**Exports by Jurox**

This letter is intended set the record straight in relation to the steroid issue and the position that Jurox Pty Ltd has taken as an ethical manufacturer of veterinary pharmaceutical products.

Jurox is a licensed manufacturer of over 160 veterinary pharmaceutical and animal products in a state-of-the-art, Good Manufacturing Practice facility. The Jurox list of products includes eight injectable "anabolic" products that contribute only 5% of total sales.

Far from taking an irresponsible and profit motivated approach to the overseas sale of anabolic products - and being conscious of the risk of potential abuse in the human field - we acted more than 12 months ago. We independently implemented a series of actions to minimise the risk of anabolic products falling into the wrong hands. In Australia, anabolic products can be sold only to registered veterinarians or licensed veterinary wholesalers.

While endeavouring to ensure similar levels of control in export of these products, Jurox removed all listing of the anabolic products from its website.

Jurox insisted that every export customer be required: to provide evidence of their status as a licensed veterinarian or distributor of veterinary pharmaceutical products, including anabolics; to provide an original signed and legally notarised (by a notary public or equivalent) document declaring that they guarantee that all the products that are purchased are used, or supplied to their customers or clients, for animal use only. Without the above documentation on file, Jurox will not supply anabolic products and has consistently rejected potential export customers unwilling or unable to supply such documentation.

Should any customer be found to be linked knowingly or tacitly in the supply of Jurox products for human use, be such supply legal or illegal in the country involved, Jurox categorically commits to cease supply of product to any such customer.

Jurox will also willingly comply with and support any additional Australian control regulations that may be considered necessary.

It should not be forgotten that there are evident clinical benefits in the use of these products in veterinary medicine, and veterinary availability and use of anabolics for such legitimate purposes in animals, both in Australia and overseas, should be maintained in the interests of animal welfare.

**Letters**

**Editor's note:** The AVJ welcomes letters from members in all areas of the profession on matters of importance to you. Please keep them brief - to meet our space constraints. Letters will be subject to minimal editing procedures. Subject to letters complying with the AVJ's legal responsibilities, they will not be censored. Nor will individuals or groups waging 'campaigns' be permitted to abuse these pages. If submitting a letter intended for publication, kindly identify it as such. Letters to the Editor can be sent by mail, fax or e-mail at the contact points listed at the start of the News Section. Writers may use a pseudonym to protect their identities - but must supply the Editor with verifiable names and points of contact.

**Cages criticised**

The AVA press releases on the use of caged hens in the egg industry sound like they came from old mother hen. They offer no answers, no solutions. They just make motherhood statements saying we don't know enough about the problem so we should find someone to pay for more research. The implication is that we should take no action (for now) to change a system some see as flawed. The position of the AVA in relation to caged hens is not clarified by these documents - does the AVA agree with "community concerns" that the current system is flawed or not? The impression is created that the AVA would like to see things stay as they are for now, but this is not stated.

This debate is too emotionally inflammatory to wait years for definitive answers. To have a real role in resolving this issue, the AVA needs to develop a position and argue its merits, then refine the argument as better information becomes available. Does the association support the production of eggs by the current system or are we keen to see change - gradual (via improvements within the current system) or radical (new laws banning battery hen egg production)? The AVA has a vital role to play in promoting best practice. If the current system of caged hen production represents best practice overall (taking into account human health, animal welfare and economics) then the AVA should say so - and put the onus on detractors of the system to develop a better way to meet the needs of the community (food and health needs as well as moral needs).

Dr Joan Ashton, Canberra

**Sexist AVJ?**

I am somewhat saddened by the (unattributed) item at the bottom of p501 in the August issue, entitled “AVAs…review” - not, obviously, because of the facts on which the item is based but because of the manner of its presentation. This seems to me to be quite inappropriate, arguably, for a professional journal but certainly for one which pretends to a scientific character.

One might wonder whether any or all of the individuals who are subject of, and subjected to, this lampoon analysis were aware, and approved, of the publication. Given the preponderance of females among graduates of recent and foreseeable years, one might also wonder whether, 20 years on, one might expect to see the recreational performances of the then minority reported in similar patronising fashion.

It is some relief that the item is not mentioned in the Contents of the issue but I should hope that the contributor might be counselled so that the journal is, and respected members of the profession are, not similarly diminished again. If it is deemed that the journal should publish juvenile humour then I suggest that it might be presented as a loose-leaf insert so that libraries and individual adult recipients can file the material separately and appropriately.

