
SVME Newsletter

Newsletter of the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics

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May 2003

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The need for an "Ethical" overview in our profession becomes more intense every day. The challenges that we face collectively are too often ignored or unanswered in group manner.

For the profession to live up to its intuitively perceived mandate as Guardian of the Integrity of the Human Animal bond, there needs to be dialogue and a relentless sense of self-scrutiny. It takes "leadership" to develop an attitude that can generate a "ethics focused culture" within our profession.

Leadership is the capacity to take upon one shoulders the responsibility to recognize the value of our past as we move to make change in the future. You don't get a pay check for it. The reward is in the process. Being involved in a dynamic that is destined to make things better is remarkably empowering. To achieve this sense of self one needs to be part of a collective effort. One person can make a monumental difference when harnessed to a machine that can be directed.

Demographers tell us that the generation that is soon to be the majority within our profession are not likely to join groups. I don't believe them. Being the guardian to the Integrity of the Human Animal Bond requires an enlightenment that can take a person beyond any alleged tendencies. Making a difference and doing justice to the animals and people we serve requires we all break the stereotype and take our games to a new level.

Given this scenario, I am going to ask the membership to become more active within the organized structure of our profession. The local and state associations need you. The national association, the AVMA, needs you desperately. Collectively the problems can be addressed, understood and consensus based solutions can be implemented. As isolated non-participants the frustrations mount, the self-worth plummets and the animals we serve suffer.

The message is relatively simple. Try to make a difference. One step at a time. Be relentless. Be patient and seek justice.

Thank you for your interest in the Ethics of our profession. Now take your interest and empower it with action.

It has been an honor to be involved with you all through our society for Veterinary Medical Ethics. I look forward to seeing you in Denver.

Brian

Brian Forsgren, DVM
SVME President

PRESIDENT-ELECT'S MESSAGE

Dear members,

The rolling hills of the Palouse are once again covered by tender green growing wheat, the school year is over and the students are back home. For myself, here at Washington State University, this means summer is back; for us all, this means the start of another year for SVME. This is my last newsletter as the secretary of the society and editor of the newsletter. I have enjoyed working with all of you! It was a very enriching experience meeting many of you and hearing your diverse points of view at meetings, in the newsletter, and on the web. I am looking forward to the coming year, as I will become the president of this Society of caring individuals. I hope to reach my goals and keep the society growing. I also hope that student involvement in the society will keep increasing, as students are the future of the profession and of the society.

Once again SVME is organizing the Ethics session at the next AVMA meeting Sunday July 20, 2003 in Denver, Colorado. I hope that you will be numerous in attending the meeting. This year's topics, ethics of cancer therapy, and the human animal bond, are extremely relevant as more animal owners view their pets as family members and are looking for the best of the expanding treatment options becoming available for them. Whether you have a few minutes or the whole day, stop by room A214! The Ethics session will be followed by the Society's business meeting where all members will have the opportunity to express their opinion, concerns and ideas and to vote for the new officers. I hope that many of you will be able to attend.

See you all in Denver!

Sylvie

Sylvie Cloutier, Ph.D.
SVME President-Elect

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

<i>President:</i>	Brian Forsgren, DVM
<i>President Elect:</i>	Sylvie Cloutier, PhD
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Mary D. Kraeszig, JD, DVM
<i>Secretary:</i>	Sylvie Cloutier, PhD (temporary)
<i>Parliamentarian:</i>	Robert C. Speth, PhD
<i>Historian:</i>	To-Be-Named
<i>Immediate Past-President:</i>	William R. Folger, DVM, MS, ABVP (Feline)
<i>Past-Presidents:</i>	Ronald L. McLaughlin, DVM Albert Dorn, DVM, MS Jerry Tannenbaum, MA, JD John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD Robert C. Speth, PhD Robert Shomer, VMD Don D. Draper, DVM, PhD, MBA

TREASURER'S REPORT

As of May 7, 2003, the SVME has a checking account balance of \$4,952.89, and a savings account balance of \$22,312.56.

