

# WYOMING VETERINARY TECHNICIAN ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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The main goal of the Wyoming Veterinary Technician Association is to promote the professional and educational advancement of Veterinary Technicians and the Veterinary Support Staff.

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## President's Message

Greetings!

Well the Veterinary Practice Act will be opened for the next legislative session starting in January 2011. The preliminary drafts that had been circulating for the last two years have all made reference to veterinary technicians. Two weeks before the joint Ag committee meeting in Buffalo, the newest draft was cut to a few amendments to the existing practice act. All mention of veterinary technicians was gone, poof!

I attended the Ag committee meeting in Buffalo on October 4. Apparently the veterinarians made enough negative comments about the previous proposed drafts that just about everything was cut. The biggest complaint was against Article 5, which is where all auxiliary disciplines were defined. Not only did it include technicians, but embryo transplant specialists, equine dentists, chiropractors, ultrasonographers, etc. The majority of the complaints were against the others disciplines, and the veterinarians were justified in their complaints. The Veterinary Medical Board just removed all of Article 5.

It became apparent that our Veterinary Medical Board (VMB) and our Veterinary Medical Association (VMA) are split. All of the veterinarians that spoke at the meeting made it very clear that the changes for the other disciplines that had been included in the previous drafts were very offensive to the concept of veterinary medicine. One veterinarian did step up and mention that they did not think that the veterinary technician should have been dropped out of the proposed changes.

In conversations after the meeting with both veterinarians from the VMA and legislators, we have been asked to help draft an amendment to the bill that was accepted to

committee. It is my hope to get technicians defined as outlined in NAVTAs model practice act, but realistically I am only holding out to have technician defined as someone who has attended an accredited school, and get direct and indirect supervision defined.

I will be working with a couple of the veterinarians and at least two of the legislators that had been willing to listen last week. The proposed amendment will be presented in Cheyenne in January. We need to here from you. Comments you have can be forwarded to me.

Thanks,

Jackie Van Noy, CVT  
WyVTA President

### **Secretary's Notes**

Jackie and myself were the only members to show up to the November meeting. I had sent a reminder out however, it appears that no one received it. So it's floating out in cyberspace somewhere. Our next meeting will be Dec. 5, 2010 at 8:00 pm in the vspn meeting room.

We need to have election of officers. If you want to run for office, please let me know. We are always looking for people to become involved in our association.

### **A Note From The Editor**

In 2011, the veterinary practice act is being opened. It is hoped that veterinary technicians can become a part of this document. At the present time, we are not defined except as nurses, veterinary aides, non-licensed employee, laboratory technician, essentially any term besides "veterinary technician. Currently embryo transplant technicians and artificial insemination technicians are defined and regulated. (<http://plboards.state.wy.us/VetBoard/RulesRegs.asp>).

Many veterinarians are under the impression that having (credentialed) veterinary technicians defined is going to force them to hire only people who have graduated from an accredited program, passed the VTNE, etc. That is not the intention of the proposed changes. It is understood that credentialed technicians are very hard to recruit in Wyoming. Much of this has to do with the cost of living and lack of affordable housing in many areas in Wyoming. At this time we just want the term defined with really no regulation. The initial changes did require that a veterinary technician be registered through the state but there was no mention that the veterinarians MUST employ only veterinary technicians to perform the duties that the "aides, nurses, non-licensed employee, etc." currently perform. Personally, I'd like to see veterinary assistants defined as well.

It's amazing what a person learns when she is looking for articles to put in a newsletter:

## Required Training for Packaging and Shipping Lab Specimens

[http://www.avma.org/issues/pack\\_ship\\_lab\\_specimens.asp](http://www.avma.org/issues/pack_ship_lab_specimens.asp)

Since 1969, the AVMA has had the policy titled "Shipment of Diagnostic Specimens" ([http://www.avma.org/issues/policy/hazardsub\\_transport.asp](http://www.avma.org/issues/policy/hazardsub_transport.asp)). This policy states that laboratory specimens properly "*packaged to prevent leakage or breaks in the containers*" pose "*no health hazard or sanitation problem.*" This is true because once specimens are packaged correctly neither the package handlers nor the environment will be exposed to the specimen. Additionally, the policy states that veterinarians are "*to review their methods of preparing diagnostic specimens and ensure that they are in compliance with all applicable guidelines and federal and state laws,*" which includes required training.

Incorrect packaging of infectious substances can quickly land a veterinary practice in hot water. Veterinary practices send specimens to diagnostic labs on a daily basis, and it is vital to ensure that the staff (including veterinarians) who package the items have had the required documented training and that each shipment meets current packaging standards. Any items found to fall below these standards may result in the shipper being visited by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) or the U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT). Fines associated with noncompliance of packaging or training can be substantial.

According to our resources, requirements associated with packaging infectious substances were last updated in 2006 when the U. S. standards became harmonized with international United Nations (UN) standards. The DOT Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) has published two documents which are designed to help shippers understand their responsibilities which when followed will provide safety for all involved in the transport of these substances. The publication titled [Transporting Infectious Substances Safely](#) is the DOT / PHMSA guide for shippers regarding these [regulatory changes](#), including the establishment of a classification system for infectious substances (categories A and B). In 2009, DOT / PHMSA released [What You Should Know: a Guide to Developing a Hazardous Materials Training Program](#), which explains the training requirements. **Quick Overview of What You Need To Know**

### **1. The classification of the sample being shipped determines the packaging and training requirements which are applicable.**

- **Category A:** "*An infectious substance in a form capable of causing permanent disability or life-threatening or fatal disease in otherwise healthy humans or animals when exposure to it occurs.*" [49CFR § 173.134 Class 6, Division 6.2(a)(1)(i)] \*
  - **Examples of Category A infectious substances are confirmed cultures of organisms such as Bacillus anthracis, Brucella abortus, Chlamydia psittaci or Eastern equine encephalitis virus.**
- **Category B:** "*An infectious substance that is not in a form generally capable of causing permanent disability or life-threatening or fatal disease in otherwise healthy humans or animals when exposure to it occurs. This includes Category B infectious substances transported for diagnostic or investigational purposes.*" [49CFR § 173.134 Class 6, Division 6.2(a)(1)(ii)] \*
  - **Examples of Category B infectious substances are samples that are suspicious for organisms such as leptospirosis or suspected but not confirmed cases of Category A infectious substances.**

- **Exempt:** 49CFR § 173.134 Class 6, Division 6.2(b) \* provides multiple specific examples of materials and samples that are exemptions to the shipping regulations of Categories A and B. An exempt material is one "*that does not contain an infectious substance or that is unlikely to cause disease in humans or animals.*" This includes: