

The Campaign season for 2016 is winding down and in the Minnesota Legislature there will be over 20 new legislators due to retirements and primary election losses. There may be more due to the general election on November 8. With 201 legislators this is a 10% turnover. This may or may not make a difference in how veterinary medicine is viewed as a whole. We will be meeting with new members as soon as possible.

The MVMA and all of veterinary medicine was very successful in the 2015 and 2016 legislative sessions. Significant funding for the Avian Influenza program to prevent further losses to the poultry industry, replacement of the 1950's isolation buildings at the College of Veterinary Medicine, complete remodeling and expansion of the Willmar Poultry Testing Laboratory, funding for the board of Animal Health for detection and control of animal diseases and additional funding for the Veterinary Loan Forgiveness program in 2015 and further funding for the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory for equipment and software to further enhance disease control in livestock populations passed in the 2016 legislative session. An open house was held on September 22, 2016 at the Poultry Testing Laboratory in Willmar which was well attended by veterinarians, legislators, poultry producers and poultry industry representatives as well as local city leaders.

The Government Affairs Committee will meet on November 17, 2016 to develop the legislative agenda for the 2017 legislative session. Bills that were introduced but not acted upon in the 2016 session would prohibit use of non-anesthetic gas for euthanasia, prohibit the use of medically important antimicrobials for non-therapeutic use in animals, establish veterinary board appointments by geographic districts, and establish an animal abuser registry. These proposals may be reintroduced in the 2017 session.

Your participation in the Vet-Pac program is vitally important as we go forward in keeping our elected officials informed on animal issues and the veterinarians role in maintaining the health of all animals as well as providing a safe food supply. Clinic visits have been well received by legislators and are an effective way of keeping the importance of veterinary medicine in the minds of decision makers as they address issues of importance to members of the MVMA.