Mary

Mary D. Kraeszig, DVM
SVME treasurer

NOTICE:

Any member who has email access and did not provide it when sending the membership application is encouraged to send their current email address to Sylvie Cloutier at scloutie@vetmed.wsu.edu

—NEWS—

Member news

Bob Speth is leaving Washington State University

After spending 19 years at Washington State University, and defying all the laws of gravity going down the ski slopes of the Northwest, Bob Speth is leaving! Bob will be accepting a position as Chair of the Department of Pharmacology in the School of Pharmacy at the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) in Oxford Mississippi. His appointment starts July 1, 2003.

Bob is planning to continue his research on the brain renin angiotensin system and also continue to prepare and distribute radioligands for use in receptor binding studies.

According to Bob, "After 19 years in Pullman, it is difficult to leave here and the College of Veterinary Medicine. I am hoping that I will be able to maintain the many close friendships I have with the wonderful people here. I will continue to be an active member of SVME and continue to view Veterinary Ethics as an extremely important issue."

BEST OF LUCK BOB!

Cloning News

Idaho Gem is Born in Utah

On May 4th 2003, Idaho Gem was born. He is a healthy mule, the first successful equine clone and the first clone of a hybrid animal. The clone was produced by teams from Utah State University and University of Idaho. For more information on this cloning event visit: <http://www.uidaho.edu/cloning/>

SVME meeting to be July 20 in Denver

The next annual meeting of the society will be held in conjunction with the AVMA meeting on Sunday July 20, 2003, in Denver, Colorado. Seminars on veterinary ethics will be presented from 8 am to 4.30 pm with a 1h lunch break. Everyone is invited to attend. The annual business meeting of the society will follow the seminars at 5pm. All active members, i.e. members who paid their dues, are invited to attend the business meeting.

**Schedule – AVMA Ethics session
Sunday July 20, 2003
Colorado Convention Center, Denver Co
Room A214**

8am	Dr. Carol A. Morgan Working with the Weakest Link: Should the Strength of the Human Animal Bond Affect the Way You Practice?
9:30 am	coffee break
10am	Dr. Carol A. Morgan Is Marketing the 'Bond' Morally Reprehensible?
11.30am	lunch
1pm	Dr. Bernard Rollin Ethics of Cancer Therapy
2:30pm	coffee break
3pm	Dr. Alice Villalobos Compassionate Cancer Therapy
4:30pm	SVME business meeting

Mark your calendar!

International Society for Applied Ethology meeting

The 37th International Congress of the ISAE will be held June 24-28, 2003, in Abano Terme (near Venice), Italy. For more information visit the web site <http://www.isae2003.org>

The following SVME officer positions will need to be filled for the year 2003-2004:

Secretary

1. The Secretary of the Society shall provide for the keeping of the minutes of all general meetings, executive committee meetings and special committee meetings.
2. The Secretary shall give or cause to be given appropriate notices in accordance with this constitution or as required by law, and shall act as custodian of all society records and reports. The Secretary shall oversee the society seal or logo, assuring that it is affixed, when required by law, to do comments executed on behalf of the society.
3. The Secretary shall perform all duties incident to the office, and such other duties as may be assigned from time to time by the President.
4. The Secretary shall be responsible for all publications of the society.
5. The Secretary shall be elected at the annual meeting with the term of office being one year. The Secretary may be reelected at the discretion of the membership. In case of a vacancy of this office, the President shall appoint a replacement to serve until the next general meeting when an election will be held.
6. The Secretary shall be chair of the Awards Committee of the society.
7. The Secretary shall be the editor of the newsletter of the society

Treasurer

1. The Treasurer shall collect dues and fees and be custodian of all funds of the society. The Treasurer shall present an annual report to the membership on the financial status of the society.
2. The Treasurer shall cause to be kept correct and accurate, accounts of the properties and financial transactions of the society and in general, perform all duties incident to the office.
3. The Treasurer shall keep or cause to be kept a roster showing the names of members in good standing of the society and their addresses, and make this roster available to other officers.
4. The Treasurer shall be elected at the annual meeting with the term of office being one year. The Treasurer may be reelected at the discretion of the membership. In case of a vacancy of this office, the President shall appoint a replacement to serve until the next general meeting when an election will be held.
5. The Treasurer shall chair the Membership Committee of the Society.

