

basis. There are also specialty practices such as reproduction or consultation where there are few advantages to having a technician. Other practices did not do routine procedures on a large enough scale to warrant having a technician. There were even a few responses from veterinarians who had never heard of animal technicians.

Many veterinarians have had previous experiences with technicians that have left the doctors with negative or embittered feelings toward them. For example, an individual works for a veterinarian for five or ten years. During this time he learns much concerning diagnosis and treatment. He then leaves his employment and starts artificial insemination or driving a drug truck. Now he is in a perfect position to quote, practice unquote veterinary medicine as many have in the past and still continue to do. Once proper steps are taken to regulate the technicians' responsibilities, the veterinary profession will no longer be subjected to the charlatans produced through lack of restraint on their future business ventures. How is one going to stop this?

Most practice acts are not strong enough for prosecution and in many areas it is up to the veterinarian to file charges and furnish evidence. Veterinarians are not policemen and are placed in the delicate position of relying on public empathy for the success of their practice.

The question of client acceptance is one of extreme importance. In large animal practice all work is done in the open, not behind closed doors as it is in the small animal practice. If you are paying a veterinarian to do a job he should do it, not the paramedical individual. If the paramedic can do it, so can the owner.

The question of restrictions and regulations governing a technician is most puzzling and controversial. Who should decide: the individual, the local practice acts, or the AVMA Committee on Technicians? The questions still remain questions.

The AVMA has set up specific standards thus encouraging the local Associations to tighten their practice acts and encourage proper utilization of technicians. Several of our states have already included the licensing or registration of technicians into their practice acts. There are considerable questions as to whether to license or register - one of legality. While on the idea of registration, I feel possibly it would be a good idea for state boards to hire an agency or individual for investigation and prosecution of violations. This would get the responsibility away from practitioners.

The use of animal technicians to the veterinarian's best advantage can be very broad. Basically, they should be used to relieve the veterinarian of routine chores and enable him to spend more time in diagnostic areas, surgery, and other professional areas. Hopefully, this would include more time off.

The subject of animal technicians has either been talked into the ground or simply avoided, but the many questions we face concerning animal

technicians must be answered, and quickly if we are to maintain the dignity of our profession and hold the respect of our clientele.

I personally would hope that with your discussion and help, we could aid the states toward a solution of this modern area of practice.

### District III

**Dr. John M. Loftin**  
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This has been a real interesting discussion. I don't think that I could become involved in anything that requires as much discussion as it is a political issue not only in the veterinary profession, but also for the general public. I had 53 answers to the questionnaire that was mailed. Out of these, 24 said they were using animal technicians and 29 said they were not. On the question, "Would you use them in the future?," 22 said no, and six said they were thinking about it. I'm hoping these answers give a pretty good representation of the population in District III. The answers came back all the way from Florida. There were probably more comments from my district than any other region about why they would not consider using animal technicians. Of the 24 that said they were using them, 22 said they were trained by the practitioner. I had one two-year trained animal technician and one four-year trained animal technician from North Carolina where they already have an effective school. North Carolina has the only effective school in District III that I know of, although there are other students in District III. I know we have one in Mississippi. Some other states have them or are in the process of getting them. Most of the people in my district are using animal technicians in a small animal or equine practice rather than food animal. Of all the reasons given on how to use animal technicians in your practice, every item that we have was mentioned except one. That was uterine conditions in cows. No one said they use animal technicians to infuse cattle. One of the things that was interesting also was the answer I received to the question, "Does the animal technician perform the above procedures in your presence?" Forty percent of the people said they did over 10% of the time, 60% said they did less than 10% of the time. Second point, several of the people said they did not use the technician for laboratory procedures. Seventy-five percent of the people in my district said they did not use their technicians for emergency surgery. According to what is usual in the southeastern United States, the salary paid ranged from \$2 an hour up to \$11,000 a year. I would like to mention some of the comments: Most of our practitioners who used animal technicians used them extensively in their practice but did not allow them to diagnose, start medication, or perform surgery of any type. This is something that I think each of you agree

