

ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS

V

MR JOHN BRENNAND WILLIAMS

JUDGMENT

The Decision of the Committee takes into account that the Respondent admitted the facts underlying the charges at the earliest opportunity, although he did not accept that the facts amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.

However, while the Committee took notice of these mitigating factors, following its Findings, the Counsel for the College had provided the Committee with a number of letters from MAFF/DEFRA to Mr Williams which arose from irregularities in his export certification, which resulted in him being suspended from his duties as an LVI on three separate occasions since 1989.

At those times, Mr Williams received advice in letters from the State Veterinary Service. In February 2003, they said that, *"Incomplete certificates must not be signed."* In June 2004, they commented, *"In discussing the underlying reasons for your feelings, you identified client pressure and time as the main contributory factors ... you must be satisfied that you have adequate time and support to provide the quality of certification expected and required. You will have our full support if owners or agents are critical of attention to detail and of any delay that results. For our part, we wish only to see the highest quality of delivery that we and the Royal College expect"*.

The Committee also noted in that same letter, mention was made of the fact that, *"...the trading credibility of this country is largely founded on a trust in the certification provided and that deficiencies put our national reputation at risk. Deficiencies also put at risk the reputation of the veterinary profession at large"*, this being a matter the Committee considered when concluding that Mr Williams' conduct amounted to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.

There were many letters, both from the public and members of the profession, attesting to the competence and diligence of Mr Williams. His Counsel pointed out that Mr Williams had never sought to deceive or to hide his position from the College or from the State Veterinary Service [now Animal Health]. He recognised his error which was made while trying to facilitate matters on behalf of his client. It was a misjudgement in a busy life which has caused him much distress. As he saw it, he had acted with the best of motives, but had learned a salutary lesson from this, his appearance before the Committee.

The Committee has given careful and anxious consideration to these mitigating factors that have been urged on behalf of the Respondent. However, the Committee was also invited to assess the character of the Respondent and, sadly, it assessed the Respondent's attitude to certification as being either irresponsible or cavalier or both.

In order to maintain public confidence in veterinary certification and to reinforce to the profession the importance of accurate certification, and, having regard to the fact that the Respondent has issued inaccurate export certificates on several previous occasions, which were followed by clear warnings to take the utmost care when issuing such certificates, the Committee considers it has no alternative but to instruct the Registrar to remove Mr Williams' name from the Register.

DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE
13 NOVEMBER 2007