

SVME Newsletter

Newsletter of the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics Volume 11, Number 2

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President's Message

Dear SVME Members,

The SVME has had an active and productive year of activities. We hope that you will be excited about our accomplishments and pleased of the innovations implemented by our board members. I want to personally thank each of you for allowing me to serve you.

We are in the midst of a period in which man's role as "Guardian of this Planet" is being tested and Ethics arguments are constantly being posed. The discussions and political mandates at both national and state levels will require our strict and constant vigilance. We need men and women who have uncompromising and unbiased principles to protect us. To borrow a statement from Dr. Sylvie Cloutier's closing message in last year's newsletter, she writes, "I believe SVME should be leading the way regarding the ethical issue related to these events and provide its members with the latest updates."

We are rapidly approaching the annual AVMA convention. During the 2005 AVMA convention, we will present the Robert R. Shomer award to an individual who has made giant contributions to the field of veterinary ethics. The recipient will receive a plaque and a cash prize of \$1,000.00. Be sure to check your AVMA announcements in order that you can be present to attend this first SVME's awards ceremony.

We would like to congratulate the individuals who have participated in SVME Student chapters and scheduled ethics activities at their institutions during the past year. To date, the Board is aware of a least two institutions that have active student chapters and we are anxious to be made aware of the progress made at others schools.

We are in the process of nominating officers to serve as new Board members. This year the positions of President-Elect, Parliamentarian, Treasurer and Secretary are up for nominations. The SVME is in a crucial phase of its development and it is important that we elect Board members who are committed to actively carrying the torch for Ethics. *continued pg.2...*

President's Message

Continued...

During the past year, an Editorial Board was formed to monitor and review materials to be published in the newsletter. The Board continues to solicit original manuscripts and articles for publications. Also, we are open to innovative mechanisms that will allow us to increase the readership of our newsletter.

Our membership has grown to approximately 70 members and includes students, who are expected to continue as regular members. It is critical that we continue to increase our membership list.

Correspondence has been circulated to each of the North American veterinary schools soliciting the names of individuals who are either teaching courses or promoting ethical discussions at their universities. The data that we receive will help us to identify potential SVME members.

The 2006 Ethics Program that will be held in Hawaii is being finalized. The fall newsletter will contain a complete listing of speakers and topics.

I would like to thank Dr. Sylvie Cloutier (Past-President), Dr. Barbara Horney (President-Elect), Dr. John Wright (Treasurer), Dr. Carol Morgan (Secretary), Dr. Bob Speth (Parliamentarian), and Dr. Gary Block (Historian) for their excellent work as Board Members during this year. To Dr. Brian Forsgren, who served as President two years ago, I say thanks for your patience and recommendations, which allowed us to resolve some difficult issues.

I hope to see many of you in Minneapolis. Be sure to remember the Ethics Sessions and Business Meeting that will be held Sunday, July 17th as well as the Robert R. Shomer award ceremony. The 2005 Ethics program listing is included in this edition of the newsletter.

Finally, thank you for your support and encouragement.

Respectfully,
Earl Dixon, Ph.D.
SVME President

Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to report that SVME's funds in both checking and savings accounts remain sound and stable. The checking account balance on June 9, 2005 was \$2,032.95, and the money market savings account balance is \$22,715.71.

Membership numbers are slowly but steadily increasing. Perhaps this is because of increased awareness of the organization due to brochures that were developed last year, and an increased presence at continuing education meetings. Perhaps it is due to members of SVME recruiting new members to this worthwhile organization. Whatever the reasons, I thank all of you that have added to the success of SVME.

Dues Time: It is that time of year when we ask you for your continued support. The annual business meeting (July 17, 2005) is the end 2004-2005 fiscal year and the beginning of the 2005-2006 fiscal year. This means that membership dues for the next year will be due on July 17. I will send a dues notice in the later part of June – early July to all members who have not paid in advance. Thank you in advance for continuing your support of SVME. I will enclose a membership brochure with the dues notices in the hope that members will introduce an interested colleague to SVME.

The SVME membership committee and Board welcomes constructive criticism. We encourage any suggestions that members think will help SVME serve your wishes for dialogue in matters of ethics related to veterinary medicine.

