

National Board Report

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Looking Back

I have the unique experience of writing this column on my 54th birthday, and birthdays are always a good time for reflection. Working with Dr. Susan McDonough to prepare the article on page 3 brought back many fond memories.

My first official function as a new AVMA staff member was a meeting of the National Board Examination Committee at the Hamilton Hotel in Itasca, Illinois in January 1987. Dr. Bud Ames had just hired me and he was eager for me to become familiar with the NBEC. I recall being overwhelmed with the terminology (including all the acronyms) associated with the national licensing examination program, and also being extremely impressed with Dr. McDonough's skill in addressing various technical aspects of the NBE and CCT. Sinking boat scoring, examination security, and criterion referenced scoring were some of the complex topics covered at that meeting.

The minutes record the names of those who attended that meeting 18 years ago, including Walter Juliff, Whitey Albrecht, Lee Allenstein, Dave Aronson, Al Davis, Demarious Frey, Nat Messer, Bob Miller, Dick Roberts, Bill Rosser, Jack Schmitz, Sam Strahm, Jean Buist, Ben Harrington, Bert Hill, Billy Ward, Jim Thorne, Frank Nickels, Karim Hayez, and Craig Schoon. Sadly, several of these fine people are no longer with us. So many talented people have offered their time and talents to the national licensing examination program over the years.

Sometimes it's important to look back, especially on your birthday.

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD
Executive Director

Examination Retake Policy Implemented

As reported in the February issue of the *National Board Report*, the NBVME approved a new NAVLE® retake policy at its January meeting. The policy was developed by a task force appointed by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) consisting of licensing board members and executive officers.

The policy was added to the 2005 NAVLE Letter of Agreement that the NBVME negotiates annually with each licensing board. It reads as follows: "In order to protect the NAVLE from compromise and to help assure its integrity, it is the policy of the NBVME that a candidate may not sit for the NAVLE more than five (5) times during a five year period from the first attempt. Each of the final two attempts must be at least one year from the previous attempt. This policy will take effect beginning with the fall 2005 NAVLE administration. Any previous attempts by a candidate to pass the NAVLE prior to the fall 2005 administration will not count toward the five attempt limit. Notwithstanding anything hereinbefore to the contrary, in the event state law permits an applicant to take the NAVLE more than five times, or if state law restricts and applicant to fewer than five attempts, state law shall prevail. A candidate who successfully completes the NAVLE may not retake the examination without the express written permission of the NBVME and the state through which the individual seeks to retake the examination."

In several states, existing law or rules do not allow a restriction on the number of times a candidate can take the NAVLE. On the other hand, a few boards presently limit candidates to fewer than five attempts at the NAVLE. Typically, these jurisdictions will allow additional attempts only upon approval by the board. The wording in the NAVLE Agreement gives individual state law or rules

precedence over the NBVME policy. It is the NBVME's hope that states whose rules do not presently allow a limit on retakes will give serious consideration in the coming years to making the changes necessary for their regulations to be consistent with the NBVME's policy.

The idea of limiting examination attempts is being considered by licensing boards and testing organizations in many professions. The main concerns are overexposure of test content when candidates repeat and examination many times, and the "false positive" effect, in which a candidate, through multiple attempts, may eventually pass the examination by chance. Some individual licensing boards in other professions have absolute limits on the number of examination attempts, beyond which a candidate cannot be licensed or certified in that jurisdiction.

Because the new policy is not retroactive, it will not begin to be applied for over three years (assuming a candidate failed the NAVLE in fall 2005, spring 2006, fall 2006, fall 2007, and fall 2008). The NBVME welcomes comments on the retake policy from all interested parties.

NBVME Position on ECFVG Eliminated

As reported in the June 1 issue of the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, the AVMA Executive Board voted in April to eliminate the position on the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (ECFVG) representing the NBVME. This position is presently held by Dr. Donald Draper. The AVMA action ends the NBVME's 40 year official involvement with the ECFVG, beginning with the ECFVG's creation as a committee of the NBVME in 1965.

