



THE COLLEGE OF
VETERINARIANS
OF ONTARIO

INFO SHEET

DISPENSING TO FREE-RANGING WILDLIFE¹

INTRODUCTION

Veterinarians are permitted to dispense drugs (with the exception of narcotic or controlled drugs) for use in free ranging wildlife (unconfined, non-domestic animals) under the following guidelines.

INFO SHEETS of the College of Veterinarians of Ontario provide veterinarians and the public with information about the governance of veterinarians in Ontario or contain practice parameters and standards that should be considered by all Ontario veterinarians in the care of their patients, dealings with their clients and the welfare of their staff.

It is important to note that these INFO SHEETS may be used by the College or other bodies in determining whether appropriate standards of practice and professional activities have been maintained.

The College of Veterinarians of Ontario regulates veterinarians in Ontario in the public interest.

June 2003

College of Veterinarians of Ontario
2106 Gordon Street
Guelph, Ontario
N1L 1G6

Phone: 519-824-5600 / 1-800-424-2856
Fax: 519-824-6497 / 1-888-662-9479
Website: www.cvo.org

1. The Veterinarian shall regard the individual, agency or organization to whom the drug is being dispensed as a client and be subject to all the regulations as stated in Ontario Regulation 1093, Section 33, with one exception.

The CVO recognizes that veterinarians will be dispensing for animals not under their direct professional care. The onus is on them to be informed as to the species to which the drugs will be administered; the circumstances under which the drugs will be stored and used; and the method of drug delivery. They must instruct the individual to whom they are dispensing regarding appropriate dosage and administration of the drug, explaining possible side effects, and ensuring that the individual is equipped to deal with those side effects. The human risks of misuse or accidental exposure while handling the drug, and the risk of residues in meat, especially in animals, which may be hunted, must be explained. The importance of the welfare of the animal shall be emphasized, and instruction shall be given on evaluating the necessity and advisability of undertaking a procedure involving a drug in a particular circumstance.

The Veterinarian must have at least one current reference text on wildlife medicine² and at least one current reference book on chemical immobilization of wildlife³ (because most requests for drugs are for the purpose of wildlife restraint). The veterinarian shall have demonstrable training or experience in wildlife medicine. Veterinarians are expected to contact a veterinarian with appropriate experience or expertise in dealing with non-domestic species if they are uncertain about a drug's application in a specific species.

Membership in the Canadian Association of Zoo and Wildlife Veterinarians is encouraged.⁴

2. The lay person to whom the drug is being dispensed shall have a letter from their supervisor or another responsible individual in the agency or organization which they represent, indicating that the purchaser or his/her organization has the legal authority to deal with free-ranging wildlife, and authorizing them to purchase and use drugs on behalf of that organization.⁵ This letter must be renewed annually. The lay person to whom drugs are being dispensed shall have had appropriate instruction on the use of the drug in wildlife.

3. Requirement for Dispensing: A proper record system shall be maintained by the person to whom the drug is dispensed, and shall be copied to the dispensing veterinarian on a biannual basis. The record for each procedure shall include date, drug used, species identity (tag number, radio collar frequency, etc.) of animal, actual or estimated weight, initial dose of drug (by mass or units, not by volume), and supplementary dose of drug or of reversal agents, outcome of procedure, drug inventory and reconciliation after each procedure, signature (for each procedure/reconciliation), disposition of unused drugs. Expired drugs shall be returned to the dispensing veterinarian. Veterinarians are required to retain these records with their clinical records.

4. The dispensing veterinarian will, in conjunction with the lay person to whom the drugs are dispensed, establish a system of identifying potential food producing wild animals which have been administered drugs⁶ under this policy in order that members of the public who may consume the meat from any such animal can be advised of the potential of any drug residues remaining in the meat.

¹ This Council policy contains reference footnotes that can be updated as required by staff, without council approval.

² A good reference text for wildlife medicine is:

Zoo and Wild Animal Medicine, 2nd Edition
Murray Fowler (ed.), Saunders 1986
and its supplements;
Zoo and Wild Animal Medicine Current Therapy Three
Murray Fowler (ed.), Saunders 1993

³ A copy of Wildlife Chemical Immobilization may be obtained from:

International Wildlife Veterinary Services Inc.
PO. Box 37, Laramie, Wyoming, 82070-00037, USA
(approximately \$38.50 U.S.)

⁴ Contact for the Canadian Association of Zoo and Wildlife Veterinarians:

Dr. Michele Oakley
Box 2119
Haines Junction, Yukon Y0B 1L0
(867) 634-7084

Membership Fee: \$10.00

⁵ Legal authorities include the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Canadian Wildlife Service and Parks Canada.

⁶ Reference:

Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre Technical Bulletin:
Drug Residues in Wild Meat – Addressing a Public Health Concern
Website: <http://wildlife.usask.ca/english/frameNewsletter.htm>
(Winter 2002/2003)