I hope to see many SVME members at the SVME continuing education sessions, and annual business meeting, which will be held in conjunction with the AVMA Annual Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota on July 17. As a life long Minnesotan I think attendees will find Minneapolis a welcoming, congenial, and pleasant venue for the AVMA meeting. I expect attendees will learn a lot, and have fun!!

Respectfully submitted,
John S. Wright, DVM
SVME Treasurer and
Membership Committee Chair

News to Ponder

Following Your Patients to Necropsy?

Despite improved training and diagnostic methods, the accuracy of pre-mortem diagnoses in veterinary medicine did not improve over a 10 year period ending in 1999. The study evaluated over 600 cases seen at a veterinary university teaching hospital and found that in approximately 37% of the cases, the clinical diagnosis differed from the postmortem pathologic diagnosis.

Internal medicine and Emergency/Critical Care were the services with the highest discrepancies whereas the Oncology and Ophthalmology services had the highest correlations. The authors note a significant decrease in the number of necropsies performed in veterinary teaching hospitals which seems to parallel a similar drop in human medicine. Should necropsy exams be mandatory in veterinary teaching hospitals unless the owner explicitly declines one? Would such a policy ultimately help improve the care of animals in the long run?

JAVMA Vol 224, Feb. 1, 2004

Doctoring Data?

Selective reporting of outcomes in the medical literature has long been suspected and now, a paper in JAMA provides support for this belief. The authors evaluated 122 published journal articles and found that "50% of efficacy and 65% of harm outcomes/trial were incompletely reported" and that "statistically significant outcomes had higher odds of being reported compared with non-significant outcomes". While no such study has been published looking at veterinary research, it is likely that a similar bias exists. The net result of such selective reporting may overestimate the benefits of a particular intervention. Interestingly, 86% of the authors of the examined articles "denied the existence of unreported outcomes despite clear evidence to the contrary". JAMA, May 26, Vol 291, 2004

Not Very Complimentary?

With all the interest in alternative and complementary therapy in veterinary medicine, two organizations have recently come forward with statements that bring into question the current utilization of these treatment modalities in veterinary medicine. The European Board of Veterinary Specialization (EBVS) has decided to recognize only "scientific, evidence-based medicine that complies with animal welfare legislation" and the Editor-in-Chief of the JAVMA has placed a moratorium on letters to the editor, commentaries and anecdotal reports of the efficacy of (or lack thereof) of such therapies until peer reviewed studies can be identified and published. The EBVS has added that a failure to comply with this edict could result in withdrawal of a specialty college membership.

Submitted by,
Gary Block DVM DACVIM
SVME Historian

**Society For Veterinary Medical Ethics Track
“Ethics For All Creatures, Great & Small”**

**Minneapolis Convention Center, Room 211A
AVMA, Sunday, July 17, 2005**

Session	Time	Speaker	Title / Topic
1	8:00-8:45	Bernard Rollin, PhD	An Ethicists View of Ethical Dilemmas in Production Animal Agriculture
2	8:45-9:30	Michael Apley, DVM	A veterinarian’s View of Ethical Dilemmas in production Animal Agriculture #1 (Ruminants)
Break	9:30-10:00	Break	Break
3	10:00-10:45	John Deen, DVM, MS, PhD	A Veterinarian’s View of Ethical Dilemmas in Production Animal Agriculture #2 (Swine)
4	10:45-1130	Speakers & Audience	Panel Discussion: Ethical Dilemmas in Production Animal Agriculture
Lunch	11:30-1:00	Lunch	SVME Annual Business Meeting
5	1:00-1:45	Carl Osborne, DVM, PhD	Ethical Dilemmas Associated with Iatrogenic Diseases
6	1:45-2:30	Bernard Rollin, PhD	Oncology and Ethics
	2:30-3:00	Break	Break
7	3:00-3:45	Rob Blair	What Are Our Obligations to Wild Creatures?
8	3:45-4:30	Panel Discussion, Speakers & Audience	What is the Veterinarian’s Role in the Ethical dilemmas Related to All Creatures Great & Small?

Please Join Us for the Inaugural



**Dr. Robert R. Shomer Award
for
Outstanding Achievement in Veterinary Medical Ethics**

Award Presentation Ceremony

**Minneapolis Convention Center, Room 211A
4:30 PM Following the Ethics Session
Refreshments will be served!**

This award is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Robert Shomer. Dr. Shomer was a co-founder and the first President of the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics. His intellect, courage, and eloquence are hallmarks of true leadership in the field of veterinary medical ethics.

