

## Changes in the USDA Veterinary Accreditation Rules that Affect Currently Accredited Veterinarians

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On December 9, 2009, the United States Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Services, announced the final rule change for National Veterinary Accreditation Program (NVAP) in the Federal Register, Volume 74, Number 235. Veterinarians will no longer be granted approval for lifetime accreditation. The NVAP will now require accreditation renewal every three years and continuing education (CE) requirements will be associated with the renewal. Furthermore, two categories of accreditation have been established. **Category I** is designed for those in companion animal practice (dogs, cat, rabbits, pocket rodents, reptiles and other animals not covered in Category II). Be sure to understand that Category I does not include pet birds, horses or pigs. **Category II** allows veterinarians to perform official duties for all species. It is highly recommended that before choosing an accreditation category, you closely review the USDA NVAP informational materials. Renewal for Category I accreditation will require three CE units (one hour per unit) every three years, and Category II accreditation will require six CE units. Within Category II, there will be APHIS program accreditation specialties created that will require additional training. However you do not need to have completed any CE to apply now, completion of CE will be required upon the first renewal date.

When and how will changes occur? The effective date for the initiation of the changes is February 1, 2010, when USDA will conduct a three-month campaign to notify veterinarians of the revised program. The notification campaign will be primarily through mass media channels and not through direct contact. All veterinarians seeking accreditation, including previously accredited veterinarians, will have to complete and submit the new application and select an accreditation category. The new application form allows accredited veterinarians to identify up to nine states, with the corresponding state veterinary license numbers, in which they are currently authorized to practice. USDA will accept and review applications from May 1, 2010 through July 31, 2010.

**Note: Your current accreditation will expire if you do not re-apply for accreditation before August 2, 2010.** The NVAP Application Form (VS Form 1-36A) is available online at [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/vet\\_accreditation/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/vet_accreditation/) Submit the completed application form to USDA, APHIS, VS, NVAP Staff, 4700 River Road, Unit 64, Riverdale, MD. Submission can be done by mail, e-mail or by FAX (301-734-3641). If you e-mail be sure to download the form, fill it out and then sign and scan so that you may e-mail the signed version.

Free online Continuing Education will be offered by USDA. Visit the NVAP site for specific announcements regarding online training availability. Paper versions of training materials will be made available for the cost of printing and shipping. USDA is working with state licensing agencies to obtain approval of their NVAP training materials for state CE credit.

Planned CE Modules include:

- Introduction to the New National Veterinary Accreditation Program

- Role of agencies (State, Federal, International) and health certificates
- Foreign animal diseases, program diseases, and reportable diseases
- Preventing disease introduction and spread
- Vesicular diseases
- Exotic avian diseases
- Foreign animal disease detection in Category I animals
- International equine export health certificates
- Interstate and international health certificates for Category I animals
- Personal protective equipment for veterinarians
- Sheep and goats: Scrapie and health certificates
- Regulations and health certifications for aquaculture
- Aquatic animal diseases and related regulatory activities
- Preventing disease introduction and spread in aquaculture
- International health certificates for poultry
- National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP)
- Avian influenza and exotic Newcastle disease
- Animal health emergency response

For information on the NVAP, details on the Accreditation Categories and to obtain the NVAP Application Form view the USDA National Veterinary Accreditation Program (NVAP) website, [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/vet\\_accreditation/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/vet_accreditation/), or call 301-734-NVAP (6827).

For additional information, contact the USDA Veterinary Services, CA-NV Area Office at 916-854-3950.