



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF BOVINE PRACTITIONERS

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AABP Creates Using Credentialed Veterinary Technicians in Bovine Practice Guidelines

Utilizing credentialed veterinary technicians (CVTs) in bovine practice can assist veterinarians in providing additional and efficient services to their large animal clients.

(ASHLAND, Ohio) March 27, 2024 – The American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP) recently created a board-approved set of guidelines, “AABP Guideline for Credentialed Veterinary Technicians in Bovine Practice”, to assist its members in effectively using credentialed technicians in bovine practice.

To be clear on defining what a credentialed veterinary technician (CVT) is, the guidelines state:

- A veterinary technician is a graduate of an AVMA CVTEA-accredited or Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA)-accredited program in veterinary technology. In most cases, the graduate is granted an associate degree or certificate.
- A veterinary technologist is a graduate of an AVMA CVTEA- or CVMA-accredited program in veterinary technology that grants a baccalaureate degree.

Credentialed technicians are required to complete continuing education for their licensure, unlike those who might hold a position of “veterinary assistant”. These terms should not be interchangeable. States and provinces may define CVTs differently, says Dr. James Bennett who chaired the AABP CVT Task Force responsible for creating these guidelines. Increasing the use of CVTs currently has somewhat of a “chicken and egg” problem, Bennett explains, where veterinarians may prefer to hire assistants with experience and/or education in agriculture, but not in a veterinary technician program. “Veterinary technician educational programs may prioritize skills needed for small animal practice because that is where the positions are, so only a minority of graduates have significant food animal training. As use of CVTs increases in bovine practice, the needs of the practice and the needs of the student and educational programs should coalesce.”

“AABP guidelines provide our members and the industry with a list of best management practices for working with cattle,” notes AABP President Dr. Michael Capel. “They provide an evidence-based approach to procedures while helping to protect the welfare of animals and people. These documents are reviewed by all of our members during open comment periods, refined by AABP committees, and then discussed and approved by the AABP Board of Directors.”

Bennett says the new guidelines are meant to provide guidance on how veterinarians can broaden the delegation of tasks to CVTs. “The underlying assumption is that bovine practitioners can benefit from

increasing delegation, and these guidelines might be used as a roadmap toward that end.” Bennett adds that guidelines may help AABP members who are involved with development or changing practice acts in their state or province.

“AABP has made significant progress in engaging CVTs in bovine practice,” says AABP Executive Director Dr. Fred Gingrich. “The first step was to create a membership category and welcome veterinary technician colleagues to join AABP. Historically, CVTs have been leveraged in brick-and-mortar companion animal practices, and guidance was needed for how we can expand their role into bovine practice to improve our efficiency, provide better care to beef and dairy farm clients, and allow the veterinarian to focus on tasks only they can perform. AABP supports increased delegation of tasks to CVTs on the veterinary medical team which is a more effective path than development of an entirely new category of mid-level practitioner.” Gingrich adds that it is also important to note AABP’s support of the veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR) and how CVTs can work under the VCPR established and maintained by their veterinary practice employer.

Most important to the new guidelines is an extensive, though not exhaustive, task list which lists common tasks/procedures in bovine medicine, and the supervision level involved for each task whether it is veterinarian only, CVT direct supervision by a veterinarian, or CVT indirect supervision by a veterinarian. The guidelines note, however, that the supervising veterinarian must have a valid VCPR, and the veterinarian and credentialed veterinary technician must follow the applicable state, provincial and federal rules and regulations. These tasks include procedures such as administering local anesthesia, diagnostic sampling procedures such as collecting milk/blood/urine, physical exams, castrations, breeding soundness exams, surgeries, treatments and records.

“There is no question that other medical practitioners, including dentists, physicians, and small animal veterinarians significantly leverage themselves through use of various professionals,” Bennett says. “Such leverage can be more difficult to accomplish in a rural, ambulatory bovine practice. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive or all-inclusive, but rather a source for brainstorming activities within any bovine practice to more effectively leverage credentialed veterinary technicians. The entire veterinary team can be involved in these discussions.”

“These professionals can improve our efficiency, extend the reach of our practice, and help us provide exceptional service to our clients,” Capel says. “These guidelines will also serve to help develop curricula to help train adequately prepared CVTs for cattle practice. Utilizing CVTs appropriately helps protect veterinarians and their clients by ensuring that veterinary services are delivered by trained and qualified individuals under the oversight of a veterinarian.”

AABP guidelines and position statements are publicly available on the AABP website at www.aabp.org under the About tab; find the CVT guidelines directly at http://aabp.org/resources/AABP_Guidelines/VetTech2024.pdf.

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