



UPDATE: USDA Veterinary Accreditation Program Changes

ISVMA OFFICES, SPRINGFIELD IL, Dec. 15, 2009 -- The ISVMA has received a flurry of questions from its members regarding the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) revision of its National Veterinary Accreditation Program (NVAP). The ISVMA requested follow up information from the Area USDA APHIS office and can share the following.

- Q: Does the USDA expect to have all veterinarians nationwide registered for the program by February 1, 2010?**
A: No. All DVMS accredited prior to February 1, 2010 will be required to **re-apply** in order to continue their accreditation status in the revised program. February 1, 2010 is when the revised program goes into effect.
- Q: When will there be access to the instructions/directions to re-apply?**
A: The National USDA APHIS office in Riverdale MD is currently working to put together all necessary materials, including the creation of a new application form. The target date to have the form and all educational modules prepared for use is February 1, 2010.
- Q: What is the required timeframe to re-apply?**
A: There will be a **6 MONTH WINDOW** to apply. Those who do not apply within this timeframe will have their accreditation status expire. The USDA anticipates having the new application ready for publication on February 1, 2010.
- Q: The new program creates two accreditation categories instead of one. Why two categories?**
A: The division is in place to ensure that accredited veterinarians receive the necessary training on zoonotic and foreign animal diseases and the risks associated with them. Category I centers on companion animals (dogs, cats and pocket pets) where Category II focuses more on food animal/large animal/zoo animal/farm-raised aquatic animals (all species including pet birds).
- Q: After I re-apply, are there any other changes I need to be aware of?**
A: Yes. First, you will be assigned a unique accreditation number by the national staff in Riverdale. Second, your status will no longer be indefinitely ongoing. Your accreditation status will expire three years after your application/reapplication date. Additionally, during those 3 years you will be required to obtain CE hours specifically targeted for accreditation. Category I will require 3 hours and Category II will require 6 hours.
- Q: Where or how do I find the required CE?**
A: The USDA will provide the accreditation training modules and plans to have it available in various media. Online training modules will be free of charge. Materials on CD or on paper will have a fee assessed. In addition to those self-training materials, the USDA may also offer seminars at various national veterinary conferences.
- Q: Can't I just attend an IVERT training and count those hours?**
A: No. You will have to use the USDA training materials.
- Q: Will the USDA accreditation CE hours count toward the 40 hours I need to renew my DVM license in the state of Illinois?**
A: At this time, these CE hours **WILL NOT** be accepted as CE needed to maintain your license of veterinary medicine. You will still need 40 hours of CE in addition to the 3 or 6 hours of CE earned for accreditation.

After Feb. 1, 2010 there will be a media blitz releasing the information in professional journals and organizations. Information comes from the national office in Riverdale MD. Please note that you may consult the USDA APHIS website for information at www.aphis.usda.gov/nvap.

The NVAP is a voluntary program that regulates the performance of specific accredited duties; veterinarians who are not accredited may still provide general veterinary care to any animal. Participation is not mandated by the federal government, however, more than 80 percent of all U.S. veterinarians, or about 71,000, are accredited. Being part of the NVAP allows private sector veterinarians to offer additional services to their clients such as certifying animal and herd health. Small animal practitioners can use their accreditation to certify companion animals for domestic and international movement.