This award is bestowed upon an individual who has made significant contributions to the field of veterinary medical ethics. The recipient for 2005 holds a distinguished career as a leader in the field of veterinary medical ethics. He is an outstanding individual, who throughout his professional career has promoted and embodied the qualities of a true professional. Please plan on attending the award ceremony following the ethics session to honor the first Dr. Robert R. Shomer Award recipient!

SVME Ethics Tract Abstracts

Following are abstracts for the scheduled lectures at the AVMA meeting in Minneapolis

Session 1: An Ethicist's View of Ethical Dilemmas in Production Animal Agriculture

Both economic success and professional freedom are predicated upon a business behavior being in accord with social ethics. It is manifest that concern with animal treatment is an ever-increasing social-moral preoccupation across the Western world. In particular, farm animal welfare in confinement agriculture is a dominant theme in Europe, where veterinarians have provided major leadership. In the US, however, organized veterinary medicine has been slow to shoulder this burden, despite 75% of society's wishing to see legislation assuring farm animal welfare.

Bernard E. Rollin, Ph.D.
Colorado State University

In this talk, we will illustrate the animal welfare issues to which confinement agriculture gives rise. These include physical and psychological deprivation, lack of attention to individual animals, lack of proper husbandry by workers and, most important to veterinary medicine, the proliferation of production diseases. We will also articulate and make explicit the implicit ethic emerging in society to accommodate these issues.

We will conclude by sketching the plausible response of industry and veterinary medicine to these challenges. The California VMA has led in articulating principles presuppositional to reform, and industry expects veterinarians to lead in this area. Progressive veterinary leadership can help avoid onerous legislation which will inevitably occur as US society grows more cognizant of the issues.

Session 2: A Veterinarian's View of Ethical Dilemmas in Production Animal Agriculture - Ruminants

John Deen, DVM, MS, Ph.D.

The assigned title for this presentation suggests that we can come to agreement on which practices or situations are dilemmas. Those that veterinarians and producers see as ethical dilemmas may be seen as moral issues by consumers and those opposed to food animal agriculture.

It is important that veterinarians recognize that what appears as an ethical dilemma to professionals may appear as a simple moral issue to consumers and the general public. It is essential that the veterinary profession clearly evaluate these differences and then communicate the evidence for the existence of an ethical dilemma as well as the reasons and evidence for selecting the appropriate course.

Session 3: A Veterinarian's View of Ethical Dilemmas in Production Animal Agriculture – Swine

The objectives in animal agriculture cover a wide range of concerns and constituencies. Animals are reared by owners to provide food and income. These animals are killed when the marginal value of maintaining them is zero or the needs of the animal must be addressed. This is nowhere more evident than in euthanasia decisions. It can be argued easily that any natural death of a farmed animal is a failure in health maintenance. Thus the minimization of natural mortality through slaughter and aggressive euthanasia should be pursued.

Michael D. Apley, DVM, Ph.D.,
DACVCP, Iowa State University

In our analyses of euthanasia patterns, it is evident that the use of euthanasia as a tool, to ensure animal well-being, is unevenly administered across swine farms. It exhibits the discomfort with euthanasia by care-givers and the uncertainty of its application. Veterinarians must be more aggressive in training and identifying risk factors for intractable pain or poor prognoses.

SVME Ethics Tract Abstracts

Session 5: Ethical Dilemmas Associated with Iatrogenic Diseases

Iatrogenic diseases are not limited to " dangerous " doctors. They are also caused by competent specialists. To enhance patient safety, practical mechanisms are needed to detect and correct the underlying events related to iatrogenic diseases.

Carl A. Osborne DVM, Ph.D.
University of Minnesota

Session 6: Oncology and Ethics

Bernard E. Rollin, Ph.D.
Colorado State University

Over the past 20 years, veterinary medicine has witnessed the rapid proliferation of oncological treatment modalities for animals, and has even developed therapies that have crossed into human medicine. Oncology is, however, a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it can certainly provide some cures for historically untreatable neoplastic diseases. On the other hand, as in human medicine, it can lead to significant amounts of pain and suffering in exchange for relatively small amounts of prolongation of life.

