



Newsletter

Veterinary Board of the Northern Territory

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AUGUST 2016

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Position	Name
President (<i>ex-officio</i> - Chief Inspector of Livestock)	Dr Kevin de Witte
Vice President (elected veterinarian)	Dr Ian Gurry
Member (elected veterinarian)	Dr Shane Bartie
Member (appointed Veterinarian)	Dr Elizabeth Stedman
Public Interest Member (appointed non-veterinarian)	Marion Davey
Board Registrar	Sue Gillis

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NEW CHIEF VETERINARY OFFICER/CHIEF INSPECTOR LIVESTOCK FOR THE NT

The Veterinary Board of the Northern Territory wishes to welcome Dr Kevin de Witte to the position of Chief Veterinary Officer and Chief Inspector Livestock of the NT following the resignation of Dr Malcolm Anderson in December 2015.

Dr de Witte graduated from the Queensland University in 1982 with a Bachelor Veterinary Science (hons 2A). He worked in various roles in Darwin and Alice Springs before commencing employment as a Veterinary Officer in Katherine in late 1984 with the Northern Territory Government. Kevin then resigned as Principal Veterinary Officer NT in March 2006 to take up employment with Animal Health Australia for the management of the national disease surveillance and welfare program and projects.

National Animal Health Information System (NAHIS) including national significant subsidised disease investigations

National Arbovirus Monitoring Program (NAMP) for bluetongue virus

National Johne's Disease Control Program (NJDCP)

Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy Freedom Assurance Program (TSEFAP)

Development of the land transport and cattle welfare standards and guidelines

Co-ordination of the FMD vaccine bank and FMD and Capri pox research

He then resigned as Executive Manager Market Access Services with Animal Health Australia to return to the Territory in February to fill the role of NT Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) and will lead and manage the Animal Biosecurity Program within the department as well as fulfilling the role of President of the Veterinary Board of the Northern Territory.



The Board welcomes Kevin to his new role.

VIRULENT SYSTEMIC FELINE CALICIVIRUS

Calicivirus. There have been outbreaks of suspected feline calicivirus-virulent systemic disease (FCV-VSD) at two veterinary practices in Sydney between December 2015 and January 2016. Several cats died from severe disease as a result. Affected cats presented with some or all of the following signs - fever, limb and/or head oedema, oral ulceration, crusted nasal sores, purulent skin ulcers, ear-tip necrosis, jaundice and dyspnoea. These clinical signs are similar to those reported in previous epizootic outbreaks of FCV-VSD strains overseas.

While typical FCV infections in cats are characterised by oral ulcers, upper respiratory signs and transient lameness, VSD is characterised by a severe systemic inflammatory response syndrome with vasculitis and hepatocellular necrosis. Signs of FCV-VSD are more severe in adult cats than in kittens and fatalities are common. FCV can survive in the environment for around one month. FCV strains that cause VSD are highly contagious and easily transmitted by clothing, shoes, bedding, food bowls and litter trays. Owners of affected cats should ensure they wash all these items if there are other cats in the household.

Vets who see pyrexia, systemically unwell cats who may have the disease must keep them isolated from other cats, and employ effective barrier nursing, good hand hygiene and wash down surfaces to prevent spread to other cats. Effective disinfectants include sodium hypochlorite (1:32 dilution of a 5-6% solution) and potassium peroxymonosulfate (e.g. Virkon). Vaccination against FCV cannot be assumed to protect cats from VSD. Although vaccination was shown to provide some protection experimentally, previous reports of FCV-VSD outbreaks have shown that cats fully vaccinated for FCV can still succumb to FCV-VSD.

The emergence of virulent strains of FCV is most likely to occur in multi-cat environments such as shelters or boarding catteries where high levels of FCV infection and replication create ideal conditions for de novo mutations of field strains of FCV. Outbreaks of VSD can also occur when cats from such environments are transported to another multi-cat environment. Fortunately, progressive spread into the wider community has not been recorded and most localised outbreaks tend to 'burn-out' by themselves.

