

ROYAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS

V

MR PAUL ANTONY EVANS MRCVS

JUDGMENT

1. The Committee has given careful consideration as to whether the facts admitted and found proved amount to disgraceful conduct in a professional respect.
2. It has reminded itself that it is a primary duty of the veterinary surgeon to ensure that medicines are used responsibly.
3. NGRC rule 217 is unequivocal that at the time of racing a greyhound must be free of medicines, tonics or substances that could affect its performance or well-being, the only permitted exceptions being products licensed by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate for oestrus control, parasiticides and vaccines. As a veterinary surgeon specialising in the treatment of greyhounds Mr Evans should have been fully aware of this rule and the fact that norethindrone, as a product used for oestrus control but without a veterinary product license, was clearly prohibited under these rules.
4. It considers that Mr Evans, by virtue of declaring himself to be a veterinary surgeon specialising in the treatment of greyhounds, many of which race under NGRC rules, must have knowledge of the NGRC's rules of racing greater than that of a veterinary surgeon in general practice.
5. It has concluded that in his failure to familiarise himself with the rules of the NGRC, in his capacity as a veterinary surgeon specialising in the treatment of greyhounds, Mr Evans fell far below the standard to be expected of a veterinary surgeon in his position.
6. This being the case, the Committee finds that the charge of disgraceful conduct in a professional respect against Mr Evans has been proved.
7. In considering sanction, the Committee has listened carefully to the mitigation by the Respondent's Counsel and has read the testimonials which have been produced.
8. The Committee accepts that Mr Evans mistakenly believed that the use of norethindrone in a racing greyhound was acceptable; firstly because he believed that it was less detrimental to dogs' welfare and had a lesser effect on performance than the licensed alternatives. Also, because its widespread use in the industry over many decades had previously gone unchallenged by the NGRC. The Committee finds it inconceivable that NGRC officials were not aware of the drug's use prior to March 2006.

9. It also accepts that Mr Evans, in prescribing the drug, caused no adverse effects on the dogs' welfare or performance nor on the integrity of racing. Neither did he receive any financial or other benefit from his actions.
10. In view of the mitigation advanced on behalf of Mr Evans, the Committee has decided to take no further action against him.
11. However, the Committee does expect Mr Evans to revisit and thoroughly familiarise himself with the NGRC rules and conduct his practice accordingly.
12. The Committee wishes to make it clear that public confidence requires that all veterinary surgeons who are licensed by the NGRC or who are involved in regulated greyhound racing, to be entirely familiar with the rules of the NGRC, particularly in relation to the administration of drugs and other substances, and apply them.
13. The Committee would also like to put on record its poor opinion of the NGRC's rules and disciplinary procedures, in particular the ambiguity of certain rules, the lack of reasons given for the findings of its stewards' enquiries and the inadequacy of the arrangements to inform respondents of the appeals procedure.

DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

13 DECEMBER 2007