Parliamentarian

1. The Parliamentarian shall be elected in odd numbered years and will serve for a term of two years.
2. The Parliamentarian is a member of the Board of Directors with all of the rights and responsibilities described herein.
3. In case of a vacancy of this office, the President shall appoint a replacement.
4. The Parliamentarian shall be responsible for questions relating to Robert's Rules of order during the conduct of meetings.
5. The Parliamentarian shall chair the Nominating Committee of the society.

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Historian

1. The Historian will be elected in even numbered years and will serve for a term of two years.
2. The Historian is a member of the Board of Directors with all the rights and responsibilities described herein.
3. In case of a vacancy of this office, the President will appoint a replacement.
4. The Historian shall maintain an archive or file of materials and papers related to veterinary ethics.
5. The Historian shall chair the Education and Archives Committee of the society.

Take the opportunity to help shape the opinions and principles of your organization. Accept a leadership role in Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics.

If you are interested by one of the positions or would like to nominate someone for an office, contact Dr. Brian Forsgren, SVME president (BForsgren1@aol.com) or Dr. Sylvie Cloutier, SVME president-elect (scloutie@vetmed.wsu.edu). The officers will be elected at the society business meeting held July 20, 2003 in Denver CO.

SVME Membership renewal

Membership renewal for the year 2003-2004 is due by July 2003. SVME Members receives the Newsletter of the society (3 issues per year) and privileged access to the VETETHIC email discussion list. Membership is \$20 for regular member and \$5 for student. If you wish to pay your dues, membership renewal forms are available on the society's web site (http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/org_svme/member_ap.htm). Send your form and payment to Sylvie Cloutier (scloutier@vetmed.wsu.edu) Sylvie Cloutier, Ph.D., Dept. of VCAPP, 205 Wegner Hall, Washington State University, Pullman, WA 99164-6520). Please note that the Society does not accept credit card payments. (Please use the membership notice on the following page to renew or apply for membership.)

SVME DUES NOTICE

Brian Forsgren, DVM, President
Sylvie Cloutier, PhD, President-Elect
William Folger, DVM, Past-President
Sylvie Cloutier, PhD, Secretary
Mary D. Kraeszig, JD, DVM, Treasurer
Robert Speth, PhD, Parliamentarian

July 2003

Dues for 2003-2004 are now payable. We appreciate your past support and look forward to a new and even better year for the Society. The dues payment of \$20.00 (\$5.00 for students) is payable to: ***Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics or SVME***. Membership will be in force from July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004.

Send checks to: SVME c/o Sylvie Cloutier
Dept. of VCAPP
205 Wegner Hall
Washington State University
Pullman, WA 99164-6520

Payment Date: _____ Check Number: _____

Please return this section of the form with your dues payment (see amounts above) to help us keep our records up to date.

NAME and ADDRESS CORRECTION IF NECESSARY:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: (_____) _____

FAX NUMBER: (_____) _____

ELECTRONIC MAIL ADDRESS: _____

Check this box if you are not on VETETHIC and would like to be.

(Email address is required)

Veterinarians in the Cloning Lab: Obligation or Odious?

What Does the Veterinarian's Oath Say?

*Article by Carol A. Morgan, DVM
Small Animal Practitioner & M.A.
Candidate in Ethics, University of
British Columbia, BC, Canada*

The impact cloning and genetic manipulation will have on medical research is likely very significant. Refining techniques utilized in cloning will also support the development of transgenic animals used in the production of medications through the milk of goats or cows. Additionally transgenic animals can be used as superior models for medical research. An offshoot of this technology is the commercial cloning of animals. Cloning promises to restore extinct or endangered species, assist producers by replacing prize breeding stock, and restore a most loved pet. Clearly cloning may provide significant benefits for society but does this potential afford researchers and specifically veterinary researchers carte blanche? Since the public controversy around cloning is noteworthy, veterinarians working with these new technologies need to consider the impact of their work on both society and the profession as a whole.

