

## **Capitol Report by Thomas Hagerty, DVM**

The Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association held its annual “Veterinarians Day at the Capitol” on Tuesday, April 5, 2016. A dozen MVMA members attended this event, as did Executive Director Dan Tjornehoj and Government Affairs Committee chair Dr. Tom Hagerty. The meeting was hosted by the MVMA lobbyists, Cullen Sheehan and Cory Bennett. The arrangements were provided by Peter Glessing, who is responsible for communications and grassroots advocacy for the MVMA’s lobbying firm, Lockridge, Grindal, Nauen P.L.L.P. Dr. Jerry Torrison, newly appointed Director of the VDL, attended the meeting and was introduced to the members.

Each member had an opportunity to meet with their senator and representative usually in their offices. Since there were no floor sessions this day legislators only had to be called from committee meetings if necessary. The MVMA members had ample time to thank their legislators for their support during the 2015 session. The VDL request, the Avian Influenza outbreak and the funding for the Veterinary Loan Forgiveness Program were of particular interest. Scope of Practice and Animal Drug Availability were two issues of concern to the members in this legislative session.

Representative Rod Hamilton, (R, Mountain Lake), has introduced two bills that would impact the VDL. Both bills are intended to affect the access of information provided by the VDL to Veterinarians and others. HF3154 provides \$600,000 for the technology software and staff to address the overwhelming amount of accessions and test results in an outbreak such as the recent Avian Influenza episode. HF3153 provides \$283,000 for the equipment to support the request. The MVMA supports both of these proposals.

A number of other bills have been introduced which our lobbyists will monitor and call to our attention if they are advanced. Over 6,000 bills have been introduced in what is a very short session. Many will not receive a hearing and will die at the end of the session on May 23, 2016.

HF1503 refers to the collection and disposal of legend drugs including those used for animals.

HF1372 addresses Animal Trusts. HF1652 regards the Prescription Monitoring Program.

HF2711 proposes to establish an Animal Abuse Registry.

HF1655 would establish requirements for the size and sets of body gripping traps.

HF3617 would prohibit the use of CO or CO2 or other inhalants for euthanasia for dogs and cats in shelters.

Please also help us at the federal level by writing a letter to your members of Congress in opposition to the Fairness to Pet Owners Act ([H.R. 3174](#)) legislation. You will find in this newsletter issue more information about this legislation and how you can take action.

In case you have not already done so we encourage you to contribute to VET-PAC. This funding is very important for our access to legislators plus we will send you a VET-PAC lapel pin to show your support.

Remember to schedule a “clinic visit” with your legislators. They tell us how much they appreciate this one on one meeting with their constituents in their own district.