

# National Board Report

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## 50 Years

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the first administration of the National Board Examination (NBE) in the spring of 1954. Developing a national licensing examination was a challenging and complicated task, and the profession was well served by the dedicated veterinarians who worked to create the new examination.

The NBVME developed the NBE in cooperation with the Professional Examination Service (PES) in New York. At that time, PES was a subsidiary of the American Public Health Association. Items for the new examination were written by content experts in the various disciplines covered on the NBE. The item writers were chosen by members of the NBVME, and included such noted members of the profession as Drs. H.H. Dukes, Rue Jensen, Francis Fox, Mark Morris, and Sam Scheidy. The NBVME's Examination Committee (Drs. Charles Bower, E.A. Benbrook, W.T.S. Thorp, and J.G. Hardenberg) met at the PES office in New York March 27-28, 1954 to prepare the first examination. They were assisted by Dr. Alexander Zeissig, a veterinarian from New Jersey who worked for PES as a consultant.

The first NBE consisted of 435 multiple choice questions, and was administered over one and one-half days to 210 candidates in three states. Content areas included anatomy and histology, biochemistry, physiology, pathology, pharmacology, bacteriology, infectious diseases, parasitology, clinical diagnosis, medicine, and surgery.

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD  
Executive Director

## NBVME Meets for Strategic Planning and NAVLE Form Review

On April 14, the NBVME met in Philadelphia to revise and update its strategic plan. The previous plan was developed in May 2001 and has guided the board's activities for the past three years.

The facilitator for the strategic planning exercise was Mr. Jack Schlegel, who also worked with the board in the development of the original plan. Mr. Schlegel began the process by soliciting comments from NBVME members on the present plan. The comments were then combined into a master document, which was distributed prior to the meeting. In Philadelphia, the members reviewed and approved a new plan to guide the board for the next three years. The revised strategic plan is outlined below.

Revision of the strategic plan was especially important at this time, given that as of July 2004, six new members will have joined the NBVME. The three new members who took office last July (Drs. Benjamin Franklin and Lila Miller, and Ms. Ellen O'Connor) participated fully in the April meeting. They were joined

by Dr. Meg Glattly, a member of the Minnesota Board who has been nominated by the AAVSB to succeed Dr. Nancy Collins as a member of the NBVME later this year. Dr. Rick Tubbs, named by the American Association of Swine Veterinarians to succeed Dr. R.B. Baker, was unable to attend the April 14 meeting. The American Association of Bovine Practitioners has not yet named an individual to succeed Dr. Norman LaFaunce.

Following the strategic planning meeting, NBVME members, joined by Dr. Glattly and Dr. Jay Hedrick of the Kansas Board, spent the next two days at the office of the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME), reviewing final drafts of the NAVLE forms to be administered during the fall 2004 and spring 2005 testing windows. Three weeks earlier, members of the NBVME's Examination Development Committee, joined by five recent graduates, met at the NBME office to conduct the preliminary review of 2004-2005 NAVLE forms.

### NBVME Strategic Plan, 2004-2007

#### Vision:

The NBVME is the recognized leader providing valid and reliable examinations for veterinary medicine.

#### Mission:

The NBVME is a nonprofit, professional veterinary examination service that produces psychometrically sound, defensible examinations for use by governmental licensing agencies and other entities whose primary purpose is the protection of the public health and welfare.

#### Values:

The NBVME believes that society expects, deserves, and needs competent and ethical veterinary professionals, and is committed to excellence in assessment. [The Values statement will be updated at the July 2004 NBVME meeting]

#### Goals:

1. Assure continued improvement of assessment instruments.
2. Build and maintain an efficient, effective and contemporary organization that will ensure and sustain the NBVME mission.
3. Maintain a financially stable organization that will ensure and sustain the NBVME mission.

## Wadley to Receive NBVME Award

Dr. George Wadley of Searcy, Arkansas, has been named the recipient of the 2004 NBVME Award.

Friends and colleagues of Dr. Wadley are encouraged to attend the NBVME meeting to help recognize his important contributions to the national licensing examination program. The meeting will be on Monday, July 26, in Room 411-412 of the Philadelphia Marriott, beginning at 9:00 am.

Dr. Wadley was appointed to the National Board Examination Committee (NBEC) by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards in 1989, and served through 1995. He chaired the NBEC in 1992-93.

