

Summary of 21st Animal Health Accreditation Advisory Committee Meeting

The meeting was held 25th November 2020 via Zoom.

Committee Membership

The Committee welcomed newly appointed members Dr Bradley Galgut of ASAP Laboratories Pty Ltd and Dr Terry Miller of Dept. of Primary Industries & Regional Development.

The term of appointment of Chair - Dr Sue Jaensch of Vetnostics and Dr Roger Chong of CSIRO (Brisbane) will end in March 2021.

NATA will seek expressions of interest for members with expertise in Veterinary Pathology (General) and Aquatic Animal Health (Diagnostic Pathology and Bacteriology) in Q1 2021.

The Committee discussed the following issues:

Aquatic Animal Health

- In terms of agriculture and aquatic animals there will be short term effects for market demand for seafood as we move into recovery from COVID-19.

Biochemistry

- An ongoing hot topic is the use of symmetric dimethylarginine (SDMA) as a biomarker for chronic kidney disease (CKD) and the proliferation of benchtop platforms offering SDMA testing with very limited validation data. Private veterinary clinics are keen to implement what they can.
- This follows a concern of the relentless proliferation of point-of-care testing outside of the accredited laboratory system. There appears to be almost no oversight, no maintenance logs for equipment, limited quality control (QC) or proficiency testing (PT) performed, all which seems to run along unchecked.

Veterinary Pathology

- *Leptospira* outbreak was identified in dogs in Sydney which created some interest through the media and resulted in pet owners changing practices as far as diagnostics and vaccinations are concerned. Although we are past the peak of the outbreak there are still more vaccinations being administered. The trigger for the outbreak is unknown however; it is thought that the change in human behaviours during the COVID-19 shutdowns led to increased rat movement out of their usual abodes in search for food, resulting in increased interactions between rats and the resident dogs.

- *Ehrlichia canis* is an emerging disease that has reached Perth from northern Australia with the movement of dogs. There is veterinary literature on this topic as these emerging diseases are coming to areas we haven't seen before.

Specific Accreditation Criteria (SAC)

- The Animal Health - Appendix document has been published since the AAC meeting was held after review of comments received from the AHAAC.