The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) hosted its annual Committee Weekend from March 7 to 11. Executive and Council meetings started off the weekend and were followed by the meetings of 7 committees, including Animal Welfare (chair: Dr. Pat Turner); Animal Health Technology/Veterinary Technician Program Accreditation (chair: Dr. Glen Jackson); Editorial Committee (chair: Dr. Ron Lewis); National Issues (chair: Dr. Brent Humphrey); National Examining Board (chair: Dr. Sylvie Latour), and Professional Development (chair: Dr. Sue McTaggart). Overall, 69 individuals contributed to this gathering. The objective of this extended weekend is to conduct committee business on behalf of the profession and to foster interaction among the different committees and Council.

From the Council table:

**Animal Welfare**
Council approved the revised position statement on Tail Alteration of Horses:

"The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) is opposed to the surgical alteration of the tail of the horse for cosmetic or competitive purposes. This includes but is not limited to docking, nicking and blocking. These procedures do not contribute to the health of the horse and are used primarily for gain in the show ring (nicking, blocking and docking) or because of historical custom (docking). Surgical alteration of the tail must only be performed when it is deemed medically necessary by a veterinarian (e.g. injury)."

Council also approved the following revised position statement on Electroejaculation of Ruminants:

"The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) holds that electroejaculation is acceptable as a component of a breeding soundness examination of sexually mature ruminants”.

**Euthanasia position statement:** This position statement is being reviewed and revised. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Euthanasia Guidelines have been updated and released and will help support the review of the CVMA’s position statement.

**Humane slaughter position statement:** The Animal Welfare committee is working on the first draft. The issue of ritual slaughter is being considered.

The **cosmetic surgery position statement** is up for review. The committee is considering whether to address additional issues within this position.
**Feral cat/trap, neuter and release position statement:** A statement has been drafted for member feedback. This new position statement should be ready for Council’s consideration in July 2013.

**Kennel Code:** The CVMA is reviewing and revising this Code and will ask for review and support from key stakeholders. The Animal Welfare Committee is considering whether to follow the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) template for codes to make it easier for provincial animal protection regulators to enforce the Code.

**NFACC (National Farm Animal Care Council) Codes of Practice:** On behalf of its members, the CVMA has representation on the NFACC. The CVMA has submitted comments on the Equine Code and is drafting comments on the Beef Code.

**Equine:** Some of the key welfare issues that the CVMA commented on include castration by non-veterinarians, tail alteration and the requirement to have a veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR). The CVMA does not support a national standard of care document that includes layperson equine castration. The best practice is that a veterinarian with a VCPR undertakes this procedure with proper anesthesia and pain control.

**Beef:** Key animal welfare issues include pain control for castration and dehorning, and snow as a sole-water-source.

**Pig:** The CVMA Animal Welfare Committee has formed a working group with key swine veterinarians and other experts to develop a pain control protocol that can be used as a reference document for the Pig Code of Practice.

**National Issues**

**Antimicrobial stewardship:** The CVMA continues the development of companion animal antimicrobial prudent use guidelines. The Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) section of the guidelines will be piloted as a “web app” to make the guidelines more user-friendly for veterinarians. The same technology is intended to be used for further Prudent Use Guideline (PUG) tools. The Prudent Use Guideline Working Group chair, Dr. Nigel Gumley, presented the CVMA UTI work done at the CanWest Conference in October, 2012. CVMA Council has nominated Dr. Gumley to represent the CVMA on the AVMA’s newly formed Task Force on Antimicrobial Stewardship in Companion Animal Practice.

**Transport of pets on airplanes:** A CVMA Position Statement will be sent to CVMA members for feedback.

**Jerky treats:** The CVMA continues to monitor this issue, including the most recent voluntary recall in the United States due to trace antimicrobial levels found by a New York state lab. The CVMA continues to receive reports from veterinarians related to the alleged toxicity issue.

**Telemedicine position statement:** The CVMA’s National Issues Committee is finalizing the draft of this new position statement and will be distributing it for member discussion in the spring of 2013.
Health Canada Regulatory Reform – Veterinary Drugs: On behalf of its members, the CVMA is participating in the Health Canada Veterinary Drugs Regulatory Reform meetings. The meeting in March specifically addressed own-use importation (OUI) and active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) – something the CVMA has been actively working on.

Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API) position statement: A draft of this new position statement has been circulated to the Ad Hoc Antimicrobial Stewardship Committee, co-chaired by Dr. John Prescott and Ms. Jean Szkotnicki. As a next step the position statement will be sent to all CVMA members in the spring of 2013 for input.

E. coli food safety: The Canadian Cattlemen’s Association is asking the CVMA to support their submission to Health Canada for approval of irradiation of beef to mitigate the risk of E. coli contamination.

Business Management
The CVMA continues to generate and provide Suggested Provincial Fee Guides, Provincial Economic Reports, Reports on Compensation & Benefits for Associate Veterinarians, Non-DVM Reports, and Individual Practice Reports. The CVMA also offers 6 business management articles in The Canadian Veterinary Journal each year and free one-on-one sessions with a business management consultant during the CVMA Convention.

During the July 2013 CVMA Convention in Victoria, Dr. Margie Scherk will talk about feline practice building, in particular on Client Compliance in the Feline Practice and Feline Friendly Practices Get CATitude. As well, Dr. Rob Wilson Rogers will be offering a session on Understanding Client Satisfaction and How to Measure it.

For 2013, the CVMA’s Business Management Committee is planning to provide member services in the areas of business issues affecting veterinarians from student to retirement, access to client management tools, and increasing client visits.

Partners for Healthy Pets
Partners for Healthy Pets is an alliance of more than 20 veterinary associations and animal health companies committed to improving the overall health of pets. Partners for Healthy Pets offers tools and resources to enhance the overall vitality of pets and veterinary practices, the delivery of preventative health care services, and communication with pet owners about the value of routine care. The CVMA is an associate member of Partners for Healthy Pets; our participation in this group provides CVMA members with online access to the educational tools and resources available. The CVMA’s Communications Advisory Group is reviewing these tools and the CVMA will be introducing them to its members thereafter.

Pet Nutrition Alliance
The American Animal Hospital Association developed Nutritional Assessment Guidelines for Dogs and Cats. The Pet Nutrition Alliance, comprised of the American Animal Hospital Association, American Veterinary Medical Association, Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, American College of Veterinary Nutrition, American Society of Veterinary Medical Association Executives, National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America and the
World Small Animal Veterinary Associations (WSAVA), is committed to supporting the development of educational resources to increase compliance with the recommendations of the guidelines.

The CVMA will be promoting the newly available tools developed by the WSAVA during the upcoming 2013 CVMA Convention through the demonstration of a nutritional assessment on dogs and cats.

Care for Cats
Since its inception, the CVMA has been a stakeholder in the Care for Cats initiative. The objective of this stakeholder group is to increase awareness of the value of cats, and as a part of this, to promote responsible ownership and preventative health care. The unique aspect of this initiative is that it includes a variety of stakeholders, such as shelters, Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, and veterinarians in the promotion of cat health and wellbeing.

Communications
Given the changing needs of CVMA members and stakeholders and the evolving variety of communications tools available, the CVMA Council has decided to review the effectiveness of its current communications efforts. Council reviewed a number of proposals submitted by communications firms and provided direction for the selection of a service provider for this project.

Collaboration with Regulatory Bodies
Last summer, the regulatory bodies and the CVMA assembled a Task Force consisting of Drs. Joel Bergeron (chair), Jim Berry, Lloyd Keddie, Duane Landals and Andrew Peacock to develop a proposal that would strategically connect the regulatory bodies to each other and with the CVMA in a more formal way, with the goal of achieving efficiencies. Since then, the Task Force has surveyed the regulatory bodies on their ability to collaborate in different areas, given their varying acts and bylaws. Based on this learning process, the Task Force developed a collaboration proposal that will be distributed to each regulatory body for feedback. A meeting between the CVMA Council and the presidents and registrars of all regulatory bodies is scheduled to take place during the upcoming CVMA Convention in Victoria, British Columbia.

