

AAAP SCIENTIFIC CONSUMER LIAISON COMMITTEE

Progress by this committee has, this year, been most disappointing and discouraging. As our predecessor ad hoc committee, we too seem to have had great difficulty in delineating specific problems and effecting useful impact or effective communication. Your chairman accepts the blame for this, because in the main he has not "needled" the committee members or the general membership for specific suggestions or enumeration of problem areas in which we should and could work.

Individually, members of the AAAP have contributed their expertise to rectifying errors in interpretation which have appeared in the press. Perhaps because of limitations of both time and funds this may have to be the way the AAAP will operate in the field of consumer education and communications. As was suggested previously, perhaps restructuring this committee with one or two members assigned to cover a specific area within their own special field of interest (expertise) would increase our committee's effectiveness.

Effective liaison demands continuing, prompt recognition of problems and misunderstandings, rapid fact-finding (both pros and cons), followed by newsworthy, objective interpretation to be disseminated to the public. Individually the AAAP members have been active, but it is difficult to do so in the name of the whole association. Neither collectively nor individually can we stick our heads in the sand - and we must move if we are to have any influence.

Last fall, following the rump session of the committee at the Cyanamid Conference, a fact sheet on Marek's disease vaccine was developed and forwarded to the AAAP Board of Directors for whatever action seemed appropriate; it was decided it would be unwise to issue any position statement at the time. Meantime there have been a plethora of news briefs and articles in the poultry and even general press about the subject which is understandable. But we have been unable to prevent alarmist news releases in such papers as the Wall Street Journal even though some of these were later corrected in line with known facts by individual effort. While these efforts must be recognized as steps in the right direction, they cannot have the impact of association policy based on total expert consensus.

We were instructed to explore the possibilities of an all-inclusive seminar on at least one of our current major problems and to contact other organizations regarding proposals. We were notified too late of the environmental pollution control session to be held at the AVMA convention in Detroit to contribute. However, the AAAP is on record with the chairman of the AVMA Scientific Program Committee through this committee that it is interested in being as helpful as possible in contributing toward any general or special sessions where the expertise of "over 500 concerned and able veterinarians would be helpful" in the field of scientific consumer liaison. Thus, there may be an opportunity and need for input from the AAAP for the 1972 AVMA convention.

The Animal Health Institute has similarly been contacted as have some of the regional industry organizations. A brief discussion with Mrs. Virginia Knauer, Director of Consumer Affairs, provided a chance to express the AAAP's concern and interest in the field of consumer affairs. In a public address, Mrs. Knauer

urged laboratory testing of products by industry to spot and correct problems prior to distribution and she suggested public tours of farms and industry to improve rapport since the communication gap needs closing. Whether these contacts bear fruit or not will depend on our awareness as an organization and aggressive follow-up of current or potential areas of misunderstanding.

The committee has noted the potential dangers to the industry of illegal or unsafe residues in poultry and poultry products. Particular concern has been expressed about residues of arsenic over tolerance due to failure to withdraw arsenicals in feed in conformity with manufacturers directions. The "National Animal Drug Certification Program" is a vehicle for certifying current use of drugs and feed additives.

It is a voluntary program supported by industry-wide groups such as National Broiler Council, AFNA, Animal Health Institute, etc. The move is a progressive one and we feel merits the full support of AAAP. Moreover, we suggest that steps should be taken to have AAAP representation on the National Animal Drug Certification Committee with official status. We must face up to problems and this program suggests a worthwhile approach.

Lack of specific objectives, limited finance and time, suggest that this committee might be reorganized along problem areas or specific problems in order to focus attention and obtain promptly the benefit of expert objective advice. This could then be sent for executive action as a firm recommendation to the Board for useful distribution. Lack of finance and time may preclude most effective action - we may make mistakes, but we might be more effective.

We suggest that the association seriously consider the value of and need for this committee, to decide whether or not it should be dissolved or restructured. This past year as a committee, we have floundered.

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Prepared and distributed without committee action.