

## **CHANGES TO USDA VETERINARY ACCREDITATION PROGRAM REQUIRES ACTION BY ALL ACCREDITED VETERINARIANS**

**Background:** The National Veterinary Accreditation Program (NVAP) was established by USDA in 1921 so that accredited veterinary practitioners could assist Federal and State veterinarians in controlling animal diseases and facilitating the movement of animals and products. The mission of the NVAP is to ensure the health of our nation's livestock and animal population and to protect public health and well being.

Veterinarians who are accredited through NVAP work cooperatively with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and State Animal Health Officials to protect and improve the health, quality, productivity, and marketability of U.S. animals and products by preventing, controlling and eradicating livestock diseases.

**Brief overview of changes:** The NVAP is undergoing changes intended to address the needs of the increasingly complex and fast-paced world of animal health, business, trade, and travel. The new program will require renewal every three years. Veterinarians accredited through the new program will be required to complete supplemental training, somewhat similar to the continuing education required to maintain a veterinary license in many states. In addition, under this restructured program, veterinarians will be required to obtain their accreditation in one of two different categories. Category I veterinarians would essentially be veterinarians working pets and non-livestock species (e.g. small animal practitioners). Category II veterinarians would be those who work with any/all species (e.g. mixed animal or large animal practitioners). *NOTE: Practitioners who issue health certificates for pet birds would need to obtain Category II accreditation.* This is a simplification of the new program and the categories, but you can refer to the links and references below for more detailed information.

These changes have been in development since 2004. In 2002, the AVMA advocated a change, which has urged USDA to make needed modifications to the NVAP, and supports the revisions being made. An article discussing these changes was published in JAVMA this year and is available on line. ([www.avma.org/onlnews/javma/jan10/100115a.asp](http://www.avma.org/onlnews/javma/jan10/100115a.asp)).

**What currently accredited veterinarians must do?** Veterinarians who are already accredited as of February 1, 2010 must elect to participate in the new NVAP by August 2, 2010. In order to apply for participation in the new program, you must complete an application (i.e. a VS Form 1-36A) and submit it to the NVAP staff in Riverdale, MD. Instructions for applying and the form to use are

available at:

[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/vet\\_accreditation/av\\_participate.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/vet_accreditation/av_participate.shtml)

Once you apply and obtain your accreditation in one of the two new categories, no further training will be required until it comes time for you to renew your accreditation. At that time, you will be notified by USDA-APHIS that your accreditation is up for renewal and you will need to complete applicable refresher training or document that you have already done so. Essentially, currently accredited veterinarians will be "grandfathered in" by USDA until they come up for renewal. Renewals for currently accredited veterinarians will be staggered over

the next 3 to 5 years.

If you are currently accredited and do not elect to participate in the restructured NVAP by Aug. 2, 2010 your current accreditation will expire (expiration will occur on August 3). In addition, if you have attended an accreditation seminar and/or core orientation within the last 3 years but have not applied for your accreditation, your orientation will expire as well and you would then be required to attend another seminar/orientation in order to qualify for accreditation.

**How to obtain further information.** Further information and guidance can be found at the following website.

1) ***National Veterinary Accreditation Program Home Page*** with in-depth information about the program changes, NVAP Updates, factsheets, and frequently asked questions.

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/nvap>

2) ***APHIS Press Release*** announcing the new program

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/content/2009/12/updatevet.shtml>

**And as always you can contact your local Kansas Area Office at (785) 270-1300**

**(Ask for Catherine Welcher)**