



October omnibus

VCNZ's **Wayne Ricketts** presents an anthology of issues that have come across his desk recently.

VETERINARY MEDICINES SECTION

The revised Veterinary Medicines section of the *Code of Professional Conduct* was made available to veterinarians for consultation during September. If you haven't had a chance to look at it, please do, as submissions close on 15 October.

The major proposed changes relate to antibiotics (including a proposed ban on advertising antibiotics), shortening the period for authorisations for restricted veterinary medicines and critically important antibiotics, a requirement for a hard-copy controlled drugs register with a minimum of monthly reconciliation, revised explanatory notes on veterinary operating instructions and a new section on multi-modal use.

We welcome any comments on the revised section.

DRY COW THERAPY

We'll be updating the Dry Cow Therapy Statement this year. In the meantime, remember that you must meet the requirements for a veterinary consultation as set out in the *Code of Professional Conduct*. The authorising veterinarian must be aware of the current health status of the animals and their dairy environment by direct physical examination at the time of authorising the product, or by a sufficient number of prior examinations in the current season.

FITNESS FOR TRANSPORT

Veterinarians need to be aware of the NZVA guidelines for fitness for transport. These have been endorsed by VCNZ. They can be found on the NZVA website at www.nzva.org.nz/page/fitnessbrochure if you are a member, or on the VCNZ website.

The requirements apply to transport for any purposes, not just slaughter. The guidelines will be updated to clarify any possible confusion among veterinarians that they only apply to transport for slaughter.

Certificates are valid for up to seven days, although there is an exception for geographical isolation.

I strongly advise that if you are unsure whether an animal is fit for transport to slaughter you should contact your local MPI Verification Services veterinarian. An up-to-date list is maintained at www.nzva.org.nz/page/MPIVSccontact.

ANIMAL WELFARE REGULATIONS

New animal welfare regulations were signed off by cabinet in July. The 46 regulations include stock transport, farm husbandry, companion and working animals, pigs, layer hens and the way animals are accounted for in research, testing and teaching. These follow the young calf regulations introduced last year.

A full list of the new regulations can be found at www.mpi.govt.nz/law-and-policy/legal-overviews/animal-welfare/animal-welfare-regulations.

Most of the new regulations are expected to come into effect in October 2018. A useful A3-sized poster that provides a quick overview of the new regulations can also be found at the above website. We (and the NZVA) will keep you posted with more information over the coming months.

THERAPEUTIC PRODUCTS BILL AND MISUSE OF DRUGS REGULATIONS

We have recently met with Ministry of Health officials about this. The Therapeutic Products Bill will replace

the Medicines Act 1981, which allows veterinarians to prescribe prescription [human] medicines.

The major issue for us is rectifying the anomaly around section 29 medicines, so that veterinarians will be able to purchase them directly from a drug wholesaler within New Zealand and hold for anticipated future use, rather than having to import them.

The Misuse of Drugs Regulations deal with controlled drugs. We have asked for clarification about custody requirements in clinics and in vehicles, and in particular the specifications for drug cabinets.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Principle 11 of the Privacy Act 1993 allows a veterinarian to release information from a client's records without their consent if asked by a member of an organisation upholding the law. This might be a police officer, an animal welfare inspector or a dog control officer requesting information to assist in the maintenance of the law under which they work.

Once a veterinarian has confirmed that the person is a client, an option is to request a production order. This is like an official request for information that is authorised by a judge or an authorised issuing officer.

The officer of the law has to specify what information is being requested, and the veterinarian is compelled to provide the information.

This procedure protects your client confidentiality obligations. You should keep a copy of the production order and the actual information released on the client's records. ⁽⁸⁾