

vetregister

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The Newsletter of the Veterinary Surgeons Board of Queensland.

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Registered Vet Medicines and Responsibilities

A contribution from Dr Sandra Baxendell, PSM, BVSc (Hons), PhD MACVSc, GCertAppSC(RurExt), GCertPSectMgt, PGDAppSc, MRurSysMan

Registered veterinary medicines are put through a rigorous assessment process by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) in which human health (including safety for users, others exposed to the product, and consumers of animal products), target animal safety, environmental safety, trade and efficacy are all considered by the APVMA with the assistance of other contracted agencies such as the Office of Chemical Safety. In addition, veterinary medicines must be produced under Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) guidelines which are audited, and the auditing is overseen by the APVMA. All registered veterinary medicines have an APVMA number on their label. To search for registered products use the PUBCRIS database found at www.apvma.gov.au

Veterinary medicines can also be used under permits and these are found on the permits database on the APVMA website. Permits can be approved for minor uses, emergency or research situations and are generally for a specific periods e.g. a couple of years and often have conditions. Chemicals approved under permit must be used strictly according to

the details of the permit. Information on applying for a permit, as well as the specific requirements and guidelines for veterinary minor use, research and emergency permits, is available at www.apvma.gov.au/permits/index.php.

There is also a general small-scale research permit (Permit 7250) which has certain conditions e.g. no animals must enter the food chain within 12 months of treatment with the chemical and it can only be used at a research institution or by research staff.

In addition, within specific legislative requirements, veterinarians can make veterinary chemical treatment recommendations which are inconsistent with the instructions on the labels of registered veterinary chemical products i.e. "off-label recommendations" e.g. for another species or for a higher dose. The key restrictions on off-label use by veterinarians prevent the use of a chemical contrary to a "DO NOT" or other restraint statement on a label, except on a single animal, and also prevent use by injection unless the label has instructions for use by injection. Due to the trade risks of unacceptable residues in food and fibre products, there are additional restrictions on veterinarians treating major trade species animals (i.e. cattle, sheep, pigs and chickens). If a chemical is not registered on any of these major trade species, it can only be used on a single major trade species animal.

When vets prescribe off-label, they take responsibility for the safety of the use, and must give adequate instructions to the user to ensure safe use. In all cases of off-label use the animal must be under the care of the veterinary surgeon. As well as keeping detailed treatment records including the animal's identifying details, veterinarians are obliged to provide full and appropriate written instructions to the person responsible for the ongoing care of the animal. The written instructions should include the length of any withholding period that applies. Ideally, prior to recommending the off-label use, veterinarians should seek advice on an appropriate withholding period from the registrant or from APVMA. Veterinarians may also supply certain unregistered veterinary chemicals. Biosecurity Queensland has the responsibility for ensuring that

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Board Membership

Nominated Members:

Dr Laurie Dowling
Prof Jonathan Hill
Dr Edith Hampson
Glenda Whitmore

Chairperson
Deputy Chair
Specialist (Veterinary Ophthalmology)
Consumer Representative

Elected Members:

Dr Philip Moses
Dr David Lovell

Specialist (Surgery-Small Animal)
Equine Practitioner

veterinary medicines are used according to the label, permit or in accordance with a veterinarians written instructions as required under the *Chemical Usage (Agricultural and Veterinary) Control Act 1988*. This Act provides for controls over the use, prescription, supply and recommendation for use of veterinary chemical products by veterinary surgeons and allows a veterinary surgeon to use an unregistered veterinary chemical product on:

- any animals that are not a trade-species animal (i.e. not a food producing animal or an animal used for trading in products derived from the animal) i.e. not a food or fibre producing animal.
- a single trade-species animal.

This Queensland legislation also allows a veterinary surgeon to use compounded veterinary chemical products (prepared by the vet or a compounding pharmacist), in a quantity needed for a single course of treatment only, on:

- a group of animals that does not comprise trade-species animals, or
- an individual trade-species animal.

