# ABVMA Veterinary Forensics Workshop

**April 1-3, 2016**

Presented by the ABVMA Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

Delta Calgary South Hotel  
Nakiska Ballroom  
135 Southland Drive SE, Calgary, Alberta T2J 5X5  
Phone: 403-278-5050, Reservations: 877-278-5050

---

**Thank you to our sponsors:**

- [PURINA ProPlan](#)  
- [Boehringer Ingelheim](#)  
- [Vetoquinol](#)

---

Program: Moderator – Dr. Phil Buote

## Friday, April 1, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Registration Open</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:45-6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Buffet Dinner provided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 6:30-8:30 p.m.  | Considerations for Animal Crime Scene Investigation:  
The Roles of the Investigator and Veterinarian  
  - General considerations for animal crime scene investigation  
  - Considerations for specific types of cruelty  
  - Evidence collection and packaging, chain of custody, photography for both veterinarians and investigators  
  - Recognition and analysis of evidence – blood stains, entomology, botany, trace | Dr. Melinda Merck |
| 8:30-8:45 p.m.  | Networking Break                                                      |                          |
| 8:45-9:45 p.m.  | Animal Cruelty and the Link to Other Crimes  
  - Domestic violence  
  - Child abuse  
  - Other crimes against humans, society | Dr. Margaret Doyle |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30-8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Continental breakfast provided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 8:00-9:30 a.m.     | Veterinary Forensics for Investigators and the Veterinary Community – dogs and cats  
 |                    | • Note: for live and deceased  
 |                    | • Examination considerations – documentation, preparation             | Dr. Melinda Merck          |
| 9:30-10:00 a.m.    | Networking Break                                                      |                              |
| 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. | Veterinary Forensics for Investigators and the Veterinary Community – dogs and cats  
 |                    | • Neglect, blunt force trauma, sharp force trauma, asphyxia, sexual  
 |                    | • Recognition of accidental vs. non-accidental injuries              | Dr. Melinda Merck          |
| 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.| Buffet Lunch provided                                                 |                              |
| 1:00-2:30 p.m.     | Veterinary Forensics for Investigators and the Veterinary Community  
 |                    | • Forensic Necropsy-principles, tools, clothing, the environment, history, photography  
 |                    | • Time of Death                                                      
 |                    | • Principles of Using a Reference Laboratory-sample collection, preparing and shipping samples | Dr. Nick Nation            |
| 2:30-3:00 p.m.     | Networking Break                                                      |                              |
| 3:00-4:30 p.m.     | Poisoning-Crime Scene and Animal Considerations in Toxicology         | Dr. Bob Coppock             |
|                    | • Basic investigation principles and documentation                      |                              |
|                    | • Clinical presentation                                               |                              |
|                    | • Environmental and physical evidence - sampling                      |                              |
|                    | • Necropsy evidence                                                   |                              |
|                    | • Common agents used in malicious poisonings                          |                              |
|                    | • Collateral poisoning from pesticide use                             |                              |

**Networking Social Evening Event**

5:30-8:00 p.m.  
Dinner and Bring Your Own Slides Session  
– Cash Bar -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:30-6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Dinner Buffet provided</td>
<td>Dr. Melinda Merck, Dr. Nick Nation, Dr. Bob Coppock</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 6:30-8:30 p.m.     | ‘Solve the Case’ - bring your own slides presentation  
 |                    | Participants are encouraged to bring their own slides for an interactive discussion as a group.  
 |                    | • Interest in presenting and slides should be submitted to the ABVMA office no later than March 15, 2016.  
<p>|                    | • Presentations will be 15-20 minutes each                             | Dr. Melinda Merck, Dr. Nick Nation, Dr. Bob Coppock, Participants |
| 8:30-9:30 p.m.     | Networking Social                                                     | Cash Bar                     |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:30-8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Continental breakfast provided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00-9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>I Suspect Animal Cruelty-Now What?</td>
<td>Mr. Brad Nichols and Ms. Shawna Baldwin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Guide for veterinarians and law enforcement on reporting and response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Networking Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Creating the Forensic Report: It is NOT the Medical Record!</td>
<td>Dr. Melinda Merck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Presentation of Evidence in Court</td>
<td>Mr. Gordon Haight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Buffet lunch provided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30-2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Complex Case: The Importance of Law Enforcement and the Veterinarian Working Together</td>
<td>Dr. Melinda Merck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30-2:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45-4:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Canadian Case – Cat Dismemberment</td>
<td>Dr. Nick Nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dr. Nick Nation will present a Canadian case broken down for interactive discussion by participants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:45-5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Wrap Up</td>
<td>Dr. Melinda Merck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Bios:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ![Dr. Melinda Merck](image1.jpg) Dr. Melinda Merck  
Veterinary Forensics Consulting, LLC  
Austin, TX, USA |