Cats infected with field strains of FCV that are co-infected with feline panleukopenia virus can also develop severe illness that may mimic FCV-VSD so testing for FPV is recommended in suspected cases (faecal antigen test for canine parvovirus, and/or faecal PCR).

Researchers at the University of Sydney are investigating the viral strains responsible for the Sydney outbreak. To discuss suspected cases or for further information, please contact Professor Vanessa Barrs at vanessa.barrs@sydney.edu.au.

BAITS CONTAINING PAPP RELEASED FOR WILD DOG AND FOX CONTROL – WITH POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR DOMESTIC PETS

A new toxin for wild dog and fox management is being released in Australia. Veterinarians may be presented with cases of off-target poisoning of domestic pets, so need to be aware of the mode of action of the toxin and its antidote in order to attempt management of these cases.

Known as DOGABAIT and FOXECUTE®, the new baits contain the chemical para-aminopropiophenone (or 'PAPP'), which induces **methaemoglobinemia** following

ingestion. Products containing PAPP have been approved for use by the APVMA, and are manufactured and distributed by Animal Control Technologies Australia (ACTA).

PAPP is considered to be a humane toxin, and has the potential to replace 1080 use in many situations. It has an additional advantage in that it has an **antidote, Methylene Blue**. Limited trials show that, if an animal is administered the antidote relatively quickly by IV injection (likely within one hour of bait exposure), it can recover with no long-term effect. At this stage, this antidote can only be administered by a veterinarian.

A summary, provided by the Invasive Animals CRC, follows.

What is PAPP and how does it work?

Para-aminopropiophenone (or 'PAPP') is the active ingredient used in new toxic baits developed for the broad-scale management of canids. Once ingested, PAPP works by converting normal haemoglobin to methaemoglobin. Clinical signs include lethargy, ataxia, unresponsiveness, unconsciousness and death. Limited studies suggest that animals receiving a sub-lethal dose can fully recover without lasting complications. PAPP baits are scheduled **Restricted S7**.

Is PAPP safe for domestic and working dogs?

No. Since PAPP is lethal to wild dogs and foxes, it is also highly toxic to all domestic and working dogs, depending on the dose ingested. The mode of action is fast and symptoms of methaemoglobinemia are diagnostic. The carefully considered PAPP dose in fox baits mean that an average-sized working dog will be less affected after eating one fox bait, but treatment should be sought immediately. Due to the higher dose in wild dog baits, if a domestic or working dog eats just one dog bait, it will die within 1-2 hours if there is no treatment with antidote. This means that the use of PAPP baits will require careful consideration of potential risk to pets, working dogs and other non-target animals.

Is there an antidote for PAPP?

Yes. The chemical methylene blue converts methaemoglobin back to haemoglobin and immediately reverses the effects of PAPP poisoning, with recovery usually occurring within 1 hour, based on limited studies. At present, methylene blue can only be purchased and administered by a veterinarian.

Can an animal killed with PAPP be distinguished from one killed by 1080?

Yes. Bright orange plastic marker beads incorporated into PAPP baits can be found in the stomach of affected animals and even in the decayed carcass. Similar red marker beads are incorporated into ACTA manufactured 1080 baits. Animals with PAPP poisoning also display grey-blue gums and tongue, caused by the change in blood colour from red to brown.

Can PAPP harm other animals?

Members of the dog and cat families are highly susceptible to PAPP compared with other species, and this is due to the unique way that they metabolise PAPP. In Australia, cats, foxes, and wild dogs are the animals most susceptible to PAPP; however PAPP will only be available for wild dog and fox control in manufactured baits. The materials used to make these baits have shown to be less palatable to herbivores. PAPP is known to affect some native non-target animals like goannas and for this reason aerial deployment of FOXECUTE and DOGABAIT has not been approved.

Where can I find more information regarding PAPP?