As with off-label use of registered chemicals, for use of compounded chemicals, the animals must be under the care of the same vet and certain conditions e.g. record keeping and label instructions (including with-holding periods for trade species) must be given.

Federal legislation i.e. the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Administration Act 1992 prohibits the importation of unregistered veterinary and agricultural chemicals. The APVMA will consider an application lodged by a registered veterinarian to import an unregistered veterinary medicine for application or administration to an animal under the direct care of the veterinarian. If an equivalent registered product is available in Australia, the APVMA will **not** provide consent to import.

Use of Drugs and Poisons: What Veterinary Surgeons Need to Know

Queensland Health (Environmental Health Unit) has responsibility for legislation {Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996} associated with scheduled drugs.

Information specific to veterinary surgeons such as writing prescriptions, advertising of restricted drugs, storage of drugs and poisons, specific authorities for veterinarians etc can be found in the document entitled 'What Veterinary surgeons Need to Know' published on the Queensland Health web-site <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/ph/documents/ehu/vet-surgeons-ntk.pdf>

Random Premises Inspections

Board members are committed to ensuring veterinary practices comply with minimum standards for the purpose of consumer and animal welfare protection by undertaking physical examinations of premises. Inspection of premises is routinely undertaken:

- where premises are intended to be designated as a veterinary hospital, veterinary centre or emergency referral facility;
- for applications where the premises are wholly owned by non-veterinarians including animal welfare groups and the premises are intended for the conduct of general anaesthetic procedures;
- as a result of any complaint lodged with the Board relating to the standard of practice conducted on the premises;
- or randomly at Board convenience.

In recent months Board members have had opportunity to conduct random inspections of premises in Bundaberg and Cairns when attending these areas on other Board business.

These inspections provided the opportunity to discuss topical issues such as record keeping and client communication whilst gaining a visual appreciation of the practice standard. Members may also be in a position to commit to participation in information forums for practitioners in the locality of the visit.

Minimum Standards

The standards for all designations of veterinary premises are incorporated in the Veterinary Premises Approval Application Pack that is published on the Board's website: www.vsb.qld.gov.au/forms.html

National Recognition of Veterinary Registration (NRVR)

NRVR currently provides 'deemed registration' in Victoria and NSW for veterinarians who hold current unencumbered (non conditional) general (primary) or specialist registration in another Australian jurisdiction, for example a Queensland registered veterinarian may **visit** Victoria or NSW to practise without making application for registration there.

However, if planning to make Victoria or NSW the principal place of residence, the normal registration requirement applies. Application must be made for registration.

Analgesia in small animal practice

By Dr Edith Hampson, BVSc PhD FANZCVS

As veterinarians we have the professional obligation to minimise pain in our patients. Small animals require potent analgesia for spinal injury, major trauma and fractures, both at the pre- and post-operative phases. Owners need to be reassured that we are providing the best possible pain relief for their pets and we have a priority to get this right.

There are many new drugs and techniques for analgesia now available to the veterinary practitioner. Techniques such as epidural analgesia, continuous intravenous opioid infusion and fentanyl transdermal patches offer sensational pain relief for our small patients. These and other analgesics can be used pre-, peri- and post-operatively within the hospital setting. Furthermore, new potent oral analgesics such as tramadol, gabapentin and buprenorphine can now be dispensed at discharge for home use.

How can we update our skills and knowledge in analgesia? Possible continuing education sessions include: AVA Branch education seminars, VIN courses and veterinary hospital continuing education seminars. In addition, veterinary anaesthetists at the School of Veterinary Science (The University of Queensland) welcome practitioners to telephone for help in this area. Contact phone numbers: 07 3365 2110 (St Lucia Clinic) and 07 5460 1788 (Gatton Clinic).

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Enquiry: Abandoned animals

Q. We have a new client who was supposed to leave her cat here boarding for one week but this turned into 2, then 3 then 4 then 5 then 6 weeks and she kept saying she would come in and pay and never did and I don't have her contact details as she has moved (last time apparently was staying in a hotel) and I cannot get onto her and she is not returning our calls.

Her bill is \$1100 and she obviously has no intention of paying or collecting her cat.

As I don't know where she is I cannot send her a letter by registered post saying we are going to surrender her cat to the RSPCA but at the same time we cannot keep the cat indefinitely.

What do I do as I cannot reach her? I have left 3 messages today on her phone (again) and 2 last week but she doesn't ring back.

A week ago I asked her for her driver's license number and car number plate but they are probably not correct as I cannot check and cannot

access those data bases. She probably lied about that too.

Can I send her cat to the RSPCA or can we re-home it? I left a message on her phone asking for her postal address so I can send her a letter detailing this.

We will send her to the debt collectors (not that that ever helps). This has happened before and usually we get people to pay if the cats are staying lengthy periods but she kept extending it and kept promising she would be in 'at the end of the week' or that 'the cheque was in the mail' and we are trusting people so believed her.

Can you please advise me what to do?

A. Assuming you have left no stone unturned in trying to contact the client (phone, fax, email, post, personal visit), to no avail, and you enter in the case notes the dates and methods of contacts made, you would have options of:

- Finding a temporary carer willing to foster the cat for a period until it is clear what the owner's intentions are; or
- If you have a mobile number, send message saying that she has 14 days to collect the cat and if not collected by close of business on that day, steps will be taken to re-home the cat; and
- After the 14 day expiry date, surrender the cat to the RSPCA, give the background of why it is being surrendered and request that the cat not be euthanased in case the owner turns up. Re-homing the cat permanently yourself presents problems if the owner resurfaces as she could demand to know where it is and could go knocking on that door to collect – arguments, legal proceedings could follow, not to mention upsetting for family if cat taken away from them.

If cat is fostered out, wait several months and then it would be safe to leave there or re-home yourself.

Avoid at all costs the cat being euthanased unless aged or otherwise not suitable for re-homing. If the RSPCA chooses to euthanase after you have requested otherwise, the owner can not have a legal dispute with you.



Make sure as much detail as possible on process is entered in case notes.

This is the Board's advice, but not a legal opinion.

Client refusing to treat

Q. I had a disagreement with a client last night that I think has been resolved but I would like to check that my understanding of my rights and responsibilities under the Act is correct.

The patient was a hit by a car dog with severe dyspnoea (pneumothorax, contusions and possible diaphragmatic hernia) which was stable in hospital on oxygen support but unable to maintain adequate oxygen saturation when not on nasal O2.

The client is a human ICU nurse. The client wished (due to financial constraints and having refused several payment plan options) to take the dog 'home to die'. I refused to allow this to happen on animal welfare grounds and offered treatment and further diagnostics to confirm whether surgical treatment was required or euthanasia. The client was adamant that she should have the right to sign a disclaimer and take the dog home. I advised the client that as this would result in a slow and painful death for the dog that by law I had the right to override her wishes. The client consented to further supportive care and diagnostics for a further 24 hours within an agreed budget.

Am I correct in my understanding of my right to refuse discharge?

A. For assistance in determining the appropriate action in this type of situation, please refer to the extract below from the document *Information on the Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/27_6049.htm under the section headed 'Duty of Care Responsibilities' -

The animal's owner is responsible for deciding what (if any) treatment that the veterinarian offers is given. The veterinarian is responsible for providing the owner with information on the animal welfare consequences of such decisions. If an animal suffers because of a decision (or lack of decision) by the owner who has been informed of the possible consequences, the owner is the responsible person.

Case Outcomes

Clinical Records

A common observation in cases presented to the Board is of the variability in clinical records. The Board often raises concerns about the thoroughness and recording of the clinical examination of an animal, and communications with the owner over the interpretation of the results, prognosis or finances. It is essential to record vital signs – temperature/pulse/respiration, mucous membranes, weight in order to demonstrate a full clinical examination has been performed and to provide a baseline for further examinations and assessment.

