

# National Board Report

A Quarterly Newsletter of the National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners

Volume 9 Issue 4

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November, 2004

## 50 years

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the first administration of the National Board Examination (NBE) in 1954.

The NBVME files include a copy of the original contract between the NBVME and the American Public Health Association (APHA, the parent organization of the Professional Examination Service). The contract was signed on behalf of the NBVME ("an unincorporated association having its office at No. 600 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois") by NBVME President Dr. Charles W. Bower, and Secretary-Treasurer Dr. J.G. Hardenbergh (Dr. Hardenbergh also served as AVMA Executive Secretary). The contract established that the new examination would be owned by the APHA, and that the per-candidate fee would be \$10.

When the national licensing examination was first conceived in the late 1940s, the plan was that it would consist of three parts: a basic science part taken by students after completing two years of veterinary school, a second part taken after graduation, and a third part focusing on clinical and practical skills. This plan was subsequently modified to include only the first two parts. As plans progressed in the early 1950s the NBVME made the decision to offer a single part examination through licensing boards, and to seek the assistance of an outside testing company (PES) for test development and scoring. The result was the NBE, first administered to 210 candidates in California, Connecticut, and Kansas in 1954.

By the time the last NBE was administered in April 2000, over 109,000 candidates had taken it.

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD  
Executive Director

## Record Number of Candidates for Fall NAVLE

A total of 3,364 candidates were approved by licensing boards to take the NAVLE® during the November 15 - December 11, 2004 testing window. This is the largest number of candidates since the NAVLE was first administered in the fall of 2000. Previous fall candidate numbers included 2,916 in 2000, 3,205 in 2001, 3,221 in 2002, and 3,286 in 2003.

Each year, more NAVLE candidates take advantage of the on-line application and payment option. The ability to download and import candidate information and charge the NAVLE fee to the candidate's credit card makes it easier for the NBVME office to process the applications and ensure the accuracy of the data. This fall, approximately 60% of all NAVLE candidates applied on-line. The on-line application option is now available to all candidates except those applying through six states (IA, IL, KS, MA, MS, and NC) and the Canadian National Examining Board.

An earlier application deadline was implemented beginning with the fall 2004 testing window. The deadline is now at least 92 days prior to the opening of the test window, instead of 60 days prior as it had been for the first four years. The earlier application deadline made it possible for the NBVME office to mail scheduling permits to candidates two to three weeks earlier than before. This, in turn, made it easier for candidates to schedule the NAVLE on their preferred testing date and location.

Candidates have benefited from the earlier deadline and other improvements in the test scheduling and delivery process, as evidenced by the fact that, two weeks into the fall testing window, the NBVME office has received very few calls from candidates who have experienced problems scheduling their examination.

New candidates for the April 2005 testing window will need to submit their NAVLE application and fee to the NBVME by January 10. This deadline will not apply to candidates who took the NAVLE in the fall and did not pass, because scores from the fall administration will not be released until late January. All unsuccessful fall candidates who wish to take the NAVLE again in the spring will be able to do so, as long as they submit their April application as soon as possible after receiving their scores. Most candidates will be approved automatically by the same licensing board that approved them for the fall administration. Candidates can contact the NBVME office for more information.

The passing standard for the first four NAVLE testing cycles was established in January 2001, and reevaluated and approved in subsequent years. Earlier this year, the NBVME decided to conduct a new standard setting exercise. The passing standard for the NAVLE is determined using the modified Angoff method, a procedure commonly used to establish a criterion-referenced or content based passing standard. On December 14, a diverse group of 21 veterinarians will meet at the offices of the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) in Philadelphia to participate in a new NAVLE standard setting exercise. After an orientation and training session conducted by NBME staff, each participant will individually rate the difficulty of a set of NAVLE items. Ratings will be made first without and then with feedback on how fall 2004 candidates performed on those items. After the meeting, NBME staff will compile the ratings and prepare a report with a recommended passing standard. The new standard will be approved by the NBVME at its January 22 meeting.

## NAVLE Item Writers Meet

NAVLE item writers are selected each year by the NBVME's Examination Development Committee and asked to write items in the various content areas covered by the examination. After the items are edited by NBME staff, they are reviewed for accuracy before being added to the item bank. On November 8-9, 23 of this year's 26 NAVLE item writers met at the NBME offices in Philadelphia to participate in the item review process.