For more online information visit the Invasive Animals CRC PestSmart webpage on PAPP at www.pestsmart.org.au/papp



Methylene Blue is distributed by Phebra: Contact is Poonam Kamboj, Pharmacovigilance & Medical Information Manager, P: +61 (0)2 9420 9199 (ext. 926) M: +61 (0) 438 275 827 or visit the below link.

<http://www.ava.com.au/node/73627>

PLANTS – POISONOUS TO HORSES (AUSTRALIAN FIELD GUIDE)

Many plants that grow in Australia are potentially poisonous to horses. In the NT Crotonia 's and Indigofera are commonly recognised threats to horse health. Such plants can cause considerable economic and welfare problems for horse owners. Below is a link to a new publication from the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation for your information.

<https://www.horsecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Plants-Poisonous-to-Horses-Aust-field-guide.pdf>

NATIONAL ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE STRATEGY 2015-2019

The Australian Government has released the first [National Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy](#) to guide the response to the threat of antibiotic misuse and resistance. The strategy was developed in partnership with industry and government, and will guide action by governments, health professionals, veterinarians, farmers and communities to reduce the emergence of resistant bacteria. Veterinary practitioners should familiarise themselves with the Strategy.

SCIENTISTS AND MATHEMATICIANS IN SCHOOLS PROGRAM

SMiS is a national skilled volunteering program managed by CSIRO. It facilitates ongoing partnerships between individual teachers and Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) professionals. The aim is to bring real-world, contemporary experiences into the classroom, to inspire students and enhance STEM education.

SMiS partnerships are voluntary and completely flexible in terms of the frequency of interactions and style of activity (including, for example, presentations, hands-on activities, video-link sessions, mentoring, site visits and field excursions). Because it fits around their work commitments, SMiS is a useful option for professionals who want to engage in outreach activities but find it difficult to do so through more structured programs. I have attached our brochure and more information is available on our website www.scientistsinschools.edu.au

To put the SMiS program in context, there are now nearly 1900 SMiS partnerships across Australia and 1297 schools are involved in partnerships (14% of schools nationally).

SMiS currently have teachers at primary and secondary schools in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine, other regional centres and rural areas across the NT who are keen to set up SMiS partnerships and I am actively looking for more STEM professionals who would be interested in participating. Vets, biologists and scientists from universities and government departments are actively engaged in SMiS partnerships around Australia, along with professionals from many other disciplines. I am therefore hoping to promote SMiS to vets in the NT, to give them the opportunity to participate in the program and make an exciting contribution to STEM education in the Territory.

For further information please contact Harriet – SIS.NT@csiro.au

2016 AVA WORKFORCE SURVEY

Australia's veterinarians perform essential roles in public health, food safety, biosecurity and quarantine, and in creating healthy and safe communities through the work they do with animals.

Despite the critical public good services provided by the veterinary profession, and an ongoing trend for governments to reduce spending on field veterinarians, there is no centralised workforce planning for the profession in Australia. It's essential that the nation has the right number of vets to meet the needs of Australia's animals and their owners, and that those vets are where they're needed. Although there have been numerous government reports in the past about ensuring veterinary services are meeting Australia's needs, these have often focussed only on rural services.

Three new veterinary schools have been established in the last 10 years, and the student population at the existing 4 schools has grown in that time. As a result, a large number of new veterinarians has started to enter the profession. To address the gap in information about veterinarians across the nation, the AVA established a voluntary survey for all registered veterinarians to complete annually.

The 2016 Survey is now ready for all Veterinarians to complete. Just click on the below link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LBD8N98>

AUSTRALIA'S VETERINARIANS AND THE FRAWLEY REVIEW 2003

The Frawley Review of Veterinary services was commissioned in 2003 to address Australia's future animal health needs and the roles, availability and capabilities of rural veterinarians to meet those needs. The Review reached three broad conclusions:

- Australia's animal health needs were being met on a day-to-day basis but Australia's animal health system needed to be enhanced to meet more stringent requirements for international trade in the future. The immediate priorities identified were the establishment of an Australian Veterinary Reserve (AVR) and the strengthening of surveillance.
- There was no current crisis identified in the availability of veterinarians. However, rural veterinarians would have to contend with rising costs, a reluctance of producers to utilise their services, long hours, limited social opportunities and schooling for their families. These factors all impact on the willingness of veterinarians to live in rural areas, create local shortages and could lead to a chronic shortage of production animal veterinarians.
- The opportunity for the most lasting solutions is offered by policies that would build up the demand for veterinary services rather than policies which might artificially induce supply. Most issues could not be successfully addressed by any one sector. There was a need for all involved in rural veterinary services to make changes to their current approaches – governments, producers, veterinary practitioners and Veterinary Schools.

A research project is being conducted by Dr John AL Maxwell as part of a DVetMedSc at Murdoch University Veterinary School titled "Australia's Veterinarians and the Frawley Review of 2003".

If you would like to participate in a survey as part of this research project please click on the following link: www.surveymonkey.com/r/VET2016



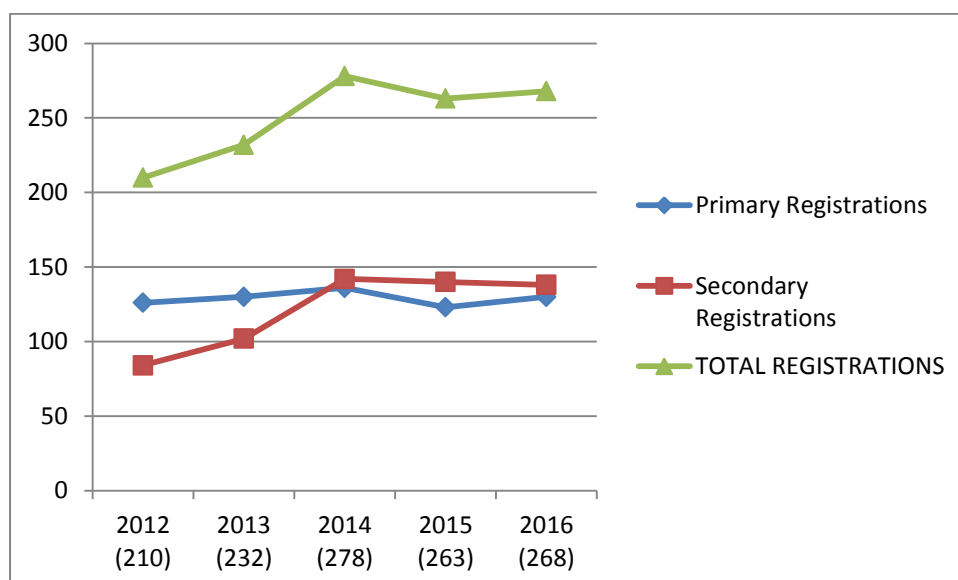
The questionnaire has been accepted by the Human Ethics Research Committee of Murdoch University (28/2015) and has the following attributes:

1. Comprehensive – it involves all veterinarians
2. Independent – the survey is conducted for research purposes only; the data is not available for any other use.
3. Anonymous – the data collected is anonymous and does not infringe privacy laws.
4. Analysis – survey monkey automatically analyses the data derived from the survey.

REGISTRATION STATISTICS

Number of registrants *(as at 30 June 2016)*

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total	210	232	278	263	268



COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATED

The Board is pleased to announce that there have been no new complaints for the financial year 2015/2016.

ANNUAL REGISTRATION RENEWALS 2016

Registration renewals will be emailed out to all registered veterinarians on 31 October 2016. For those veterinarians that don't have an email address you will still receive your renewal notices by mail. Please ensure that your postal address/email address is up to date.

When you receive your renewal notice please ensure that you provide all documentation required to process your renewal. You can email, fax or post your documentation back to:

Registrar
Vetboard NT
PO Box 3000
DARWIN NT 0801

Fax Number: (08) 8999 2089

Email: Vetboard@nt.gov.au

REMEMBER: RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION MUST BE RECIEVED BY 31 DECEMBER 2016.

