



NEWS RELEASE

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STATE BOARD CELEBRATES 125 YEARS OF CONSUMER PROTECTION

Veterinary Medical Board was founded when Californians relied on horses and oxen

SACRAMENTO – The California Veterinary Medical Board marks its 125th anniversary this week and remembers veterinary medicine milestones with a newly created historical [timeline](#).

A lot has changed in 125 years. That first year, 69 veterinarians were licensed, whereas now the board licenses approximately 14,000 veterinarians, 8,800 registered veterinary technicians, 3,600 veterinary assistants and 4,000 veterinary hospitals.

In 1893, the board was founded at the request of veterinary professionals who saw the need for more training and higher standards in animal care. At the time, horses were the main means of travel and California was an agricultural state reliant on oxen for plowing and livestock for food. Caring for those animals was the mainstay of early veterinary practices.

California's first veterinarians didn't need a degree to get licensed, they could take an exam instead. Many consumers scoffed at the very idea of needing a license to treat horses and cows. The exam fee was \$5 for applicants with a diploma and \$10 for those without. A license then cost \$5, and practicing without a license could result in a fine of \$100 to \$500, or imprisonment for up to six months, or both.

Surprisingly, licenses were only required in cities or towns that had a population of at least 2,000 people. After World War II, veterinary practice shifted dramatically in the state as urbanization occurred and veterinarians were treating more small animals and family pets.

Although the board has evolved over more than a century, it continues to protect consumers and animals by licensing professionals, developing and maintaining professional standards and enforcing the California Veterinary Medicine Practice Act.

For more information about the Veterinary Medical Board, visit www.vmb.ca.gov.

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS: *The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) promotes and protects the interests of California consumers. Consumers can file complaints against licensees or report unlicensed activity by contacting DCA at (800) 952-5210 or online at dca.ca.gov.*

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