Dr Ian Littlejohns, Macquarie Fields, NSW

Editor's note: Somebody seems to have missed the point. A number of the women named in the item in question have telephoned the AVJ to express their delight that a light-hearted piece had disrupted the flow of very earnest material in the journal. It was even described as "pro-woman" because it recognised the capacity of women to assume or remain in high office within the AVA during pregnancy, or as new mothers. The only adverse comment to come to the AVJ on this subject is the letter above. No counselling sessions are planned at this time.
AVA and welfare

I WISH to congratulate our incoming President Dr Ian Denney on the excellent choice of topic for what is one of his first presentations from the presidential seat (August AVJ, p517). Animal welfare and the AVA’s role in this arena certainly deserve a high profile. I support and concur with many of the considerations expressed. The Viewpoint column is certainly inspiring and rises to the challenges that I am told were presented to the profession at a plenary session at the AVA conference. Animal welfare should be a major concern to veterinarians. Veterinarians and their association should be the leaders in this field.

What is, however, missing in the Viewpoint are the mechanics and the day-to-day practicalities of achieving this role. Current AVA allocation in personal, financial resources and systems of operation are unlikely to lead us to achieve the aspired leadership position. Critical evaluation is needed - with goals and timeframes set in place.

Commitment to, and employment of, a permanent full time Animal Welfare Officer, a research co-ordinator or an AVA animal welfare advocate is mandatory if we are to achieve success.

Setting up an efficient, effective, open and meaningful system of communication on a wide range of animal welfare issues within and between Divisions, Branches and Special Interests Groups must be one of the first priorities for the new appointee. Members’ involvement on a wide spectrum of topics must be established in an open and constructive atmosphere. Sharing responsibilities between Divisions and the National office on an equal basis is essential.

Developing a capacity to deliver, at a short notice, public comment on any animal welfare issue arising at local, state or national level is mandatory for the achievement of Dr Denney’s vision. Many policies and position papers are already developed and published in the AVA Compendium. Based on these policies, opinions must be delivered while the issues are still at the center of the community concerns and attention.

The establishment of an effective multi-level structure of spokespersons on animal welfare on a State and national level is crucial. Proactive and reactive roles must be clearly defined and pursued.

There is a huge amount of concern, care and commitment to animal welfare by veterinarians in Australia - yet the greater part of this has little AVA affiliation or involvement.

Several years ago the National AVA had an employed coordinator for animal welfare matters. As an active participant in the animal welfare arena within and outside the AVA I found that during this period animal welfare issues were dealt with more effectively and productively than anything that had gone before, or has happened since.

While I am not aiming to criticise the current arrangements or the people involved, I strongly believe that broad changes are required in the way we deliberate, formulate translate communicate and educate within our organisation. This applies to all of AVA’s levels as well as our involvement with other organisations and the community.

Dr Denney, I share your aspirations and beliefs but challenge you and the AVA Board to review the arrangement structures and resources allocated to achieve this position and to lead our profession and the community in all aspects of care, welfare and concern for our animals.

Dr Onn Ben-David
Caufield South, Vic

AVA, ACAC and PIAS

HAS anyone bothered to contact the Australian Companion Animal Council (ACAC), via the address, telephone number or fax listed on their glossy old masters propaganda March 2000 publication, The Power of Pets? I did, and found the contact details to be one and the same as the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) to which we all pay our subscriptions; some of which presumably goes toward maintenance of the office.

Unfortunately, on 13 July 2000, the AVA telephonist had no idea who or what the ACAC was. On consulting someone in the office she returned with the advice to contact: Sue Chaseling, Petcare Information and Advisory Service (PIAS), 51 Darling Street, East Balmain 2041, e-mail: petsyd@petnet.com.au.

Is this the same Susan Maree Chaseling, director of the organisation – prominent in the PetPEP enterprise – calling itself Delta Society Australia Ltd, I wondered?

(A person of influence, is she a vet?)

What’s more, didn’t Stuart Littlemore QC broadcast his view that: “the Pet Care Information and Advisory Service, which it seems fair to say, is nothing more than a front for the multi-national pet food manufacturer Mars, through its Australian subsidiary Uncle Bens”?

I asked for an explanation as to why the AVA office is used as an address for the ACAC which now seems to be a front for PIAS.

Because the ACAC move around a lot, that’s why they use the AVA address, came the reply on 24 July 2000. They are currently in Balmain, and before that they were somewhere else, said my AVA informant.

But, I protested, the ACAC is not PIAS - not according to the list of contributors at the front of the booklet it isn’t. “Tell me,” I said, “should the Minister for Local Government, having seen this glossy brochure, telephone for more information what would you tell him?” We would direct him to ACAC in Balmain, said my informant.

At this stage I became concerned that the AVA may be in the business of lending its name and office space and sending out brochures purporting to know everything or almost everything there is to know about the pet industry but when it comes to who or what or where the ACAC is no one seems to know, except that it is necessary to contact PIAS.

These are just some of the concerns that Breck and I have discussed and believe should be put to the membership to see if anyone can shed any light on the goings on at AVA House.

PS: This message and any correspondence arising should be available for general distribution.

