, not mandatory like it is in the US. Recent graduates can take an examination covering general topics, while experienced practitioners can choose one in their area of expertise. Successful candidates receive a certificate that they can display in their office. Recertification is encouraged every five years.

On Thursday evening, Dr. Eldon Uhlenhopp of Iowa State University and I met with a group of Chilean veterinarians to discuss veterinary education and licensure in the United States and how our system might work in Chile.

NAVLE Update

The NAVLE was administered to nearly 800 candidates during the April 9-21, 2001 testing window. Scores were reported to licensing boards on May 17. Three candidates received accommodations, two in Canada and one in the US. We will have a complete report on the November-December 2000 and April 2001 administrations in the next (August) issue of the *National Board Report*.

The NAVLE candidate bulletin has been revised in preparation for examinations to be given during the November 19 - December 15, 2001 and April 8-20, 2002 testing windows. Bulletins will be sent to licensing boards by the end of May. The revised bulletin and NAVLE application form will be put on the NBEC's web site in June. The only significant change to the application process is the addition of the on-line application and credit card payment option, and the decision to accept personal checks for payment of the NAVLE fee.

New NBEC Employee

Tiffany Thomas joined the NBEC staff in April as a half time employee. Her duties include the new Qualifying Examination and Veterinary Clinical Skills Assessment, coordinating NBEC meetings, working with licensing boards on contracts, and assisting in processing NAVLE applications and fees.

Tiffany is a native of Bismarck, and has work experience in the hotel industry. She also works in the office of the North Dakota Tax Commissioner office as a tax clerk.



The seminar was held at the regional headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and was facilitated by simultaneous translation from Spanish to English and vice versa. It

was my first trip to Latin America, and, although I was only there for three days, I had a wonderful time.

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD
Executive Director



left to right: Drs. John Boyce, Victor Cubillos, and Eldon Uhlenhopp meet at the FAO headquarters in Santiago, Chile

NBEC Meeting Plans

The next regular NBEC meeting will be held in Boston, Massachusetts on Tuesday morning, July 17. The NBEC will meet in Executive Session beginning at 6:45 am, followed by a General Session beginning at 8:30 am. The General Session is open to all. The meetings will be held in the Swissotel, which is where the American Association of Veterinary State Boards will have its meetings. Please contact the NBEC office for more information on the July meeting.

In June, NBEC members will come together in Chicago for a special strategic planning meeting. The June 8-9 session will be led by an outside facilitator, Mr. John F. Schlegel. Mr. Schlegel served for 17 years as a chief executive officer for three national associations. He is now a consultant on association management and strategic planning.

The NBEC will hold its January 2002 meeting in Fort Worth, Texas on Saturday, January 19.

Answers to state board questions (from page 2)

1. a) sodium carbonate, $\text{Na}_2\text{CO}_3, 10\text{H}_2\text{O}$. b) potassium nitrate, KNO_3 . c) Copper sulphate, CuSO_4 . d) mercuric chloride, HgCl_2 . e) Sodium sulphate, Na_2SO_4 . f) potassium tartrate, $\text{KNaC}_4\text{H}_4\text{O}_6$.
2. Lunar caustic is nitrate of silver, fused into round sticks, or pencils. It is prepared by adding 4 per cent hydrochloric acid to silver nitrate, fusing and pouring into suitable moulds. It is used for cauterizing inflamed surfaces, warts, etc.
3. Mercuric oxide, mercuric and mercurous chloride, mercuric iodide, massa hydrargyri, unguentum hydrargyri, hydrargyri cum creta.
4. Plaster of Paris is made by heating native calcium sulphate (gypsum) and depriving it of part of its water.
5. Wine, according to variety, contains from 6 to 22 per cent alcohol. Brandy contains from 40 to 50 per cent of alcohol.
6. a) vinegar, olive oil, demulcent drinks, lemon juice. b) sodium bicarbonate, lime water, soap. c) egg albumin, flour and water.
7. Milk must contain not less than 12.5 per cent solids, of which three per cent must be fat.
8. Place some Fehling's solution in a test tube and boil it. If no discoloration takes place, it is suitable for the test. Add a few drops of the suspected urine and boil. If the mixture suddenly turns to an opaque yellow or red color, the presence of sugar is indicated.
9. The acetates of potassium, lead, ammonium, sodium, zinc, and copper. The first five named are used in veterinary medicine.

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