

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**  
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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

bovine practitioner. The comments may not relate to other phases of veterinary medicine. It is said the average man marries for beauty rather than brains which just shows that he can see better than he can think. From comments by many veterinarians, it appears that sometimes we see what we might lose rather than thinking about what we can do in our own practice environments.

Animal technicians have been around since the beginning of animal medicine. Just in recent years have we given them a more important sounding name, and in some cases a little formal training. Our prime concern should be not protecting the veterinarian from encroachment into veterinary medicine, but rather in protecting the public from misconceptions about the qualifications of animal technicians. Animal technicians are just a part of the total field of animal health, and rightly so.

Food animal technicians, under the guidance of a veterinarian, are used to do laboratory procedures, restrain animals, assist in surgery, plus do minor surgical procedures themselves, administer prescribed medications and vaccinations, collect feed and milk samples, answer phones, and do office procedures.

Proposals in District V are that animal technicians are to be regulated primarily by becoming certified, or licensed, under the state practice acts. Certification would require at least two years of formal education, plus an exam by a board of veterinary examiners. Technicians, presently employed with the proper qualifications, could take the exam and become certified through a grandfather clause. Note the above proposals have not been enacted into law as yet. It is probable that licensing would also restrict the use of some veterinary technicians practitioners have trained.

The practicing veterinarian that employs an animal technician is legally responsible for the technician's actions. A certified animal technician will not be allowed to treat, diagnose, or prescribe without the veterinarian.

Respondents in District V to the questionnaire sent out by The American Association of Bovine Practitioners, Animal Technician Committee, revealed some of the following: Of the 83 practices that responded, 76% do not use technicians and 24 do. Most of the practices utilizing technicians are mixed group practices, where the technician is also used in small animal and equine practice. Very few of the technicians had formal training with most being trained by the veterinarian they work for. Salaries paid to the animal technicians varied from \$5,000 per year to \$15,600 per year. Some technicians receive a commission such as half of the income from castrations and dehorning.

Comments by a few respondents showed that they may hire animal technicians in the future. A couple of practitioners were very much against animal technicians. One veterinarian said, "Why belittle procedures such as castrations and dehornings?" I agree that no procedure where a veterinarian feels he

or she is highly qualified should be belittled. However, no one is degrading certain procedures; and many practice acts do not even include castrations and dehornings under surgeries to be performed by veterinarians only.

Most respondents not using animal technicians either did not have one because they were adequately staffed with veterinarians and felt the client and practice got more for their money with a veterinarian; or, most of all, that present-day economics do not justify hiring an animal technician. It would appear from the comments that each practice and practice area is different from the next one. Each veterinarian has to make a living according to the needs of his area. Nevertheless, I believe that a veterinarian can, and should, continue to create increased veterinary use in his, or her, practice by some form of personal continuing education, being ready to give of himself as needs arise, and continuing his client's education. The bovine practitioner must be technician, scientist, diagnostician, surgeon, herd health management consultant, etc. Where our main emphasis is placed depends upon our community's needs and personal goals.

A recent survey in Wisconsin asked dairymen on DHIA where they get most of their new information for future management decisions. The reply was that veterinarians and specialized farm magazine articles were tied for the number one source of information. These two sources were by far number one over all other sources such as universities, extension offices, feed mills, etc. Doctor, are you capable of acting like number one?

Until about a year ago, I practiced in a general, mixed group practice where we had both small and large animal technicians. Technicians were very helpful under the circumstances, and I thought I would never practice again without an animal technician.

Now I am in a solo practice where most of my income comes from herd health management procedures. In keeping with present day economics, I now have many technicians, yet I have none on my own payroll. My technicians are called dairymen, herdsman, feedmen, etc. It is sometimes interesting to have your client and your employer be your technician. As bovine practitioners, I feel our duty is to train and continue to oversee management in certain technical skills—not to the point where it decreased management time, but to the point where it increased the economics and management abilities of the bovine-agri unit. Most clients properly educated become better clients and develop more profitable production units. My clients and associated persons are trained in a point of view through both group meetings and individual continuing education contacts.