Surprising, perhaps, other Western democratic societies have entertained a radically different view of oncology from the one prevalent in the US. We will sketch the Swedish view of animal oncology which, in its full-blown form, characterizes oncology as "torture." The reasoning behind this view will be laid bare, as will the valuable lesson we in the US can learn from it. In particular, we need to realize that, conceptually, animals cannot choose prolongation of life at the expense of suffering the way humans can. This, in turn, militates in favor of veterinary medicine's undertaking a serious analysis of quality of life considerations. This is truly a challenge, both because 20th century science and medicine, including human medicine, have set a precedent eschewing qualitative considerations in favor of what is countable, i.e., length of life. In addition, it has also entertained an ideological bias against dealing with subjective states in humans or animals.

Session 7: What Are Our Obligations to Wild Creatures?

As a conservation biologist who works on urban wildlife and as an Extension Specialist who works with the public, I am asked constantly about certain wildlife that people want to entice to their yards and vermin that they want exterminate. Rarely do people reflect and ask whether they should take either of these actions and even more rarely do they understand that one person's cute and watchable wildlife (e.g. rabbits and deer) is another person's disease-bearing vermin (e.g. rabbits and deer).

In this presentation, I'll take you through Environmental Ethics 101 by introducing you to the major ethical theories that apply to wildlife and other environmental issues. I will also examine the conflicts that arise when different people operate under different ethical assumptions: Are Canada geese beautiful or just plain scary? Should Bambi die? Should we raise every orphaned bunny? Is hunting unjust or a family tradition? Should we rehabilitate every raptor that is hit by a car? My intent is not to answer these questions, but rather to give you enough background to examine your opinions on these issues as well as to understand the opinions of others with whom you may disagree.

Robert B. Blair Ph.D.
University of Minnesota

**SVME Annual Business Meeting Notification
Minneapolis Convention Center, Room 211A
AVMA, Sunday, July 17, 2005
11:30 AM – 1:00 PM**

SVME Elections: The following slate of candidates are nominated for officers of the SVME Executive. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

President-Elect - Anna Worth
Treasurer- John Wright
Secretary- Carol Morgan
Parliamentarian - Francois Martin

SVME Officers

<i>President</i>	<i>Earl Dixon PhD</i>
<i>President-Elect</i>	<i>Barbara Horney DVM PhD</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>John Wright DVM</i>
<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Carol Morgan DVM</i>
<i>Parliamentarian</i>	<i>Bob Speth PhD</i>
<i>Historian</i>	<i>Gary Block DVM MS DACVIM</i>
<i>Past-President</i>	<i>Sylvie Cloutier PhD</i>

Notification of Proposed Bylaw Amendments

According to ARTICLE IX, Section 1 of the SVME bylaws the "Constitution and Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the active membership at an annual meeting, provided 30 days written notice of the proposed amendment change has been sent to each member. If the amendment change is approved, the amendment change will be effective at the conclusion of the meeting." Below are a series of proposed bylaw amendments developed by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee and chaired by Past-President Sylvie Cloutier. These amendments will be presented for acceptance via majority vote at the 2005 Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE II - Section 2.

Current Wording

- A. To encourage ethical practices and professional behavior of veterinarians and other participants in the field of Veterinary Medicine in all aspects of the profession.
- B. To increase the understanding of those involved in the veterinary profession in veterinary medical ethics and the philosophical, social, moral and ethical value issues encountered by the veterinary profession.
- C. To sponsor seminars and other presentations on ethics and value issues at local, state, regional and national meetings of veterinarians and other interested individuals.
- D. To promote the teaching of ethical and value issues at colleges of veterinary medicine and to identify speakers on these subjects.
- E. To encourage persons from other professions and disciplines, such as medicine, law, political science, philosophy and theology, to engage in cross-disciplinary discussions and studies of these issues.

Proposed Amendments

- A. To encourage ethical practices and professional behavior of veterinarians and **others in all aspects of the veterinary medical profession.**
- B. To increase the understanding **of the philosophical, social, moral and ethical values encountered by the veterinary medical profession.**
- C. **To arrange presentations on ethical issues at** local, state, regional and national meetings of veterinarians and other interested individuals.
- D. To promote the teaching of ethical **issues at** colleges of veterinary medicine and to identify speakers on these subjects.
- E. To encourage persons from other professions and disciplines, such as **biomedical research**, medicine, law, political science, **philosophy and theology**, to engage in cross-disciplinary discussions and studies of these issues.