The Veterinarian's Oath provides guiding principles to veterinarians both in public and in private practice. The overarching principle is the protection of public interests, through a number of diverse directives. The Oath adopted by the AVMA states:

Being admitted to the profession of veterinary medicine, I solemnly swear to use my scientific knowledge and skills for the benefit of society through the protection of animal health, the relief of animal suffering, the conservation of animal resources, the promotion of public health, and the advancement of medical knowledge.

I will practice my profession conscientiously, with dignity, and in keeping with the principles of veterinary medical ethics.

I accept as a lifelong obligation the continual improvement of my professional knowledge and competence.

These directives should assist veterinarians in making decisions in their day to day lives. Some have heavily criticized the Oath as contradictory, while others acknowledge that its conflicting objectives are a somewhat accurate portrayal of the veterinarian's conflicting duties to both humans and animals. In many cases, society is clear on how veterinarians should handle these conflicts. For example, societal norms are established, which instruct veterinarians to prevent pain of pet dogs, but to permit some suffering of the same species in the advancement of medical knowledge? However, when new technologies or industries emerge, society grapples with setting acceptable boundaries and limits. As professionals, veterinarians working with any new technology or industry should ask themselves what the profession and society would consider acceptable use of animals. This article is not a critique of veterinarians working in cloning

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research or allied industries, but an exercise how veterinarians may use the Veterinarian's Oath to examine their role during the emergence of new technologies or industries.

1) The Protection of Animal Health

Health is a notoriously difficult term to define. In animals, health is usually defined in the Darwinian sense i.e. health is a state that favors survival and reproduction. At present rates of success, cloning is less successful at producing healthy offspring than natural reproductive practices. Cloned neonates appear to be more susceptible to disease and may not enjoy the life span of their 'natural' counterparts. In addition, surrogates are much more likely to abort early in the pregnancy. When pregnancies are successful, caesareans may be required due to unusually large fetuses. Thus, cloning does not have any direct benefits to the animals involved in the actual process and either reduces their health or increases their health risk.

However, one may argue that the use of cloning technologies will ultimately promote animal health through veterinary medical research. These benefits would likely be a benefit extended only coincidentally to animals after human needs have been satisfied. Therefore, reasoning that cloning animals promotes the health of animals, is a tenuous assertion at best.

2) The Relief of Animal Suffering

The production of one viable clone involves a number of animals; the DNA donor, egg donors, and often numerous surrogates (if one includes the failed attempts). Although success rates vary significantly and appear to be species dependent, many attempts are required to procure one successful clone. Pain involved in the process may be mild, as with the collection of a skin biopsy from donor animals, but can be more significant. Collection of donor eggs and implantation of zygotes will likely cause some suffering, although this can presumably be mitigated by anesthesia and analgesics. The common procedure of embryo transfer used in food animal practice does not seem to carry to same risks as does cloning, to both the surrogate (increased need for caesareans) and for the progeny (increased disease susceptibility and illness).

Cloning either causes increased suffering or increases the risk of suffering (at current success rates) over 'natural' breeding. Since veterinarians are obliged to relieve animal suffering rather than increasing it, cloning technologies (at current success rates) seem to counter this objective of the Oath.

Some have heavily criticized the Oath as contradictory, while others acknowledge that its conflicting objectives are a somewhat accurate portrayal of the veterinarian's conflicting duties to both humans and animals.

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3) Conservation of Animal Resources.