When to refer?

This is not straightforward and requires consideration of a broad variety of factors that require detailed consultation with the client. The Board has been presented with cases where the primary veterinarian clearly misinterpreted an animal's condition whilst in the veterinarian's care. The veterinarians in these cases failed to recognise clinical signs (e.g. vomiting, tachycardia, elevated body temperature, high PCV, extended CRT) as being representative of an acutely ill animal and in some cases left the dog unattended with only basic supportive care. The veterinarians in these cases failed to initiate appropriate diagnostic process such as blood testing, x-rays, ultrasound, or referral to determine an appropriate course of treatment.

Board Q and A Sessions

The current VSB is focused on an open and transparent approach to its function. As part of this in the last 6 months Board members have conducted a presentation and a Q and A session in Cairns, Bundaberg, on the Sunshine Coast and at the AVA Queensland Conference and have a session planned in Toowoomba later in the year.

If you would like a Board representative to give a talk in your local region, please contact our office on 07 3239 3600.

Farewell Wayne...

Wayne Murray retired as Registrar of the Veterinary Surgeons Board on 24 February this year after 25



Wayne Murray & Valerie Mustafay (A/Registrar) years of service with the Board and 46 years service with the Department overall.

Wayne was appointed to the position of Deputy Registrar in June 1987. He attended his first meeting as Registrar after being appointed to the position in June 1989 (Meeting 238). Wayne attended 168 meetings with no absences until he retired. His last meeting was meeting number 405 in February 2012.

Wayne registered a total of 3185 veterinary surgeons (certificate numbers 2307 through to 5491) as Registrar of the Veterinary Surgeons Board of Queensland.

Wayne is a golf enthusiast and will no doubt continue to visit the greens and fit in a bit of travel now that he has retired.

AVA Workforce Survey

The Australian Veterinary Association Ltd (AVA) is undertaking a workforce survey to collect information about workforce trends, educational needs and other issues relating to the profession.

For further information about the survey and to participate, simply click on the link below:
<http://ava.informz.net/survistapro/s.asp?id=1284>

Biosecurity Queensland Link

Biosecurity Queensland – a service of the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation – is the agency responsible for protecting Queensland’s primary industries, environment and way of life. Visit www.biosecurity.qld.gov.au for further information.

Emergency Animal Disease newsletter and bulletin

The Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) provides current information on emergency diseases at: <http://www.daff.gov.au/animal-plant-health/pests-diseases-weeds/animal/ead-bulletin>

Recent changes in disease epidemiology, distribution and pathogen characteristics are noted.

The National Significant Disease Investigation Program (NSDIP)

Biosecurity Queensland, a service of the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation, participates in the National Significant Disease Investigation Program (NSDIP) which aims to boost Australia’s capacity for the early detection of livestock and wildlife diseases by increasing the participation of veterinary practitioners and subsidising the cost of investigating significant diseases.

This program can subsidise the cost of a disease investigation by a private veterinary practitioner where there are financial limitations to the investigation – for example, where producers do not want to proceed with practitioner services because of low economic value of the stock or cannot afford practitioner involvement. Subsidies are available for the initial field investigation, clinical evaluation and a follow-up investigation. In return, the practitioner must provide a case report of the investigation to Biosecurity Queensland. It is important to be mindful that cases for investigation must meet certain criteria to be deemed suitable for the program.

Practitioner subsidies of \$225 and \$325 are available for each approved local and remote investigation respectively and an additional \$225 to \$325 is available for follow-up investigation.

Biosecurity Queensland already offers a generous indirect subsidy to practitioners for them to engage in disease investigations of farm livestock. This takes the form of:

- a free diagnostic laboratory service for material meeting the submission criteria,
- feedback and advice from laboratory-based veterinary pathologists on required specimens, their presentation and best means of transport; &
- assistance from Biosecurity Queensland field personnel where an investigation exceeds the service capability or capacity of the practice.