Fall NAVLE Application Process Ready to Begin

The NBVME office has been busy this month preparing for the fall NAVLE administration. Application forms are being revised, candidate bulletins are being printed, the NBVME's web site is being updated, and the database is being prepared to accept candidate records.

The on-line NAVLE application will be posted on the web site by mid-June. The latest deadline for receipt of NAVLE applications for the fall testing window, either on-line or through a licensing board, is August 15. Some states have earlier deadlines.

The per-candidate fee for the 2005-06 examination cycle is \$450, an increase of \$25 from last year.

All NAVLE candidates must be approved by a licensing board to take the examination. Board application and approval preferences are summarized on a table on the NBVME's web site.

Last year, the NBVME office assumed responsibility for approving candidates for the Virginia Board, and the process worked well. Beginning this fall, the NBVME office will be approving candidates and reporting scores for the Florida, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania boards, in addition to the Virginia board. Application forms specific for each of these states will be available on the NBVME's web site. The NBVME will charge a \$50 application fee for candidates seeking approval to take the NAVLE through these states.

From the Past: State Board Questions

Number 16 in a Series

This series of articles is now over halfway through the book *Veterinary State Board Questions and Answers*, published in 1917 by V.G. Kimball. These questions are from the obstetrics chapter.

Questions

1. How many centres of ossification appear in the early formation of the pelvis?

2. Give approximately the superior-inferior and the transverse diameters of the bony pelvis of the cow.

3. State the four chief functions of the generative system.

4. What is the influence of the pregnant uterus on the neighboring organs?

5. What is an emmenagogue?

6. Trace the journey of the ovum from incipency to the accomplishment of fertilization.

7. Describe an impregnator and state how impregnation is accomplished by its use.

Answers

1. Five centres of ossification appear in each half in its early formation; one for each of the three bones and two complementary centres, one for the anterior spinous process and spine of the ileum, the other for the ischial tuberosity.

2. Superior-inferior inlet, 8-10 inches; outlet, 9 inches. Transverse inlet, 7 inches; outlet, 7 inches.

3. Copulation, impregnation, fetation, and parturition.

4. The immense volume of the pregnant uterus occasionally disturbs the neighboring viscera as shown by colic, tympanites, constipation, oedema, coughing and paraplegia.

5. An emmenagogue is any agent which stimulates or favors the menstrual discharge. Ergot and rue are well known emmenagogues.

6. After rupture of the Graafian vesicle, the ovum escapes and is conveyed into the Fallopian tube by means of the fimbriated extremity of the same. It passes down the tube to the uterus where it is met by the spermatozoa. This meeting may take place in the oviduct but the ovum usually continues to descend to the uterus.

7. An impregnator is an instrument designed to keep open the os uteri during copulation and thus insure a direct discharge of the semen into the uterus. It consists of a hollow, soft-rubber tube, 3 to 4 inches in length. It is constricted in the middle portion and flanged at the posterior end to prevent it from falling into the uterus. Those who advocate its use do so with the belief that sterility in most cases is due to occlusion of the os. Intelligent breeders ignore the instrument. Prof. Williams in his "Veterinary Obstetrics" regards the use of impregnators as "a harmless diversion which ordinarily will not prevent conception."

Next Issue: more obstetrics

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Qualifying Examination Enters Fourth Year

With the completion of the May 5, 2005 administration, the NBVME's Qualifying Examination (QE) has now been administered seven times since August 2002. The QE, a 300 item computer based basic science examination, has now been given to a total of 374 candidates enrolled in the PAVE program.

Eighty-three students completing their second year at the Western University College of Veterinary Medicine also took the QE on May 5. Raw scores obtained by these candidates will be used as part of the student's final semester grade. Western University would like to repeat the May administration in subsequent years. Several other veterinary schools have also expressed interest in having their students take the QE, as a measure of student performance on a standardized basic science examination and as a way to

assess the school's basic science curriculum.