Preserving resources presents an interesting challenge for veterinarians, as the word 'resources' is open to interpretation. A clear example in support of this tenet of the Oath, is the preservation of wildlife and particularly endangered species. However, companion animal practitioners protect animal 'resources' by prolonging and improving the lives of individual companions. These practitioners do not try to preserve numbers and in fact are often the greatest advocates to reduce the number of animals. On the other hand, food animal practitioners protect resources primarily through maximizing the growth and short term health of animals, attempting to maximize numbers. The question remains whether cloning will serve to protect these resources.

The preservation of endangered species through cloning may be a viable use of the technology so long as the species in question are considered 'resources'. Endangered or even extinct species could be repopulated, contributing to biodiversity or the human enjoyment of these animals.

Cloning of agricultural animals has been going on for years in the form of splitting embryos. 'Superior' animals donate embryos for implantation into 'inferior' animals. The difference between this commonly accepted practice and cloning is one of magnitude rather than kind. At present, commercial cloning does not represent a threat to the preservation of agricultural animal resources due to high cost and poor success rates. However, assuming that these problems can be resolved, does cloning endanger agricultural animals by the possibility of the production of a monoculture? Highly successful animals (by productivity standards) may lack the ability to resist disease. If cloning of animals used in agriculture is so successful that many animals have identical or similar genotypes, are these animals and ultimately the agricultural industry at risk of catastrophic annihilation due to disease? Some authors have expressed concern over development of these monocultures and increasing the likelihood of epidemic disease. Others have disagreed and described the threat of increased disease as a pseudo-problem, indicating that an epidemic causing the annihilation of an entire line of animals would be just desserts for the foolish producer(s). Veterinarians cannot afford to be so glib. The risk on pandemic disease may well be a problem, if the population is reduced to a near monoculture. As disease resistance can vary between animals, producing and using clones in agricultural use would almost certainly narrow the spectrum of responses to pathogens. Superior animals used as donors in cloning may not be resistant to certain pathogens and it would be very difficult to know a priori which pathogens would be a problem. Not only would this be disastrous for the animals, farmers would suffer also. Veterinarians have the obligation to protect animal resources and development of a monoculture may indeed place this resource at risk. While cloning for agricultural purposes may not be odious, veterinarians are obliged to use their influence to ensure that these procedures do not endanger animals or the agricultural industry. Veterinarians by virtue of their professional status should not wait for tragedy but try to prevent one.

At present, commercial cloning does not represent a threat to the preservation of agricultural animal resources due to high cost and poor success rates.

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4) Promotion of Public Health

This portion of the Oath refers to the obligation to prevent injury to the public caused by attacks, food borne and zoonotic diseases. Except where the production of a monoculture (as discussed above) may somehow increase the likelihood of zoonotic or food borne diseases, it seems unlikely that cloning itself will have any impact on public health. The technologically conservative among us often express fears regarding long term safety of foods produced using new technologies. Concerns about GMOs and long term health risks in people ingesting these food products remain high. Cloning alone presents no change in the genome, therefore these fears are likely unfounded.

5) Advancement of medical knowledge

‘Advancement of medical knowledge’ (human or veterinary) implies the advancement of knowledge applied to medical (human or veterinary) situations rather than the advancement of knowledge for its own sake. Cloning technologies must promise to have some application to human or veterinary medicine. Certainly, these possibilities exist. Even those that are firmly opposed to the use of animals in research will often submit to its necessity when significant human medical advances are a possibility. Cloning research clearly promises to advance medical knowledge. On the other hand, commercial cloning of food or companion animals does not present any further advancement of knowledge than that which can be studied in the lab.

Commercial cloning of food or companion animals does not present any further advancement of knowledge than that which can be studied in the lab.

Synopsis

Having examined the various tenets in the Oath, one finds that the Oath may provide contradictory advice when it comes to cloning. Cloning likely increases the risk to animal health and may cause more suffering than relief of pain. Although cloning may provide conservation of reserves, using the technology on a grand scale may place agricultural resources at risk. Although animal cloning itself likely does not present any health risk to people, the health benefits through research may be great. At this point, one needs to decide how to manage these conflicting goals. The most

obvious approach is to try to evaluate the ‘amount’ of societal benefit, cloning will have in specific scenarios.