This year's NAVLE item writers included Drs. Trevor Bebchuk (Ottawa, ON), Alex Bermudez (Columbia, MO), Benjamin Darien (Madison, WI), Julie Fixman (Carmel, NY), Kevan Flaming (Ames, IA), Sherrill Fleming (Mississippi State, MS), Robert Froehlich (Littleton, CO), Ned Gentz (Albuquerque, NM), Jean Hall (Corvallis, OR), Robert Hardy (St. Paul, MN), Ken Harkin (Manhattan, KS), Joanne Hewson (Guelph, ON), Mark Hilton (West Lafayette, IN), Manon Lécuyer (St-Hyacinthe, QU), Linda Lord (Waynesville, OH), Candace McCall (Frederick, MD), David Reeves (Athens, GA), Joel Schrader (Ashland, NE), Joe Taboada (Baton Rouge, LA), Belinda Thompson (Ithaca, NY), Helen Tuzio (Rego Park, NY), Jeff Tyler (Columbia, MO), Dennis Villani (Greensburg, IN), Ame Walesby (Baton Rouge, LA), Colette Wheler (Saskatoon, SK), and Alice Wolf (College Station, TX).

The NBVME appreciates the expertise of these dedicated item writers and the NBME editorial staff who work with them to ensure the quality of the examination.

## From the Past: State Board Questions

### Number 14 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.

#### Questions

1. Write a prescription for a blister for bowed tendons.
2. Give results of neurotomy when unfavorable.
3. Describe otorrhoea of the dog. Give treatment.
4. Give the treatment of pharyngeal polypi.
5. Give the method of "bishoping" a horse.
6. Mention diseases for which phlebotomy of the jugular vein is performed.
7. Give the symptoms of rupture of the diaphragm (diaphragmatic hernia).
8. Define gleet.

#### Answers

1. Hydrargyri biniodidi, 3ij; Pulv. cantharides, 3ij; Ol. adipis, 3ij. Misc. Sig.-Apply with friction to affected tendons.
2. Fractures, due to neurotrophic atrophy; necrosis of extremity following infected wounds; neuroma forming on end of cut nerve; regeneration and restored function.
3. An inflammatory condition of the external auditory meatus. It is characterized by a discharge of a yellowish-brown secretion, usually mixed with pus, pruritus and shaking of the ears. Treatment: Cleanse with peroxide of hydrogen, probe and

cotton. Dry with ether and keep dry by dusting lycopodium over the affected parts. Repeat the treatment daily.

4. Adjust the mouth speculum and attempt grasping and removing the polypi with the hand introduced through the mouth. If this method fails, perform laryngectomy, pass hand or ecraseur through the larynx into the pharynx and remove the growth, preferably by torsion. If this fails, cut the growth away with scissors or scalpel.

5. "Bishoping" is accomplished by drilling or gouging out a cavity in the tables of incisor teeth and staining the cavity black with silver nitrate or a hot iron. It is a method employed by unscrupulous dealers ("gyps") for the purpose of deception in regard to the age of a horse.

6. Congestion of the brain; diseases which are accompanied by plethora such as azoturia, congestion of the lungs, acute laminitis, etc.; toxæmic diseases such as tetanus.

7. Asphyxia from compression of the lungs; symptoms of strangulation of the bowels. It is difficult to diagnose. Tapping the intestines through the thoracic walls and the obtaining of ingesta therefrom will aid in the diagnosis.

8. Chronic nasal catarrh characterized by a thick, purulent discharge, ulcers in the nasal cavity, bulging of the sinuses and enlargement of the submaxillary lymph-glands.

Next issue: more surgery.

The *National Board Report* is published quarterly by the National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (NBVME®), PO Box 1356, Bismarck, ND 58502. Phone (701) 224-0332, fax (701) 224-0435, mail@nbvme.org, http://www.nbvme.org.

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## Qualifying Examination Usage Increases

A total of 117 candidates took the Qualifying Examination (QE) during the first four administrations (August 2002 through January 2004). The numbers took a big jump with the August 2004 administration, when 123 candidates sat for the examination. This trend will continue with the January 20, 2005 administration, when 75 candidates are scheduled to take the QE.

For the August administration, 94 of the 123 candidates achieved a passing score, for a passing rate of 76%.

The QE is a basic science examination developed by the NBVME for the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE), a certification program operated by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards for graduates from foreign non-accredited veterinary schools. The examination is administered three times per year via the internet at

proctored testing sites. After January 20, the next administration is scheduled for May 5, 2005.