Since August 2004, the QE has been given using web-based testing. The examination is developed and administered with the assistance of the National Board of Medical Examiners.

QE dates for the coming test cycle are September 15, 2005, and January 19 and May 11, 2006. Candidates apply for the QE through the AAVSB office, as part of the PAVE application. The application deadline for the September 15 administration is June 24.



QE Item Writers for 2005 (l to r): Drs. Phillip Nelson, Western University (immunology), Robert Walker, FDA (bacteriology); Gina Michels, Pfizer (pharmacology); Tomas Martin, Univ. of Illinois (pharmacology); Anne Zajac, Virginia Tech (parasitology); Aslam Hassan, Univ. of Illinois (physiology), Ed Murphey, Univ. of Texas (anatomy); and Darren Wood, Univ. of Guelph (clinical pathology). Not pictured: Drs. Sheila Grimes, Ohio Dept. of Agriculture (pathology), and Bonnie Smith, Virginia Tech (anatomy).

McDonough to Receive NBVME Award

Dr. Susan McDonough of Arnold, Maryland, has been named by the NBVME to receive the 2005 NBVME Award. The award will be presented at the NBVME's July 18 meeting at the Minneapolis Hilton. The award presentation will take place at approximately 11:00 am.

For nearly 20 years, Dr. McDonough played a key role in the national licensing examination program. Through her position as member and chair of the Consultant Advisory Board of the Professional Examination Service, she had oversight responsibility for the development of the National Board Examination (NBE) and the Clinical Competency Test (CCT). She was the major force behind the maturation of the case-based CCT, and was responsible for organizing and leading many item writing and examination review sessions. All who have worked with Dr. McDonough admire her intellect, enthusiasm, and dedication.

A 1968 graduate of the veterinary school at the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. McDonough began her veterinary career as a postdoctoral fellow at the Wistar Institute in Philadelphia. After working for two years for Merck in the area of feline leukemia virus vaccine research, she founded the Cat Hospital of Philadelphia in 1972, and worked there until 1997.

Today, Dr. McDonough works part-time as a veterinarian at the Anne Arundel County Animal Control. In 2003, she earned an MA degree in Liberal Arts from St. John's College in Annapolis.

Dr. McDonough served as a member of the Pennsylvania Board of Veterinary Medicine from 1980-1990, and chaired the board for five years. She has extensive experience as a consultant for major corporations, and as a speaker on feline medicine and surgery.



Friends and colleagues of Dr. McDonough are encouraged to attend the NBVME meeting to help recognize her important contributions to the national licensing examination program.

July NBVME Meeting

The next NBVME meeting will be on Monday, July 18, in the Hennepin Room on the second floor of the Minneapolis Hilton. The General Session, which is open to all, is scheduled to begin at approximately 9:30 am. Dr. Jim Dalley (below) will chair the meeting.



NAVLE School Score Reports

The NBVME provides an annual NAVLE score report to each AVMA accredited veterinary school. The report shows how that school's graduating seniors did on the NAVLE compared with the total candidate population. Recently, the NBVME worked with the AVMA to clarify its policy on providing score reports to schools that are in the process of seeking accreditation. That process will now be defined as schools that have officially scheduled a COE consultative site visit. Each spring, the AVMA will notify the NBVME of schools that are in that category. The NBVME office will work with the schools to identify any candidates they may have in that year's NAVLE database, so that the appropriate school score reports can be prepared. The NAVLE application itself will continue to list only those schools that are officially accredited by the AVMA.

VCSA Update

Development of the Veterinary Clinical Skills Assessment (VCSA) continues, under the direction of overall coordinator Dr. Michael Paul. The VCSA section heads have made good progress in outlining the content of the various sections of the examination. An examiner training session will be held in late summer, and a pilot test is planned for October. The first VCSA administration is planned for spring 2006. Assistance in developing the VCSA is being provided by the Office of Medical Education Research and Development at Michigan State University. The VCSA, a two day hands-on assessment of clinical and client communication skills, will be administered at Cedar Valley College in Dallas.

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