Dr. Wadley provided key leadership to the NBEC during a time of transition. He drafted revised Operating Guidelines for the NBEC, which subsequently formed the basis of the NBEC Bylaws when the board incorporated as an independent organization in 1994.



## From the Past: State Board Questions

Number 12 in a Series

The following questions are taken from the Surgery chapter of *Veterinary State Board Questions and Answers*, by V.G. Kimball, published in 1917. The book was donated to the NBVME by Dr. Don Hastings of Bismarck.

### Questions

1. State the general principles of antiseptic wound treatment.
2. Mention the domestic animals in the order of their susceptibility to suppuration.
3. Define (a) septicaemia, (b) pyaemia, (c) phlegmon.
4. What precautions should be taken in case an animal has been bitten by a rabid animal?
5. Name the four cardinal symptoms of inflammation.
6. Name five antiphlogistic remedies.
7. Describe the condition known as "lampas."

### Answers

1. Remove foreign bodies and necrotic tissue, cleanse wound thoroughly and use a non-irritating antiseptic agent. Cover the wound with antiseptic gauze and bandage. In case of operative wounds, the site of operation is shaved, washed, and bathed with an antiseptic agent; if possible an antiseptic pack should be applied for 24 hours prior to operating. The operator's hands, nails, and arms should be scrupulously cleansed with soap, water, and a stiff brush, then with alcohol or ether to dissolve all oily secretions, and, finally, immersed for ten minutes or longer in the

antiseptic agent. The instruments, suture material, dressings, etc., are disinfected by being placed in the antiseptic solution for 10 minutes before using. They should be handled only by the operator's disinfected hands.

2. From the most susceptible to the least, as follows: horse, ox, sheep, cat, dog, pig, fowls.

3. (a) A septic intoxication caused by the presence of bacteria and their toxic products in the blood. (b) A general wound infection disease characterized by the presence of pyogenic germs in the blood and the formation of suppurative foci of disease in the body. (A septicaemia plus metastatic abscess formation.) (c) An infectious, serous or suppurative inflammation of the connective tissue and all its parts, viz., the subcutaneous, subfascial, intermuscular, periosteal, tendovaginal, and interglandular connective tissue.

4. Cauterize the wounds; excise the wounded tissue if possible, and use strong disinfectant. (Pasteur treatment and quarantine.)

5. Dolor (pain); calor (heat); rubror (redness); tumor (swelling).

6. Heat, cold, counter-irritants, massage and antiseptics.

7. A congestion of the hard palate, just posterior to the incisors, often seen in young animals during the eruption of teeth. Rarely occurs in mature animals or requires interference. (Often referred to as "a disease of the stableman's mind.")

Next issue: more surgery.

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Douglas Aspros, DVM; R.B. Baker, DVM; Dale D. Boyle, DVM, MPH, DACVPM; Nancy L. Collins, DVM; James Dalley, DVM, MS, *Chair-Elect*; Donald D. Draper, DVM, PhD, MBA; Benjamin Franklin, DVM; Jan Krehbiel, DVM, PhD, DACVP, *Chair*; Norman LaFaunce, DVM, DACT, *Past Chair*; Sylvie Latour, DVM; Lila Miller, DVM; Ellen O'Connor, *Public Member*; Mike Thomas, DVM, *Secretary-Treasurer*. John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD, *Executive Director*

## Qualifying Examination Moves to Web-Based Testing

The NBVME's Qualifying Examination (QE) is a basic science examination used in the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE) of the American Association of Veterinary State Boards. The QE has been administered four times at Prometric testing centers (August 2002, January and August 2003, and January 2004). Beginning with the next administration, August 19, 2004, the QE will be delivered via the internet, rather than through the Prometric system.

Web-based testing offers several advantages, including scheduling flexibility and the ability to deliver the examination at any location that has a computer with a reliable internet connection. A variety of methods are used to ensure examination security, including the use of test administration software that prevents items from being downloaded or printed, the use of pre-assigned passwords for each candidate, and the use of trained proctors at each test site to supervise the administration. The National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) has experience delivering

web-based examinations for other clients, and the NBVME is excited about the opportunity to move the QE to this mode of testing.

A revised QE Bulletin of Information for Candidates, which outlines the examination application and delivery process, has been uploaded to the NBVME's web site ([www.nbvme.org](http://www.nbvme.org)). Candidates apply for the QE through the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB), as part of the PAVE application process. More information is available at [www.aavsb.org](http://www.aavsb.org).

