National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia

Animal Health

Summary of the 26th Accreditation Advisory Committee Meeting

6 August 2025 (Virtual)

The 26th meeting of the Committee considered the following matters.

Automated diagnostic technologies

- Increasing use of *MALDI-ToF* and *Sensititre* systems for bacterial identification and antimicrobial susceptibility testing (AST).
- Laboratories continue to be reminded to retain Gram-stain examinations of primary samples and biochemical testing where required to identify species definitively to ensure diagnostic accuracy.
- Manufacturer libraries often lack data for animal pathogens; laboratories continue to be encouraged to validate results, particularly at the genus level.
- Minimum inhibitory concentration (MIC) data should be reported only when appropriate and with clear interpretive guidance. In most circumstances reporting only dichotomous interpretations are preferable
- Contributions to open databases must be supported by validated organism identification.

Aquatic pathology

- The “Aquatic Slide of the Quarter” (SOTQ) program has resumed.

Reporting, validation and measurement uncertainty (MU)

- Reference-range establishment and reporting remain variable across laboratories, requiring greater standardisation.
- Understanding and implementation of MU continue to be inconsistent.
- Laboratories interpret validation adequacy differently; clearer criteria and tools are required for consistent validation and verification.

Proficiency testing

- No formal proficiency-testing (PT) program currently exists for aquatic animal health. The challenge is contributed to by the large number of pathogens of interest and the relatively small number of laboratories engaged in aquatic animal health testing.

Additional Technical Assessors (TAs) are sought in:

- Clinical Chemistry (including Toxicology)
- Haematology
- Parasitology
- Molecular Diagnostics
- If interested in becoming a TA, please contact NATA.