upon. This is something that must be left up to the licensed D.V.M. The majority of those using animal technicians now are group practices. Most of these worked in a hospital, but they were also used on a farm. I think there is definitely a place for animal technicians in veterinary medicine. This has already been proven. I feel more than ever that we need laws in our present government to control them and their ability to work under the direction of a licensed D.V.M. Whether we believe it or not, I think the use of animal technicians in our profession is here to stay. Mississippi has been through this in the last three years. I think in the long run, we did improve our Practice Act. I would like to see the profession hold to some kind of law that would license animal technicians. I don't think the legislature should tell us how to run our profession. As long as this idea of animal technicians is coming, it is going to spread.

I was talking to Dr. James Drake a while back, and we were talking about quacks in all professions. A quack is simply someone who is giving a service for a fee but does not have a license. I think that we can control this and propose better control. We should take the lead. We would be better off than having the legislatures dictating to us.

#### District IV

**Dr. William L. Lovell**  
*Bowling Green, Kentucky*

I received forty-three (43) questionnaires from the veterinarians in the four states of Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia, and Kentucky. Twenty-three (23) replied that they do not and have not used animal technicians in their practices. Nineteen (19) have and are using lay employees trained by the veterinarian as animal technicians. One (1) is using a formally trained technician in his large animal practice.

The reasons given for not using animal technicians are as follows:

1. Nine (9) said that there was no need at this time but they would be interested in the future as the practice grew.
2. Three (3) were reducing their large animal practice.
3. Two (2) trained the herdsman and owners to assist, treat, and diagnose.
4. Several would like to utilize the services of the animal technicians, but according to the present proposed additions to the Practice Acts in their states, hiring them would not be beneficial or profitable because the veterinarian has to be present while they are working.
5. One veterinarian feels that there will be an abundance of veterinarians in food animal medicine in the future due to the opening of the new veterinary colleges. He will hire a veterinarian to do the work.

**Summarizing the questionnaires of the**

#### **veterinarians using animal technicians:**

1. Most of them have one technician
2. All but one trained their own technician.
3. Animal technicians have been used by these men from 1 to 30 years; average seven 7 yrs.
4. Ten (10) used the technician in small animal and equine practice also.
5. The majority of the veterinarians used the technicians for:
  - a.-administration of medicine
  - b.-castration
  - c.-dehorning
  - d.-drawing blood samples for lab. analysis (6 for Brucellosis testing)
  - e.-vaccination (2 for Brucellosis vaccination)
  - f.-assisting with major abdominal surgery and OB work
6. One-third of the technicians perform their work over 50% of the time not in the presence of the veterinarian  
One-third perform only in the veterinarian's presence  
One-third perform 10% of the time in the veterinarian's absence
7. One-fourth use technicians for laboratory procedures
8. One-half use technicians for emergency treatments
9. Salaries average from:
  - \$2.00 - 4.00 per hour
  - \$100.00 - 125.00 per week
  - \$600.00 - 800.00 per month
10. The comments from these veterinarians stated that the animal technician was the only salvation of the food animal veterinarian; however, they must be controlled by the Practice Acts. The Practice Acts must be liberalized to allow routine herd treatments to be performed by animal technicians without the presence of the veterinarian.

The Practice Acts of Michigan, Ohio, and West Virginia make no allowances for the use of lay employees and animal technicians in the practice of veterinary medicine. West Virginia has no plans to recognize or register animal technicians. Ohio and Michigan are proposing animal technician certification clauses in their new practice acts but they will require the presence of the veterinarian at least on the premises. Kentucky's Practice Act at the present time allows lay employees to perform procedures at the direct instruction, control, or supervision of veterinarians. Additions are now being prepared to register technicians after examinations by the Board of Veterinary Examiners.

#### District V

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The following comments are those as viewed by a