The application deadline for the August 19 administration was May 20, and at press time, over 120 candidates have submitted applications. As part of the application, candidates are asked to indicate where they will be on the test date. The NBVME office will use this information to assign candidates to testing sites in the US and overseas.

The web-based examination will be divided into two blocks of 150 items in 165 minutes, with a 45 minute break between blocks.

## Qualifying Examination Stats

A technical report describing the August 14, 2003 and January 2, 2004 administrations of the Qualifying Examination (QE) was sent to PAVE states this month. The report was also posted on the NBVME's web site.

Eighteen candidates took the August exam, and sixteen passed. Twenty-one of the 30 candidates who took the January exam achieved a passing score. A total of 117 candidates have taken the QE during the four administrations to date, with overall passing rate of 77%.

Future QE administrations are planned for January 20 and May 5, 2005.

The NBVME is hopeful that the experience gained from the web-based QE will be useful as it explores the possibility of moving the NAVLE and other examinations to web-based testing in the future.

## Basic Science or Clinical?

One of the most common questions that arises when the Qualifying Examination (QE) is discussed is how it differs from the NAVLE. The QE is a basic science examination developed to help evaluate the educational equivalence of graduates of non-accredited veterinary schools. As noted in the QE candidate bulletin, the examination is designed to assess knowledge of basic veterinary medical sciences as taught during the first three years at accredited veterinary colleges in North America. The QE is not designed to measure a candidate's ability to make diagnoses or manage clinical cases.

The NAVLE, on the other hand, is a licensing examination designed to be used by licensing boards to help determine whether a candidate is qualified to enter private

clinical practice. All items on the NAVLE are intended to address this criterion, namely, entry-level private clinical practice. The NAVLE does not have a basic science or discipline component. However, many test items frequently require an understanding of basic science concepts to answer clinical diagnostic or patient management type questions.

The distinction between basic sciences and clinical practice is not always clear cut. The QE and NAVLE candidate information bulletins include 34 and 60 sample questions, respectively. In reviewing these sample items, it is apparent that some questions on the QE have relevance to clinical practice, while most, if not all NAVLE items require an understanding of both basic and clinical science.

The following example may help illustrate the difference in focus between these two examinations. Histology and histopathology are important subjects taught at all accredited veterinary schools, and are important in understanding normal tissue structure and disease processes, respectively. However, veterinarians in private practice rarely look at histologic specimens under the microscope. A QE question might show a photomicrograph and ask the candidate to identify the structure or the lesion shown. A NAVLE question might describe a clinical case and the collection of a biopsy specimen, and include a report on the biopsy issued by the diagnostic laboratory. The candidate would have to interpret the information and then choose the most appropriate treatment options.

## July NBVME Meeting

The next NBVME meeting will be on Monday, July 26, in Room 411-412 of the Philadelphia Marriott. The General Session, which is open to all, begins at 9:00 am. Dr. Jan Krehbiel (below) will chair the meeting.



## Earlier Deadline for Fall NAVLE

The fall 2004 NAVLE testing window will run from November 15 through December 11, 2004. New candidate information bulletins will be sent to licensing boards by the end of May. Electronic versions of the bulletin (plain text and pdf format) are now available on the NBVME's web site ([www.nbvme.org](http://www.nbvme.org)). The site also includes a NAVLE application form, a practice examination, and other information.

The NAVLE application deadline is earlier than it has been in previous years. Beginning this fall, applications must be received no later than 92 days prior to the opening of the testing window, or August 14 for the November-December 2004 window. Some licensing boards have an earlier application deadline, so candidates should check with their licensing board for specific application information.

The earlier application deadline will allow scheduling permits to be mailed at least two weeks earlier, and that should make it easier for candidates to schedule their preferred testing appointment with Prometric.

The on-line NAVLE application will be available on the NBVME's web site in June. This option, which includes payment of the fee by credit card, is available to candidates applying through boards that prefer candidates to submit their NAVLE application and fee directly to the NBVME (the option used by most licensing boards). A chart listing licensing board NAVLE application and payment preferences is also on the web site.

The 2004-2005 NAVLE fee will be \$425 per candidate, an increase of \$50 over the 2003-2004 fee.

The April testing window will be April 11-23, 2005.

National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners  
Post Office Box 1356  
Bismarck, ND 58502

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