



October 2018

It's been a busy few months for VCNZ and we're sorry for the lack of recent updates. Here is some news and guidance for October. As always, please get in touch with us if you have any questions or comments.



Transfer of client's records

We often receive queries about giving a client's records to another clinic. The client's consent must be given before the transfer occurs. Clients can provide consent directly to the veterinarian who holds the clinical records or can do so

through their new veterinarian. In the second situation, the client's new veterinarian makes the request for the clinical records. If in any doubt, the veterinarian asked to release the clinical records can ask for evidence that client consent has been given. However, in many cases this won't be necessary. Non-veterinary staff can request the records but, sometimes, to save any confusion, time delay, or doubt over whether client permission has been sought, it may be easier for veterinarians to make the request.

Cracking down on cartels

The Commerce Commission is working to raise business awareness of how to avoid and how to spot anti-competitive behaviour. They are releasing a series of five articles, this first of which was recently featured in NZVA's *Vetscript*. We strongly encourage all veterinarians to read the articles and to contact the Commerce Commission, or us, if you have any questions.

[Read the first article here](#)

New animal welfare regulations

A number (45) of new animal welfare regulations took effect as from 1 October 2018.

If you are a companion animal veterinarian, there are now regulations around tail docking (cosmetic tail docking is prohibited, although veterinarians are able to remove tails for therapeutic reasons), and dew claw removal.

If you are a large animal veterinarian, you may be asked more frequently to provide advice on whether stock can be transported and to certify animals for transport. Information for veterinarians about certification of stock has been provided in *Vetscript* (articles by Wayne Ricketts [November](#) and [December 2017](#) and Richard Wild September 2018). Information was also provided on the recent MPI/NZVA/VCNZ roadshows. If you are a NZVA member refer to the NZVA website. VCNZ has received a number of complaints about certification

for transport. We recommend that veterinarians should take a cautious approach and discuss any difficult cases with a Verification Services veterinarian or another colleague.

You can view all of the regulations [here](#).

Further information can be found on the [MPI website](#) at

The regulations for disbudding and dehorning cattle are delayed until 1 October 2019.



Q&A session Palmerston North

The Council will be holding this year's Q&A session in Palmerston North on 20 November at the Wharerata Function Centre at Massey University. The meeting commences at 7.00pm with nibbles and drinks and the Q&A session starts at 7.30pm. An invitation will be sent shortly to veterinarians who live in the Manawatu region. Come along, it's a great opportunity to meet Council members and Council staff and to ask some questions.

Use of prescription human medicines

An ACVM audit earlier this year of the use of prescription (human) medicines (PMs) by veterinary practices indicated a few practices with a significantly high purchase rate of PMs, with Augmentin the most significant. On the face of it, it appears that Augmentin is being used instead of the equivalent veterinary medicine, Clavulox.

Veterinarians are able to prescribe PMs, and in many instances, there are the only drugs available for treatment. The [Veterinary Medicines section of the Code](#) and the [Statement on the Discretionary Use of Human and Veterinary Medicines by Veterinarians](#), describe the requirements around the use of a PM.

If there is a suitable RVM, this should be used before the discretionary use of a PM or the off-label use of a veterinary medicine. It is not appropriate to substitute a PM for a registered veterinary medicine purely on the basis of cost. However, it is recognised there will be circumstances where the discretionary use may be chosen in preference. Ultimately the type of product used is at the discretion of the veterinarian as long as they are able to justify their decision.

Judicial Committee hearing

The Judicial Committee recently considered charges against Dr William Baird. The charges related to:

- his behaviour towards, and lack of support for, a new graduate veterinarian who he employed
- a failure to respond to a complaint made to him by his clients
- a failure to engage adequately with VCNZ's Complaints Assessment Committee and Notification Review Group.

The Committee decided that Dr Baird's behavior fell short of the Profession's accepted standards and it found Dr Baird guilty of professional misconduct.

As a result, Dr Baird was censured, his registration suspended for 9 months, practice conditions were imposed for a period of two years and he was ordered to pay \$43,000 towards the cost of the hearing.

The decision provides an important reminder to veterinarians of the need to

interact with colleagues in a respectful way that fosters good relationships and communication between veterinarians and to provide support for junior colleagues. It also highlights the importance of dealing with complaints in a timely, honest and constructive way.

[Read the full decision here](#)

Reminder: APC fee consultation

We are still consulting on the proposed APC fee for the 2019/20 practising year. To find out more and have your say, [read our discussion document](#).

Veterinary Council of New Zealand
PO Box 10-563 | Level 10, Bayleys Building, 36 Brandon Street
Wellington 6143 | New Zealand
Phone: 04 473 9600
www.vetcouncil.org.nz

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