

STATUTORY EXAMINATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

EXAMINERS' REPORTS

1. Examiners report on each candidate's performance in their subject and these reports are sent to candidates who fail the examination. Subject examiners also submit reports to RCVS on the examinations that they conducted. Extracts from these reports about areas where, in general, candidates performed poorly and other comments that will help candidates prepare themselves are set out below.

EXTRACTS FROM EXAMINATION REPORTS

2. These extracts are from the reports on the examination held under the 2005 regulations in the following subjects: the horse, production and small companion animals, and veterinary public health in 2006 and 2007.

2006 EXAMINATION

3. There is a problem in the written papers with the candidates not answering the question asked. In addition there was, on some occasions, omission of part of a question. In some cases we suspect this may not be lack of knowledge but bad time management, or carelessness as there was good evidence to expect a valid answer from the performance in the rest of the paper. In a number of questions, while the marks awarded were a reflection of the material in the answer relevant to the question asked, a considerable effort had been made by candidates to present material that was very correct but unfortunately irrelevant and thus a waste of candidates' time.
4. The examiners in small companion animals would like to emphasize the importance of each candidate being assessed on the clinical examination of a live small animal (dog or cat), preferably a real clinical case. Organising centres should ensure that sufficient live case material is available for such purposes.
5. Candidates should be able to conduct a full general clinical examination as well as more "specialised" examinations such as an orthopaedic and neurological examination. Candidates should also be able to interpret the results of their examination and integrate this information with other information supplied (e.g. blood test results, radiographs).
6. Candidates must be aware of UK regulations and practice. For example, knowledge of licensed drugs in the UK, and the UK Ionising Radiation Regulations.
7. Several candidates were not fully conversant with animal husbandry methods used commonly in the U.K. They were not aware of the potential use of different breeds and sexes of livestock or the value of animals and the costs of veterinary treatment. This undermines their ability to give pertinent advice to owners of production animals. The requirement for knowledge in this area needs to be emphasised to candidates and any providers of education targeted at them.

8. Several candidates had a very mechanical approach to clinical examination, for example systematically attempting to palpate every lymph node, but not moderating this approach to concentrate on areas of specific interest that should have been highlighted by the case's presenting signs. For example, they did not take extra time to look carefully at the teeth of a mature ewe that had lost weight.
9. There were also significant deficiencies in many candidates' knowledge of vitally important rules and regulations such as medicine legislation, the need for withdrawal periods, the cascade system, prescribing rules etc.
10. It was observed that many candidates appeared to make the same errors or offer the same incorrect information particularly regarding legislation and other areas outlined in the previous paragraph. Given the diversity of these individuals' background and experience it suggests that there is a common source of (mis)information. While it was impossible to identify such a common source, providers of education targeted at candidates should take extreme care to ensure candidates receive and understand correctly information provided to them.
11. In the COP there was a tendency to assume that the VPH examiners would wish to hear about certain topics and issues e.g. HACCP and cattle TB. These were introduced as part of an answer when in fact the question was not in any way expecting a mention of these subjects/topics. There was obviously a focus during the study for the examination on meat inspection by most candidates but evidence of a lack of awareness of many common UK zoonoses and in particular pet animal zoonoses.
12. This was the first examination in this format and on reflection there could have been some confusion as to the breadth and depth of the subject area. Therefore the potential candidates should be made well aware that VPH examination does in fact encompass the whole farm to fork area and includes aspects of the husbanding of animals, their welfare and health at production and the transport phases as well as the slaughter stage. There is a need to make the candidates aware of the importance of occupational zoonoses.

2007 EXAMINATION

13. Some candidates failed to show sufficient knowledge base in common diseases of small animals and also did not display sufficient knowledge of how to 'work-up' a case logically. Some candidates were unaware of UK issues with respect to drug licences.
14. The horse examiners reported that those candidates who failed the written paper were generally weak across the board, performing badly on the essay and short answer questions and showing the same lack of knowledge in all areas. A few candidates did their cause no good by failing to even attempt one or more questions.
15. Only 3 candidates obtained a pass mark in the horse steeplechase question requiring filling in an identification form, which is worrying. They didn't take the trouble to read the guidance notes at the bottom of the form.
16. The performance of the candidates in the horse oral and practical examinations was of a higher standard than in some previous years. As was to be expected there was variation in depth of knowledge and the ability to apply it to clinical cases, and in the confidence, or lack of it, to handle horses, but no candidate performed very badly.

17. The production animal examiners used the Liverpool University farm facilities to examine candidates' knowledge and skills in issues pertaining to herd health evaluation (production, nutrition, lameness, mastitis, calf-rearing).
18. The veterinary public health examiners reported that candidates who went forward to the COP were of a suitable minimum standard at good general level but some did not have a sufficiently detailed knowledge of:
 - a) food hygiene regulations
 - b) water and shell fish
 - c) link with human health professionals

12 September 2006

29 August 2007

29 September 2007