Candidates apply for the QE through the American Association of Veterinary State Boards, [www.aavsb.org](http://www.aavsb.org).

## QE Item Writers

QE item development follows a process similar to that used for the NAVLE. Item writers are appointed each year to write items in specific content areas. After the items are edited by NBME staff, the item writers meet as a group to review the new items before they are added to the item bank.

On September 27-28, eight of the 10 QE item writers for 2004 met at the NBME office in Philadelphia for the review. Items reviewed at that meeting will be used on QE forms to be administered during the 2005-06 testing cycle.

QE item writers for 2004 included Drs. Shelley Burton, Charlottetown, PEI (clinical pathology); Paul Gibbs, Gainesville, FL (virology); Sheila Grimes, Reynoldsburg, OH (pathology); Patricia Heine, Indianapolis, IN (histology); Judy Klimek, Manhattan, KS (anatomy); Tomas Martin, Urbana, IL (pharmacology); Ed Murphey, Galveston, TX (physiology); Michael Sims, Knoxville, TN (physiology); and Robert Walker, Laurel, MD (bacteriology).

## NBVME Member Profile: Dr. Thomas Hairgrove

Dr. Thomas Hairgrove is one of three new members appointed to terms on the NBVME beginning in July 2004. Dr. Hairgrove was named by the American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP) to succeed Dr. Norman LaFaunce.

Dr. Hairgrove received a B.S. degree in animal science from Texas A&M University in 1967, then served four years in the US Army. After completing his military service, he enrolled in veterinary school at Texas A&M, where he received his DVM in 1974.

After graduation, Dr. Hairgrove worked for two years in a mixed practice in Ft. Stockton, TX, before moving to Haskell, TX, where he established his own mixed practice with an emphasis on beef cattle medicine. He has practiced in Haskell for the past 28 years.

In 1997, Dr. Hairgrove achieved board certification from the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners in beef cattle practice, and he presently serves as the beef

cattle regent for the ABVP. In 1998, he completed the production medicine course at the Great Plains Veterinary Education Center in Clay Center, NE.

Dr. Hairgrove was honored by the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory with the Diagnostician of the Year award in 2001, and he received the Merial Veterinary Preventive Medicine Award from the AABP earlier this year.

In addition to the AABP, Dr. Hairgrove is a member of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the Academy of Veterinary Consultants, and the Society for Theriogenology. He formerly served as a member of the National Johnes Working Group, and presently serves as a member of the Texas State Johnes Working Group.

In Haskell, Dr. Hairgrove is a member of the Rotary Club and is past president of the Haskell CISD school board. He and Peggy, his wife of 21 years, have one son, who is currently attending Texas A&M.



## January NBVME Meeting

The NBVME will meet on Saturday, January 22 at the Embassy Suites Phoenix Biltmore in Phoenix, Arizona. The General Session will begin at 1:00 pm, and is open to all. Dr. James Dalley will chair the meeting. Persons interested in attending the meeting should contact the NBVME office for more information.



Dr. James Dalley, NBVME Chair

## VCSA Development Update

Work on the Veterinary Clinical Skills Assessment (VCSA) moved ahead in July when the NBVME hired Dr. Michael Paul to serve as the overall coordinator for the examination. The VCSA is a hands-on clinical skills examination being developed by the NBVME for use in the PAVE program.

Members of the NBVME's VCSA subcommittee (Drs. Jim Dalley, Mike Thomas and Meg Glattly), along with Dr. Paul and Dr. Boyce, plan to visit two potential sites for the VCSA in early December. On January 7, the same people will meet in Detroit with the VCSA section heads to finalize the format and content of the various sections of the two day examination. Also attending the Detroit meeting will be three testing consultants from the Office of Medical Education Research and Development at Michigan State University.

### Correction

One line was omitted from the VCSA article on page 4 of the August issue of the *National Board Report*. Dr. Michael Paul is a past president of the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA), and has served on numerous committees for the AAHA, California VMA, and AVMA.

### Audit

In 2004, the NBVME changed from a calendar year to a fiscal year accounting period. The latest audit, prepared by Brady, Martz & Associates, covers all of 2003 and the first half of 2004. The audit shows revenue of \$1,917,794 and expenses of \$1,901,509. Unrestricted net assets on June 30 were \$971,095. Copies of the audit have been sent to the NBVME's constituent organizations. Additional copies are available from the NBVME office.

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