

**A Post Graduate Foundation Publication**

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**Antimicrobial Prescribing  
Guidelines  
for Veterinarians**

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**Editor: B S Cooper**



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## *Foreword*

Antibiotics are the most commonly used drugs in veterinary, as in human, medicine. As with any drugs, this implies significant cost and potential toxic or other unwanted side-effects. However, antibiotics differ from other drugs in that by selection of antibiotic-resistant bacteria they can affect both the environment and members of a population other than those actually treated.

In human medicine, the emergence of resistance in bacteria responsible for serious community and hospital-acquired infections has caused concern since antibiotics first became widely available over 40 years ago. The development of new agents, designed to overcome bacterial resistance has barely kept pace and those which have been developed are usually many times more expensive than older agents.

The prospect of untreatable bacterial infection (still largely theoretical but occasionally a reality) and rising drug bills have led to development of guidelines for and restrictions on the use of antibiotics especially in hospital practice. Australia has been at the forefront with the publication, in 1979, of a small antibiotic guidelines booklet written by a group of Melbourne specialists concerned about often inappropriate use of antibiotics and the increasing clinical problem of serious infections caused by multiresistant *Staphylococcus aureus* in Melbourne hospitals.

The 8th edition of "Antibiotic Guidelines" is now in preparation; it is published by the Victorian Postgraduate Medical Foundation with contributions from clinicians, microbiologists and pharmacists from all Australian states and a wide national circulation among doctors in hospital and community practice. In 1984 "Antibiotic Guidelines" was endorsed by the Antibiotic Standing Committee of the National Health and Medical Research Council as a blueprint for antibiotic use in human medicine in Australia.

The Antibiotic Standing Committee had been formed by the NH&MRC in the 1960s in response to widespread concern about transmissible antibiotic resistance and the possible implications of increasing use of antibiotics in medical and veterinary practice. The committee's terms of reference included inter alia "To give advice to NH&MRC on: ...uses of

antibiotics and their effects in medical, veterinary and agricultural contexts... (and on) ... methods of control of antibiotic resistance in health care establishments, the general community and primary industry."

In response to this continuing responsibility, the Expert Panel on Antibiotics (EPA) - as the former Standing Committee is now called - has continued to explore ways to improve the use of antibiotics in all areas of practice. In 1991 it recognised a need for easily accessible and locally relevant information for veterinarians comparable to that in "Antibiotic Guidelines". The publication of "Veterinary Antimicrobial Prescribing Guidelines" is a response to that need by the Post Graduate Foundation in Veterinary Science, on the initiative of Dr Douglas Bryden, a member of the EPA and Director of the Foundation.

The editor, Professor Brian Cooper, has gathered a formidable group of authors whose academic knowledge, clinical experience and local expertise in many areas of veterinary medicine, have contributed to the production of a unique resource for veterinary practitioners. The recommendations are clearly presented and accessible and supported by useful background information. On behalf of the EPA I congratulate the Foundation and all of those involved in the publication of this book on their achievement and recommend it to veterinarians as a practical contribution to improving the use of antibiotics and retarding the emergence of bacteria resistance.

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