Cloning research, though likely to cause or at least increase the risk of animal suffering, appears to be well within the constraints of the Veterinarian’s Oath as long as the research is directed towards the public ‘good’. Medical research is clearly within this realm. However, it is incumbent on veterinarians in cloning research to try to temper the negative outcomes of their actions. Veterinarians working in cloning research should not abdicate their obligations to reduce suffering or promote animal health, in favor of the advancement of medical knowledge.

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Cloning of endangered species, at first blush, may appear a laudable goal. However, endangered or extinct species are in that state because of other problems such as lack of appropriate environment, overuse by people, human encroachment on territory etc. Due to their obligation to ensure the protection of animal health and reduce suffering, veterinarians engaged in cloning of endangered species must attempt to address these concerns as well. This does not suggest that veterinarians need to lobby for more green space or join Green Peace, but they do have the obligation to make sure these animals will be afforded appropriate living conditions in accordance with appropriate animal welfare standards for that species. This issue needs to be seriously addressed prior to the arrival of these clones – not after. As a colleague once said, “build the barn before you buy the horse”.

Food animal practitioners and those promoting commercial cloning of livestock, need to focus on the protection of animal resources but should not do so exclusively. While maximizing efficiency through the cloning of superior animals may further this goal, extreme use of this technology may serve to endanger the resources as well. One must also ask how much animal suffering ought to be permitted for the preservation of these resources.

Cloning of pets cannot under the Veterinarian’s Oath, be construed as a worthy cause. Although research involving the cloning of companion animals may lead to medical advances, pet replacement by cloning increases the suffering of animals and the risk of disease without any real benefit to society. Some authors have suggested that this segment of the cloning ‘industry’ is not a real concern because the price of cloning will be self-limiting. While this may well be true, the fact that something may fizzle out as a fad does not make it any less morally objectionable.

The Verdict?

What does the Oath say? Obligation or odious? Although the Oath does present conflicting ‘advice’, going through the tenets, one by one, ensures that veterinarians working with cloning technologies are at least attempting to balance these conflicting goals. Failing to engage in the required ethical conversations regarding potential risks, harms, and benefits is a failure to live up to ones professional obligation.

While engaging in this analysis is particularly important when new technologies emerge, examining traditional procedures in this manner is also useful. Does the comparable procedure of embryo transfer make cloning acceptable? Or alternatively, does it bring into question the acceptability of embryo transfer? Do cosmetic surgeries in pets benefit society? Is there a societal ‘payoff’ that balances the suffering of the animals involved? Explication of the Oath in different circumstances by different people may render a different answer, however one should not dismiss the Oath. The Oath should be considered a tool (albeit flawed) through which veterinarians can contemplate their role in society. What is important is that both the profession as a whole and the individuals within the profession consider, ponder, and examine their role in society.

Although the Oath does present conflicting ‘advice’, going through the tenets, one by one, ensures that veterinarians working with cloning technologies are at least attempting to balance these conflicting goals.

BOOK REVIEW

There is no book review in this issue of the newsletter.

For those of you who are interested in Steven Wise's work (author of *Rattling the cage: Towards Legal Rights for Animals* that was reviewed by Dr. Bob Speth in the May 2000 issue of the SVME Newsletter, followed by a rebuttal from Mr. Wise in the September 2000 issue), he has published a new book in 2002: "Drawing the Line: Science and the Case for Animal Right."

A review of the book by Dr. Mike Appleby (HSUS) will be published this month (May) in *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*.

Dr. Appleby concludes his review saying "...this book and its predecessor (Wise, 2000. *Rattling the Cage: Towards Legal Rights for Animals*) are absorbing in their elegant reasoning for a strictly defined interpretation of animal rights - a concept that all too often is ill defined."

I encourage any member who would like to review any book that could be of interest to the members for the next issues to let me know.

Sylvie Cloutier, PhD
SVME Secretary/Editor

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