

AVAR to Host Exhibit Booth at SAVMA

AVAR will host an exhibit booth at the upcoming Student American Veterinary Medical Association (SAVMA) convention in Knoxville, Tennessee, March 11-13. This is the first time AVAR will exhibit at the convention. We invite all students who are attending to stop by to learn more about AVAR and our programs and meet AVAR staff members. The booth will include information on our early-age sterilization training, our online database of alternatives in veterinary education, and our various advocacy campaigns involving both companion and farm animal issues. We'll also be available to talk to students who are interested in starting an AVAR student chapter.

AVAR is planning an informal get together for AVAR student chapter members and other interested veterinary students who will be attending the SAVMA convention. This will be an opportunity to meet like-minded students from other schools and share your experiences, thoughts, and concerns. We will have information about this event at the AVAR exhibit booth and will also be distributing an announcement on the AVAR eGroup for Students listserv. Or, send an e-mail to Pam Runquist at pam@avar.org if you're planning on attending and we'll keep you posted.

Nearly Every Veterinary School Cited by USDA for Non-Compliance with Federal Law

An AVAR petition filed with the United States Department of Agriculture, urging that agency to enforce the federal Animal Welfare Act as it applies to veterinary medical schools, has produced some positive results. In response to the petition, which was filed in July 2002 by AVAR and several veterinary medical students, all veterinary medical schools were inspected and nearly every school was cited for non-compliance with the federal Animal Welfare Act.

Most citations were issued for failing to search for alternatives to harming and killing animals or for providing an explanation as to why they weren't being used. Further, many schools were cited for duplicative use of animals and for the number of animals used, as well as the appropriateness of the species. Some were cited for lack of personnel training and identification of animals, multiple potentially painful procedures, and missing information regarding anesthesia and methods used to kill animals.

"The citations are important because they bring the issue of harming and killing animals to the forefront through the federal law. If members of the faculty aren't even searching for alternatives to harming and killing animals, how can we expect them to use the alternatives?" said Teri Barnato, AVAR's national director. "We are working to educate the schools on the numerous available alternatives to harming and killing animals. By doing this, we hope to motivate significant

change in the use of animals in veterinary schools," she said.

AVAR is hopeful that public pressure, as well as concerns voiced by veterinary students, will prompt schools to continue the move toward eliminating the harming and killing of animals in veterinary

instruction. After learning of the results of the petition, AVAR issued a news release and newspapers in several communities where veterinary schools are located reported on the issue. Barnato stated, "This is the first time that many people are learning about this issue and the general consensus seems to be that veterinary schools should not be in the business of harming and killing animals."

Other interesting information is contained in the inspection reports. For example, last year at

Auburn University, a dog was shot to death after getting hung up in a fence trying to get into a goat enclosure. Apparently, appropriate fencing was not used, and animals suffered due to the school's neglect. Some research studies were also disclosed, such as at the University of Pennsylvania, reflecting extensive animal suffering.

On page three is a listing of the veterinary schools for which AVAR received inspection reports from the USDA and a partial listing of the citations for each school. The information is not an adequate evaluation for any individual school, as some schools had repeated violations while others had few.

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Teri Barnato,
AVAR's National Director

SCHOOL	DID NOT CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES	DID NOT PROVIDE ASSURANCE OF NONDUPLICATION	INADEQUATE PERSONNEL TRAINING	APPROPRIATENESS OF SPECIES/NUMBER USED
Auburn	X	X	X	X
California	X	X		X
Colorado	No non-compliances			
Cornell	X	X	X	X
Florida	X	X		X
Georgia	X			X
Illinois	X			
Iowa	X			X
Kansas	X	X		X
Louisiana	X	X		
Michigan	X		X	
Minnesota	X			X
Mississippi	X	X	X	X
Missouri	X			X
North Carolina	X	X		X
Ohio	X	X	X	X
Oklahoma	X			X
Oregon	X	X		X
Pennsylvania	X	X	X	X
Purdue			X	
Tennessee	X			
Texas A&M	X			
Tufts	X			
Tuskegee	X	X		X
Virginia-Maryland	X		X	X
Washington		X		
Wisconsin	X			X

As a follow-up to the inspections, the USDA is also setting up animal welfare programs at each veterinary school and has asked the Animal Welfare Information Center to provide more information on alternatives to each school. AVAR will resurvey the schools in a year or so to see what positive changes have been made and then decide what further action, if needed, will be taken.

In the meantime, some schools are to be congratulated for changes being made to eliminate harmful and fatal animal use. The University of California School of Veterinary Medicine has plans to discontinue its remaining terminal surgeries and other terminal procedures in both core and elective small animal courses. Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine and Virginia-Maryland Regional College of

Veterinary Medicine both have eliminated terminal surgeries in their core courses.

A copy of the inspection reports for your school can be faxed if a contact name and fax number are provided. E-mail request to: info@avar.org. For media coverage of the petition and citations, go to www.avar.org.