Remember, once we were only veterinarians, now we are bovine practitioners, some are Board Certified Theriogenologists, some are members of The Academy of Veterinary Consultants, etc. Now public pressures say our help should be called animal

technicians. However, with the fancier name comes the necessity of some formal training and testing and the need of the employer to expect to pay a higher salary. With our human counterparts also having nurses, medical technologists, paramedics, and emergency medical technicians, it appears that the veterinary profession will also have its animal technicians.

As for regulations, it appears to me that practice acts should be amended to encompass technicians with some sort of certification program installed. The role of the technician should be defined in general terms, rather than fine specifics, in order to vary with individual practice needs. The animal technician must work under the direction of a veterinarian. The veterinary profession, then the individual practitioner, must accept responsibility for the actions of their technicians as we have done in the past.

### District VI

**Dr. Earl S. Thompson**  
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I have been impressed by the applicants that I have interviewed for jobs. The results of the questionnaire resulted in 28 stating that they do not use animal technicians. Of these, five stated they planned to use them and 13 said they had no need for them. Another five said the cost was too great and five gave no reasons. Twenty-six stated that they use technicians and of these, 13 trained their own and 13 are formally trained. We had one for a year and she did very well; we did a lot more bacteriological examinations.

### District VII

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District VII includes the states of Oklahoma, Missouri and Kansas. Recently, an animal technician questionnaire was sent to all members of the AABP. I received 27 from my District. Thirteen veterinarians used technicians in their practice. Fourteen did not use animal technicians in their practice. Of the 13 veterinarians who did use animal technicians, three employed technicians with formal training and ten trained their own technicians. Of the fourteen who did not use technicians, only two were opposed to the concept and most of the other twelve stated it was a good concept or they would use technicians if practice would warrant it. Salary range for technicians ranges from \$100 per week to \$10,000 per year. The technicians were used in assisting the veterinarian, laboratory procedures, monitoring anesthesia and some emergency treatments. None of them were used to prescribe, diagnose or perform surgery.

We now have one accredited school in Kansas. They have had 48 graduates since 1971. The state of Oklahoma does not have any schools. Missouri has a school graduating their first class in 1975. They hopefully will be accredited by the AVMA by the time of graduation.

As far as State Veterinary Practice Acts are concerned, Kansas rewrote their Practice Act a number of years ago. Their Practice Act is very adequate to regulate animal hospital technicians according to AVMA guidelines and also approval of the Attorney General. Missouri has been informed by their Attorney General that their Practice Act is not adequate to regulate the technicians and they must either revise it or seek a new ruling. The veterinary associations of Oklahoma have just formed an advisory committee to proceed on technicians and to study their existing Practice Act.

### District VIII

**Dr. James H. Denton**  
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In some instances, they have their own horses to round them up, separate the calves, and work them. They'll do everything under the sun to them—vaccinate, castrate, dehorn and etc. The majority of ours did answer that they administer drugs and medication, that they dehorn, that they do castrations, so it's according to what side of the fence you are on as to whether castration is proper or not. If you are an equine practitioner you wouldn't have your lay person castrating a horse. Is it all right to worm a cow, worm a calf? Is it all right for a lay person—animal technician—to tube worm a horse? Some of them said we didn't have to get into these discussions, but these are things we're going to have to face head on; we're not going to solve any problems by dodging them, let's meet them. Three of our states—Texas, Oklahoma, and I believe they said Mississippi—contain about 89 or 90% of the brucellosis reactor herds in the United States. A few years back—eight or nine years—we busted the state and federal regulatory people because they had laymen testing cattle. The job's got to be done. Now, in our state we have lay technicians that can bleed and use a card test. They have to be supervised. About all you have to do as supervising veterinarian is sign your name to the test sheets. They draw blood samples.

One of the things we've talked about is the administration of anesthetics. It is hard on some veterinarians to administer an anesthetic and keep an animal any length of time and do surgery, worry about the patient, and worry about the operation too. They assist in obstetrical work. We have some people who do specialized practices. Dr. Larson—I'm sure you all know him from San Antonio—teaches his clients to deliver calves, to do OB work, and remove retained