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WVA POSITION STATEMENT ON IDENTIFYING A VETERINARY PROFESSIONAL

WVA POSITION

Only individuals qualified by virtue of completing appropriate education and training can be identified as a veterinary doctor, veterinarian, veterinary surgeon or any other term that implies that they are entitled to engage in the professional practice of veterinary medicine pursuant to registration by the statutory veterinary regulatory authority in their jurisdiction.

WVA RECOMMENDATIONS

1.The World Veterinary Association holds that all individuals engaged in the professional practice of veterinary medicine should be registered by the Statutory¹ Veterinary Professional Regulatory Authority, the Veterinary Statutory Body (VSB) or equivalent Veterinary Professional Authority (VPA).

2.The World Veterinary Association holds that the adequacy of the curriculum content in Veterinary Educational Establishments (VEEs) should be assessed by outcome based education both during and at the conclusion of the veterinary education program².

DISCUSSION:

The WVA acknowledges that there are many educational programs that can provide the appropriate academic qualifications for educating and training competent veterinary professionals. The title of each degree or diploma is defined by the academic institution conferring it. The designations used include Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, Veterinarian Medicinæ Doctoris, Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine, Bachelor of Veterinary Science, and other terms, all having their own acronym or initials, such as DVM, VMD, BVM or BVSc. The privilege of displaying these initials in context after a person's name is granted by the academic institution and signifies that the individual possesses the specific credential as a graduate of a specific veterinary program. It is appropriate for a veterinary professional to assume these post-nominals after their name if they are entitled to do so by the academic institution. Persons who have not been conferred a specific veterinary degree by a VEE must not infer that they are a veterinary professional.

Credential designations granted by a VEE and affixed to a person's name do not necessarily signify that such a graduate is allowed to practice the veterinary profession or carry out veterinary regulatory responsibilities. Depending on the region or country, academic credentials (i.e. conferred by a veterinary degree) plus registration or licensure by a Veterinary Statutory Body may be

¹ As defined in the World Organisation for Animal Health's (OIE) Terrestrial Animal Health Code. (See also the WVA Position on Veterinary Statutory Body).

² See also the WVA Position on Global Veterinary Day-One Competences: http://www.worldvet.org/uploads/docs/wva_policy_on_day_one_competences_march_2017_new.pdf

necessary elements for recognition and practice as a veterinary professional. Such a person shall be allowed to undertake veterinary regulatory responsibilities as well.

The WVA believes that the use of the prefix Doctor before the name of a veterinary professional qualified by academic education is appropriate, but consideration must be made for legal or traditional restrictions on the title that may apply in a specific region or country.

Additionally, veterinary professionals may be recognised for advanced knowledge and skills by specialty registration boards or organisations. These organisations may impart a credential for this recognition and it is appropriate for a veterinarian to place this credential following their name, provided all conditions of the specialty board or organisation are met.

BACKGROUND

Society depends on veterinary services for many critical tasks including managing the health and welfare of animals, diagnosing, treating and/or preventing animal disease, and providing many other services that impact the health of animals, humans, and the environment. These diverse activities help to ensure food safety and security, preserve animal health, prevent zoonotic disease, conserve biodiversity, as well as protect and sustain the environment. It is imperative that the public remain assured that the veterinarians providing these services are qualified and competent. The restricted and proper use of the specific titles 'Veterinary Doctor', 'Veterinary Surgeon', or 'Veterinarian' helps to ensure that individuals are qualified and competent professionals. Other considerations that contribute to veterinary competency and veterinary service quality include regular internal and external assessment or evaluation of Veterinary Educational Establishments (VEEs) to assure that the graduates acquire the requisite Day One Competences, as well as ongoing regulation and oversight of the veterinary professionals by the regulatory Veterinary Statutory Body (VSB) or equivalent Veterinary Professional Authority.