ARTICLE III - Section 2 D

Current Wording

A Life Member is a person who has served the Society for a long period of **time** .Such persons will be nominated for Life Member status by the Board of Directors. Acceptance of Life Member status is at the discretion of the person to whom such membership is offered. A Life Member is exempted from paying annual dues and may not hold office or vote on any matter.

Proposed Amendment (Typo)

A Life Member is a person who has served the Society for a long period of **time**. Such persons will be nominated for Life Member status by the Board of Directors. Acceptance of Life Member status is at the discretion of the person to whom such membership is offered. A Life Member is exempted from paying annual dues and may not hold office or vote on any matter.

ARTICLE IV - Section 5 - B. President-Elect

Current Wording

3. Upon completion of the term of the President, the President elect shall automatically assume the office of the President for the next term of office. In the absence of the President, or in the event of disability, inability, or refusal to act, the President-Elect shall assume the office of President with full powers there of

5. The President-Elect shall serve as chair of the Program Committee and be responsible to organize and implement the program for the next annual meeting.

Proposed Amendments

3. Upon completion of the term of the President, the **President-Elect** shall automatically assume the office of the President for the next term of office. In the absence of the President, or in the event of disability, inability, or refusal to act, the President-Elect shall assume the office of President with full powers **of that office**.

5. The President-Elect shall serve as chair of the Program Committee and be responsible **for arranging and implementing the program for the annual meeting of his/her year of presiding at the annual meeting.**

ARTICLE V - Section 1.

Current Wording

Each director and active member is entitled to one(1) vote and may not vote by proxy. The election of officers will be conducted at the annual meeting and members must be present to vote.

Proposed Amendment (typo)

Each director and active member is entitled to **one (1)** vote and may not vote by proxy. The election of officers will be conducted at the annual meeting and members must be present to vote.

ARTICLE VI - Section 1

Current Wording

The Standing Committees for the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics shall be the Executive Committee, Constitution and Bylaws Committee, Program Committee, Awards Committee, Membership Committee, Nominating Committee, and Education and Archives Committee.

Proposed Amendments

The Standing Committees for the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics shall be the Executive Committee, Constitution and Bylaws Committee, Program Committee, Awards Committee, Membership Committee, Nominating Committee, **Education and Archives Committee, and Editorial Review Board.**

ARTICLE VI - Section 2

Current Wording

C. Program Committee

2. The purpose of this committee is to plan and implement the scientific and educational program for the upcoming general and annual meeting of the society.

E. Membership Committee

2. The purpose of this committee is to promote membership in the society and attempt to identify those individuals who may desire membership. The Treasurer with the assistance of this committee maintain a list of members in good standing.

F. Nominating Committee

1. The Nominating Committee is chaired by the Parliamentarian and includes at least two additional members.

Proposed Amendments

C. Program Committee

2. The purpose of this committee is to plan and implement the scientific and educational program for the **general and annual meeting of the society for the presiding year of the President-Elect.**

E. Membership Committee

2. The purpose of this committee is to promote membership in the society and attempt to identify those individuals who may desire membership. The Treasurer with the assistance of this committee **shall** maintain a list of members in good standing.

F. Nominating Committee

1. The Nominating Committee is chaired by the Parliamentarian and **consists of the Executive Committee, and other members of the organization as determined by a majority vote of the Executive Committee.**

ADDITION Proposed

ARTICLE VI - Section 2

H. Editorial Review Board

1. The Editorial Committee is chaired by the editor of the society's newsletter and includes at least two additional members.

2. The purpose of this committee is to assist the editor in reviewing articles submitted for consideration for publication in the society's newsletter, and enhancing the quality, and quantity of article submissions.

ADDITION Proposed

ARTICLE X

Section 5. This Constitution was revised on June 9, 2005 to clarify the language of the objectives, modify the President-elect function and add the description of the editorial review board as follows:

- A. The modification of Sections 2A, B, C, D, and E of Article II**
- B. The modification of Sections 5B3 and 5B5 of Article IV**
- C. The modification of Sections 2C2, 2E2 and 2F1 of Article VI**
- D. The addition of Section 2H of Article VI**

SVME

C/o Sylvie Cloutier

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