For more information regarding this matter, please visit http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/4790_19673.htm

Stringent new Residue requirements for meat and offal exports to Russia

SAFEMEAT is a partnership between the red meat and livestock industry and the state and federal governments to ensure red meat and livestock products achieve the highest standards of safety and hygiene.

SAFEMEAT are currently seeking the cooperation of veterinary surgeons who prescribe oxytetracycline or chlortetracyclines (or combinations thereof) to label each bottle with a statement to the effect that “a provisional Russian Export Slaughter Interval (Russian ESI) of 90 days applies to animals treated with this drug”. An ESI is the time required for residue levels at slaughter to deplete to levels which meet the requirements of sensitive export markets.

Additionally, veterinarians dispensing or providing oxytetracycline or chlortetracycline products to cattle producers for in-feed use are also asked to include a 90 day provisional Russian ESI on the labels of these products.

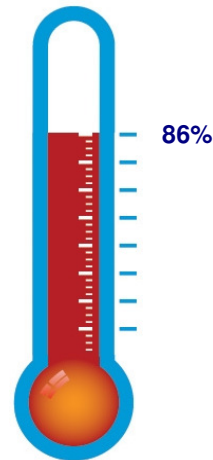
Industry has initiated a process to review these products and identify where possible, product specific interim slaughter intervals. To date, one product “Alamycin 10 Injection” has been assigned a provisional Russian ESI of 35 days. As further products are reviewed information will be made available on any updated interim slaughter intervals on the SAFEMEAT website www.safemeat.com.au

While there’s no legal requirement to include ESIs on dispensing labels, the addition of this advice on labels, or as a minimum verbal advice to this effect, would go a long way to reducing potential problems with this growing export market. For full details of this situation and your requirements as a veterinarian, please refer to the SAFEMEAT website.

Have you provided/updated your emergency contact detail for disease alert?

86% of registrants have recorded their emergency contact details on the Register of Veterinary Surgeons. You can record or update your details by:

- providing this detail on the Notification of Details Form enclosed with your registration renewal notice;
- completing the Change of Particulars Form on the Board website
<http://www.vsb.qld.gov.au/forms/Change-of-particulars-on-register-form.pdf>
- email – vsbqld@dpi.qld.gov.au; or
- telephone – 07 323 93600



New diseases do occur
You may be looking at the first case
EXOTIC DISEASE WATCH HOTLINE
1800 675 888

Quick Links

Previous editions of VetRegister:

<http://www.vsb.qld.gov.au/VetRegister/vetregister.html>

Policies:

- **General**
<http://www.vsb.qld.gov.au/policygeneral.html>
- **For practitioners**
<http://www.vsb.qld.gov.au/policypractice.html>

Industry:

- **AVA** <http://www.ava.com.au/>
- **Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists**
<http://www.anzcvs.org.au/info/home/>

National Veterinary Registration Boards:

- **New South Wales**
<http://www.vpb.nsw.gov.au/>
- **Victoria** <http://www.vetboard.vic.gov.au/>
- **South Australia** <http://www.vsb.sa.gov.au/>
- **Western Australia**
<http://www.vsbwa.org.au/>
- **Tasmania**
<http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/ThemeNodes/EGIL-5D78W3?open>
- **Australian Capital Territory**
<http://www.health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=sp&did=10030521>

Radiation Health web link

Radiation Health has a website that provides open access to guidelines, application forms and other information for licensees. The site also provides an opportunity for clients to highlight issues or ask questions about the radiation safety legislation or the radiation safety standards.

<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/radiationhealth/healthrelated/veterinary.asp>

Board Officers

The Board is currently administered by the Acting Registrar, Valerie Mustafay and Administration Officer (Registration), Sheri Jackson. Both officers are non-veterinarian employees of the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Applications for registration can be submitted by:

- Post- The Registrar
Veterinary Surgeons Board
GPO Box 46
BRISBANE Qld 4001
- fax - 07 3225 1488
- email – vsbqld@dpi.qld.gov.au
- in person by appointment during office hours.