Dr Tom Lonsdale
South Windsor, NSW

Tom “obsessed”

I S S this the same Tom Lonsdale who is so obsessed with his RMB theory that he is conducting a vendetta against a certain petfood company through his membership of the AVA and through his membership of the RCVS ?

Give me a break, Tom! Don’t throw so many stones in that glass house of yours!

We can all see through your public spirited “free speech” angst.

Dr Bob Bradley
Nunawading, Vic

No intrigue

REGARDING the Australian Companion Animal Council (ACAC): what a shame.

You, Tom Lonsdale, let your preconceptions paint such a scandalous picture of intrigue.
and subterfuge. The truth is far more transparent and much less sinister, but why let the truth get in the way of a good story?

In response to your 'judgements', there are no secrets concerning myself or the Australian Companion Animal Council. Who, what, or where ACAC is, is clearly stated for all to see in ACAC's credo document, The Power of Pets. That brochure lists who the members are: all prominent pet industry organisations, of which AVA is one. Others include: ASAVA, Australian National Kennel Council, Avcare, Delta Society Australia, Pet Food Industry Association of Australia, Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, PIAS, Veterinary Makers and Distributors Association, and the Veterinary Nurses Council of Australia.

What ACAC does is also clearly stated. It is a forum for the pet industry to promote the benefits of socially responsible pet ownership to the wider community. An example of recent ACAC activity is the mailing of The Power of Pets to every politician and every local council in Australia. It is hoped that activities such as this will raise awareness of the importance of pets to our society. The brochure doesn't purport to know everything there is to know about the pet industry, but it is probably safe to assume that the 10 members of ACAC do combine to give a certain level of knowledge on the subject.

As to where ACAC resides, the answer is simple. ACAC is a group of organisations and needs one person to coordinate administrative and secretarial functions. At present that person is me, but that could change at any time. Publications need to have longevity, and the AVA address provides a constant and central base which is printed on the brochures to ensure they will be valid for years to come. You may be interested to know that the recent mailout to councils and politicians listed me as the Secretary and provided my direct contact number for further enquiries.

It appears that you may have spoken to a new receptionist when you called AVA on 13 July, there have been many staff changes there in recent times and not all new staff would be immediately aware of AVA's membership of ACAC.

It is a shame that when you received my contact details you didn't speak to me personally. I am also on the board of Delta Society, a wonderful non-profit organisation which, among other things, now has dozens of accredited dog and owner teams visiting nursing homes and other institutions. Recently, Delta established the first pet visitation program at the Sydney Children's Hospital, quite an achievement and something I am certainly not ashamed to be involved with.

As for me, I am not a person of influence, nor am I a vet. I am an agricultural scientist with a love of animals and, until today, have enjoyed a pleasant five years working in the pet industry.

So, far from being a front for a front for a front as you suggest, ACAC is an excellent example of an industry pulling together and finding common ground for the good of all, something which you don't seem to want to understand. The promotion of the benefits of pet ownership is nothing to be ashamed of and something from which all veterinarians benefit.

And by the way, the NSW Minister for Local Government was the first to receive the glossy brochure. He can pick up the phone and call me any time. I am his representative on the NSW Companion Animals Advisory Board - and that is certainly not a secret.

Sue Chaseling, East Balmain, NSW

Lonsdale 'unreasonable'

The Australian Companion Animal Council (ACAC) was formed in 1994-5 with many of the current member organisations being foundation members. Several other national or key organisations with interests in socially responsible pet ownership or interests in the impact of the human-animal bond on society, such as RSPCA and AMA, have been invited to join but have declined.

Many member organisations have had at least one change of representative to ACAC since its inception. For instance AVA was initially represented by Dennis Eager and Lindy Scott while they were with theAVA. When they left AVA they were replaced by Barbara Horsfield and Jill Maddison, with Jill recently replaced by Kersti Soks (when Jill finished her term with the AVA Board). All meetings have been and currently are held every two months at AVA House, Artarmon, N SW. The AVA phone number and postal address were initially mooted as contact details and this has continued to be a reasonably convenient arrangement.

Petcare Information and Advisory Service (PIAS) has generously provided the services of its sole Sydney employee, Sue Chaseling, for honorary secretarial duties. Sue and PIAS have always contributed positively to the roles companion animals play in Australian society. Although PIAS is fully funded by Uncle Ben's (division of Mars Corporation), Sue and PIAS have nothing to do with the nutrition of Australia's cat and dogs or recommendations thereof.

It is extremely unreasonable to say PIAS is a front for anybody or to imply AVA and ACAC are fronts for anybody. It is also extremely unreasonable to comment on anybody (such as Sue), through a channel they cannot access (such as avalist). I am affronted by this and will post a reply from Sue to that list to ensure she has a fair say in this matter.