Dr. Melinda Merck is a forensic veterinarian consulting on legal cases involving animals. She assists investigators of animal cruelty with crime scene investigation, examination of live and deceased victims, frequently testifying as a veterinary forensics expert. She helps with large scale operations including exhumations of burial sites and examination of skeletal animal remains. Dr. Merck provides training for veterinary, attorney and law enforcement professionals internationally on the use of veterinary forensic science and medicine in the investigation and prosecution of animal cruelty cases.


She developed the first Veterinary Forensics course for University of Georgia and Florida veterinary schools and frequently lectures at other veterinary and technician colleges. She teaches workshops on animal crime scenes and the processing of burial and surface remains. She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Forensic Science and member of the International Association of Blood Stain Analysts.

| ![Dr. Margaret Doyle](image2.jpg) Dr. Margaret Doyle  
Riverbend Animal Clinic  
Calgary, AB |

Dr. Margaret Doyle finished her Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine (MVB) in Dublin in 2009 and a masters in veterinary forensics from the University of Florida in 2015. She became involved with the Calgary Humane Society Animal Protection Officers in 2010 when she began consulting on abuse and neglect cases.

Since then she has been involved in hundreds of cases from crime scene investigation to providing expert witness testimony. She is passionate about increasing the awareness of the connection between animal abuse and domestic and interpersonal violence to benefit human and animal victims.
Dr. Nick Nation is a 1974 graduate of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan. Following graduation, he remained at the U of S as a graduate student in veterinary pathology, obtaining an MVSc in 1976. Dr. Nation then went to work as a veterinary diagnostic pathologist for Alberta Agriculture for 17 years, working in the Peace River Country, South Central Alberta and Edmonton over that time. While with Alberta Agriculture, Dr. Nation wrote the specialty examination of the American College of Veterinary Pathologists, and also took a leave of absence to complete a PhD degree in neuro-toxicology in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Calgary. Dr. Nation joined the University of Alberta in 1991 as veterinary pathologist for Health Sciences Lab Animal Services, and became Director in 2000. He left the employ of the U of A in 2005 to set up a private consulting practice in veterinary pathology, and continues his association with the U of A as an adjunct professor in the Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry. Dr. Nation is a general diagnostic pathologist and has been presented with a number of forensic cases in the course of his practice. These include so called cattle mutilations, mutilations of cats, and criminal investigations of small animal cruelty cases involving the Edmonton City Police and the RCMP.

Academic Degrees:
- BSc (Chemistry and Agriculture)
- DVM (Veterinary Medicine) Michigan State University
- MSc (Veterinary Pathology)
- PhD (Toxicology) University of Illinois

Board Certifications:
- Diplomate, American Board of Veterinary Toxicology
- Diplomate, American Board of Toxicology

Publications: Over 100 scientific publications

President and CEO: Robert Coppock, DVM
Toxicologist and Associates Ltd.

Constable Brad Nichols attended Mount Royal University, obtaining a degree in Justice Studies. Following graduation Brad worked in municipal enforcement for a rural county before joining the Calgary Humane Society (CHS) team in 2005 as a Special Constable. Over the last decade Constable Nichols has been promoted to field supervisor, Department Head of Protection and Investigations and most recently, Senior Manager, Animal Cruelty Investigations. During his decade with CHS, he has investigated thousands of animal cruelty files and seized hundreds of animals, prosecuting and obtaining convictions in many cases.

In the last several years, Constable Nichols’ department has obtained a high public profile and is internationally recognized as a leader in animal cruelty investigations. In his time at CHS, Constable Nichols has added several animals to his household, most recently, his German Shepherd, “Munchie”, who was seized from a grow-op and a snake named “Steve” who was seized after being abandoned.
| Detective Shawna Baldwin  
Calgary Police Service  
Calgary, AB |
|---|
| Detective Baldwin attended St. FX University where she earned a BSc in Kinesiology with Education. She taught in Northern Saskatchewan for a few years before moving to Calgary and becoming a police officer.  
She has been a Calgary police officer for 17 years having worked street patrol, the Arrest Processing Unit, the Gang Unit, OCOC - Organized Crime Operation Centre, the Vice Unit, Economic Crime and is currently with CGIS - Centralized General Investigations Unit.  
Along with fellow officer Brad Nichols, Shawna has spearheaded a successful working relationship between the Calgary Police Service (CPS), Calgary Humane Society (CHS), Animal Services and Dr. Margaret Doyle. This is the first collaborative group of its kind in Canada.  
Detective Baldwin currently investigates all serious animal cases and assesses each animal related call received by CPS and mentors officers dealing with these cases. |