Canadian Veterinary Reserve (CVR)
From February 27 to March 1, the CVR held a call-up exercise for a civil emergency scenario. The call was directed to 411 members of the CVR. Of the 50% who responded approximately 62%, or 124 individuals, replied that they were available to be deployed. The objective of this exercise was to test the readiness of CVR members to respond to a civil emergency call-up.

In November 2012, Council agreed to a framework allowing for the continuation of a viable civil emergency response effort. During this March 2013 meeting, Council approved the members of the new CVMA-CVR Working Group comprising Drs. John Drake, Carin Wittnich and Gordon Krebs. The role of this Working Group will be to advise the executive director about the requirements of reservists with respect to foreign animal disease emergency preparedness. The Task Force will focus on the identification of needs in preparing for civil emergencies, the
development and updating of online training, the identification of other pertinent online modules that would help reservists’ preparedness, and, if necessary, advise the executive director on whether to call reservists for exercises and emergencies.

**Animal Health Technology/Veterinary Technician Program Accreditation**
Council approved full accreditation for the Veterinary Technician Program at Algonquin College.

**2013 CVMA Awards**
The CVMA will honor the following 2013 awards recipients during its July 10 Awards Luncheon in Victoria:

- CVMA Humane Award: **Dr. Judith French-Sampson**
- Small Animal Practitioner Award: **Dr. Cheryl Cullen**
- Merck Veterinary Award: **Dr. John Kastelic**
- CVMA Practice of the Year Award: **Calgary Trail Pet Hospital**
- President’s Award: **Dr. Terry Whiting**

The CVMA would like to congratulate all the recipients on their achievement.

**Emerging Leaders Program**
The CVMA’s Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) will be hosting its 4th workshop on July 10, 2013, during the CVMA Convention in Victoria. CVMA members who graduated within the last 10 years may apply for full sponsorship to participate in the program.

In addition, all other CVMA members are eligible to apply for participation to the chair and founder of this program, **Dr. Melodie Chan**. The workshop will be facilitated by **Dr. Rick De Bowes**. The sponsors helping to co-sponsor this program with the CVMA and provincial veterinary medical associations are Hill’s Pet Nutrition Canada, Merck Animal Health, Zoetis and Western Financial Group Insurance Solutions.

While the CVMA’s Emerging Leaders Program has only been in existence 4 years, since participating, a number of CVMA members have risen to leadership positions in their provincial associations including:

- **Dr. Marc Philippot** (2010 ELP participant) became Manitoba Veterinary Medical Association president
- **Dr. Ali Crandlemire** (2010 ELP participant) became New Brunswick Veterinary Medical Association president
- **Dr. Wade Sweet** (2010 ELP participant) became Prince Edward Island Veterinary Medical Association president
- **Dr. Jennifer Reid** (2012 ELP participant) became PEIVMA vice-president
- **Dr. Kate Wilson** (2012 ELP participant) became Newfoundland and Labrador Veterinary Medical Association president
- **Dr. Lisa Freeze** (2012 ELP participant) became NBVMA vice-president
2013 Summit of Veterinary Leaders
The 2013 Summit will take place on July 10, 2013, during the CVMA Convention in Victoria. All CVMA members and invited guests are encouraged to attend.

The 2013 Summit will be chaired by CVMA’s president-elect, Dr. Jim Berry. This year’s theme is The Two-edged Sword: Animal Welfare in Veterinary Practice. Eight speakers plus additional international guests have been invited to share their thoughts on this important subject.

2013 CVMA Convention: July 10 – 13, Victoria, British Columbia
As the only national, multi-species event, the 2013 CVMA Convention will once again offer world-class continuing education combined with an opportunity to meet with colleagues and veterinary leaders from coast to coast.

In total, there will be 35 speakers sharing their expertise and thoughts in 6 different tracks offering 36 sessions each of the 3 days of the convention with a possibility of 8 additional hours of wet labs. All of this combined with the beautiful location of Victoria will guarantee for an unforgettable experience.

See you in Victoria!

(submitted by Jost am Rhyn, Executive Director, Canadian Veterinary Medical Association)