



termite infestation. It directed the Technical Advisory Committee to arrive at the best method for monitoring these procedures.

FUTURE MEETINGS:

September 5 in San Francisco.

TAX PREPARER PROGRAM

Administrator: Don Procida
(916) 324-4977

Enacted in 1973, abolished in 1982, and reenacted by SB 1453 (Presley) effective January 31, 1983, the Tax Preparer Program registers approximately 19,000 commercial tax preparers and 6,000 tax interviewers in California, pursuant to Business and Professions Code section 9891 *et seq.* The Program's regulations are codified in Division 32, Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR).

Registrants must be at least eighteen years old, have a high school diploma or pass an equivalency exam, have completed sixty hours of instruction in basic personal income tax law, theory and practice within the previous eighteen months, or have at least two years' experience equivalent to that instruction. Twenty hours of continuing education are required each year.

Prior to registration, tax preparers must deposit a bond or cash in the amount of \$2,000 with the Department of Consumer Affairs. Registration must be renewed annually, and a tax preparer who does not renew his/her registration within three years after expiration must obtain a new registration. The initial registration fee is \$50 and the renewal fee is \$40.

Members of the State Bar of California, accountants regulated by the state or federal government, and those authorized to practice before the Internal Revenue Service are exempt from registration.

An Administrator, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, enforces the provisions of the Tax Preparer Act. He/she is assisted by a nine-member State Preparer Advisory Committee which consists of three registrants, three persons exempt from registration, and three public members. All members are appointed to four-year terms.

RECENT MEETINGS:

The Advisory Committee has not met since December 13, 1988, and no new appointments have been made since the terms of all of the Committee members expired on December 31, 1988.

FUTURE MEETINGS:

To be announced.

BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN VETERINARY MEDICINE

Executive Officer: Gary K. Hill
(916) 920-7662

Pursuant to Business and Professions Code section 4800 *et seq.*, the Board of Examiners in Veterinary Medicine (BEVM) licenses all veterinarians, veterinary hospitals, animal health facilities, and animal health technicians (AHTs). The Board evaluates applicants for veterinary licenses through three written examinations: the National Board Examination, the Clinical Competency Test, and the California Practical Examination.

The Board determines through its regulatory power the degree of discretion that veterinarians, AHTs, and unregistered assistants have in administering animal health care. BEVM's regulations are codified in Division 20, Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR). All veterinary medical, surgical, and dental facilities must be registered with the Board and must conform to minimum standards. These facilities may be inspected at any time, and their registration is subject to revocation or suspension if, following a proper hearing, a facility is deemed to have fallen short of these standards.

The Board is comprised of six members, including two public members. The Board has eleven committees which focus on the following BEVM functions: continuing education, citations and fines, inspection program, legend drugs, minimum standards, examinations, administration, enforcement review, peer review, public relations, and legislation. The Board's Animal Health Technician Examining Committee (AHTEC) consists of the following political appointees: three licensed veterinarians, three AHTs, and two public members.

MAJOR PROJECTS:

Enforcement Complaint Review Workshop. Sections 4883 and 4875 of the Business and Professions Code authorize the Board to suspend or revoke a license and/or cite and fine a licensee for violations of the Veterinary Practice Act. Most of the violations for which the Board is authorized to take disciplinary action are specified in section 4883; guidelines for classifying violations for the purpose of assessing fines are specified in section 2043, Division 20, Title 16 of the CCR.

The Board recently began a review of its complaint processing system. The process begins with the referral of incoming complaints to either a BEVM executive staff member or to William Steinmetz, DVM, a Board consultant. Routine complaints, such as a veterinarian's refusal to release medical records or refusal to release an animal to its owner until the owner remits payment for medical services, are mediated over the phone. If the complaint cannot be mediated over the phone, Board staff sends a complaint form to the complainant to complete and return to the Board. Once the form is returned, an executive staff member reviews the complaint and sends an acknowledgment letter to the complainant. At that time, notice of the complaint is sent to the respondent veterinarian along with a request for copies of medical records, lab reports, and X-rays. If the respondent consulted with another veterinarian on the procedure or treatment complained of, Board staff sends a letter to that veterinarian requesting similar documents.

All death-related complaints are sent directly to either the northern or southern complaint review committee (CRC). These committees are composed of volunteer, practicing veterinarians. If the complaint is not death-related, Dr. Steinmetz reviews the complaint and medical records; based on his review, he either notifies the complainant and the respondent that the case is closed for lack of merit or refers the case to the appropriate CRC for further review.

Once the CRC receives the complaint, it has the option of closing the case for lack of merit, requesting additional information, recommending formal investigation, closing the case with admonishment, or assessing a citation and fine against the veterinarian. If the CRC recommends investigation, a CRC veterinarian/consultant begins the fact-finding process. Then an expert witness, a salaried veterinarian, evaluates the facts found; if the expert finds a violation of the Practice Act, the case is referred to the Attorney General's office for preparation of an accusation. The case against the veterinarian is then heard by an administrative law judge, who renders a proposed decision to the Board; the final disciplinary decision rests with the Board.

During its recent review of the complaint handling process, the Board agreed to make its admonishment letters more specific; some veterinarians have noted that these letters do not provide details regarding the acts for which the veterinarian is being admonished. In order to encourage consulting veterinarians