| Mr. Gordon Haight  
Crown Prosecutors Office  
Alberta Justice  
Calgary, AB |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Gordon Haight obtained his law degree at the University of Victoria in 1994, and articled with Alberta Justice in Calgary. He was called to the bar in 1995, and has been employed as a Crown Prosecutor in Calgary since that time. Mr. Haight has been doing animal cruelty and neglect prosecutions since 1997. In addition to those prosecutions, he also conducts all manner of criminal prosecutions, including homicides. Mr. Haight currently lives in Calgary with his wife and their blended family of two dogs, two cats, and five other “children” ranging in age from 17 – 25.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dr. Phil Buote is the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association Deputy Registrar and Complaints Director. He grew up in rural Prince Edward Island, completed his undergraduate Bachelor degree at the University of Prince Edward Island and graduated from the Atlantic Veterinary College in 1995. Phil completed a rotating internship in large animal medicine and surgery at Washington State University in 1996.

Dr. Buote began clinical practice in Alberta as a mixed animal practitioner in the Peace River region. He did two years of mainly beef cow-calf practice before moving to Sherwood Park where he joined a practice limited to horses. Three years into equine practice he wanted to return to mixed practice and explore practice ownership. He moved to Cochrane where he eventually purchased the Cochrane Animal Clinic.

Dr. Buote was a member of the ABVMA Food Animal Committee and was a member of Council from 2004 through 2007. He was then appointed to the Complaint Review Committee, and took on the role of Chair in 2010. Looking for a change of careers, and given his satisfaction with his volunteer work with the ABVMA, he applied for the position of Complaints Director and joined the ABVMA staff in July of 2010.

Dr. Buote lives with his wife Carmen and their two sons on an acreage near Devon. In his spare time he enjoys coaching his son’s minor hockey and lacrosse teams, canoeing, camping, and hunting.

---

**Book Discount**

The study of Veterinary Forensics is relatively new. The lead speaker is Dr. Melinda Merck, author of the textbook *Veterinary Forensics: Animal Cruelty Investigations*, and consultant for many animal cruelty cases in North America.

Workshop delegates may use the discount code **VBK88** to receive **20%** off Dr. Merck’s textbook!

**Order online at: [http://ca.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-826580.html](http://ca.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-826580.html)**

**Registration Fees**

Regular delegates: $550.00 plus $7.50 registration fee plus GST.
Students: $400.00 plus $7.50 registration fee plus GST.

**Solve the Case**

Participants interested in sharing a case at this informal evening event should send their cases to: Margaret Doyle at: **madoyle@gmail.com** no later than March 15, 2016.
Workshop Location and Accommodations

Delta Calgary South Hotel
135 Southland Drive SE, Calgary, AB
Phone: 403-278-5050, Reservations: 877-278-5050

Room rates available:

- Delta Standard: $119
- Delta King: $144

Rates do not include taxes. Each extra person sharing a room will be charged an additional $15.00 per night.

Please indicate you are attending the ‘ABVMA Veterinary Forensics Workshop’ to receive the discounted room rates. Reservations must be made by March 3, 2016 to qualify for the reduced room rates.

To book your room, please call the Reservations Department
403-225-5800 or the Global Reservations Office at: 1-800-268-1133

Continuing Education Approval

RACE Approval

The Veterinary Forensics Workshop (Program 949-19406) is approved by the AAVSB RACE to offer a total of 18 CE credits, with a maximum of 18 CE credits being available to any individual veterinarian or technician/technologist. The workshop is approved in categories one (scientific) and two (non-scientific-clinical). This approval is valid in jurisdictions which recognize AAVSB RACE; however participants are responsible for ascertaining each board’s CE requirements.

How to Register:

Online at: http://www.cvent.com/d/gfqpw7/4W

Or contact Lacey Morris at the ABVMA office: 780-784-5231, toll-free: 1-800-404-2862 or by email: lacey.morris@abvma.ca.