Craig Mapherson
President, ACAC

'Unbalanced diet'

Since it still seems to cause some people problems - perhaps only those who are part of the "RBM pet food conspiracy camp" - I will enlighten you to the supposed 'mystery' and 'conspiracy theory' put about by Uncle Tom.

As usual it is all a bit of a beat up. If you know anything about ACAC you will know that the acronym stands for the Australian Companion Animal Council. It purports to be the "peak body" on companion animal affairs and tries to bring together all the companion animal groups such as UAM, Delta Society, Welfare bodies, AVA, ASAVA, the pet food industry etc. If you look on the front of the recent brochure sent to you you will see the current membership. The membership is not a secret and there is no conspiracy.

The current President of ACAC is Craig Mapherson, who is the ASAVA nominee representative and Sue Chaseling is doing the secretarial support. Yes, Sue does work for PIAS and, yes, she also sits on the companion Animal Advisory Board of the NSW Govt.

Well, why not? She is a competent person whose job is to relate to the companion animal industry - of which we are a part. The AVA has a good working relationship with all its major supporters whose names are not a secret and who are published in every edition of the AVJ.
Letters

Survey thanks

WHILE they say “old cricketers never die – they just become commentators” I hope the same does not apply to old AVA Presidents.

However, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all the members of the AVA. The results (to be circulated) are very interesting and the information gained should help those entrusted with planning the course of the veterinary profession in the years ahead. Most importantly you (the Members) have played a major part. Many thanks also should be expressed to Professor Trevor Heath for the mighty effort he has played in providing the data, the time and the expertise in making sense of all the data.

On another subject, I would like to pay tribute to Barbara Horsfield, our Chief Executive Officer for the past five years who is leaving us this month. She has managed to keep us focused and united over that period – while ensuring harmony and progress. She has played a major part.

Conscience and morality must be satisfied with the comfort and welfare of animals. The profession must come to grips with its ethical responsibilities in all animal husbandry methods affecting the well-being (welfare) of animals. The community expects this from us and realises that many problems cannot be solved by scientific research alone. Conscience and morality must also be taken into account.

Reasonable debeaking may be a small price to pay to prevent cannibalism. We have come to live with dehorning cattle (plus genetic selection) and trimming cats’ claws.

The second point is that the AVA must be much more proactive in reviewing its animal welfare policies and keep a step ahead of the community – where is it being left to decide on all matters affecting the welfare of animals.

Dr Bill Gee,
Mosman, NSW

Policy needs review

IT is regrettable that correspondence on this topic could not have been published in the August AVJ when the issue was most public, but we can be sure it will not go away. My first reaction to President Ian Denney’s media release on the ARM CANZ consideration was dismay at how far behind was the veterinary profession. Then I realised that Ian was nailed to the existing AVA policy position, which has become quite out-dated. This raises a number of matters. Caging of laying hens is an ethical, not a simply scientific issue. I cannot believe that any veterinarian can be satisfied with the comfort and welfare of hens tightly restricted to small cages. The profession must come to grips with its ethical responsibility to demonstrate community leadership in all animal husbandry methods affecting the well-being (welfare) of animals. The community expects this from us and realises that many problems cannot be solved by scientific research alone. Conscience and morality must also be taken into account.

Better management systems than cages will be demanded – and will be resisted with a multitude of (cost-saving) arguments from the poultry industry.

No doubt some research will be needed (internal parasites, zoonotic bacteria, etc). This is not really rocket science territory.

Uncle Bens is a major supporter of the AVA.
Which comes to the key point of Tom’s conspiracy theory – why is this the registered address of ACAC the AVA? Well, Tom it is a legality – every group has to have an address somewhere to satisfy tax office and other legal requirements. ACAC members nominated the AVA because it is a stable address.

Tom, the ‘Association’ is answerable to its Board and the Board is answerable to the members. The majority of members are reasonably happy with the activities of the Association. Tom, as far as I remember, you are one of the only people trying to do the ‘Association’ a disservice by creating diversions, such as this storm in a teacup.

What is the problem Tom? Where is the conspiracy? What is the conspiracy? Are you just being petulant because many of us do not agree with your Cybernetic hypothesis?

What is your problem? There are many pet food companies – why just attack one – why not have a go at them all. Shades of Don Quixote. Where are the windmills Tom?

Incidentally, my five dogs and three cats eat nothing but commercial dry pet food and all have lovely teeth and healthy gums. Their turds are firm, taut and terrific. They are placed into a compost bin and recycled into organic waste. They never have intestinal upsets and have never been constipated or had intestinal tract obstructions. Their white cell counts are normal and they live to a ripe old age with perfect coats and no allergies.

I show my clients and they ask me why is this so – I tell them “it is because we are what we eat. If we eat an unbalanced diet, we become unbalanced”. Incidentally, are you eating a balanced diet, Tom?

Dr Roger Clarke
Bundoora, Vic