

Submitter: Becky Brandenburg
On Behalf Of: Sherman Veterinary Clinic
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and
Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB976

I am a mixed animal veterinarian in rural Oregon but have worked in mixed animal practice for the last ten years. I have recently left a more suburban area of Oregon to come to a very rural area to open a mixed animal practice. I have colleagues in other parts of the country that have multiple issues with individuals providing dental services who are not veterinarians.

From a business aspect, equine dentals do not keep my business running financially. However, equine dentals are an important part of preventative practice. Equine dentals should be performed every 1-2 years dependent on age/circumstances, this allows the veterinarian to see the horse to make sure everything is physically appropriate for the horse. We listen to the heart and the lungs, evaluate the patients weight, check feet and legs for any injuries. It allows us to develop a client- patient relationship and recommend changes to help keep this particular animal healthy. This is a very important part of equine health. Many horse owners give their own vaccines, so the only time we see their horse is for problems and then we do not know have a baseline normal for these patients.

Horses are expensive animals to maintain appropriately with hoof care, feed, and pasture. The price of a routine equine dental once a year does not match the cost to maintain a horse for a year. I do not feel that this should be a factor in this decision. Most of the time, the dental expense will save a horse owner hundreds of dollars on decreased feed costs due to less waste & better digestion.

Access to care: Dentals are not an emergency situation. Dentals should be and can be scheduled 6-12 months ahead of time after the last dental was performed. Poor teeth do lead to emergency situations such as choke, colic and weight loss. As a GP veterinarian, if you expect our veterinarians to show up during emergencies then we would prefer to have a relationship already established with that client/horse at their preventative dental. Are these dentists going to be allowed to sedate and carry sedatives with them? The dental itself is only one aspect of an equine dental. The pharmacology of drugs is another aspect that can have detrimental effects if not used properly. Every animal can exhibit a different response to drugs and will these individuals be able to address these issues. Many older equine species in my practice need very heavy sedation and local blocks to the dental arcades to be able to access the last tooth which often carries the most significant issues. I have seen horses injected into the artery instead of the vein, which can cause seizures. As the local veterinarian, am I going to be expected to leave my practice/ appointments if an emergency arises. This is going to limit more access to care to everyone. When I scheduled myself to be at the dental, I schedule extra time in case issues occur. Are these dentists going to know when this patients need to be referred to an equine

dentist? As a GP veterinarian, we take radiographs and then send horses to a surgical facility for extractions because these surgeries are long and difficult. Are the dentists going to be able to get these patients referred appropriately and now the owner will have two dental costs. I am not willing to take on the responsibility of an equine dentist under my license. Are these dentists going to carry insurance that covers their work and potential complications?

Cattle pregnancy diagnosis is similar. Preg checks are not a huge income for us. The ability to go out to the farm and see the setup, discussed preventative vaccines and diets allow us to plan for future calving issues. This allows to have a herd exam to help provide correct medications and vaccinations. Preg checking is also not an emergency and should be set up months in advance. We give those clients that use us for these preventative services priority for emergencies day or night because we know what we already have that relationship.