

VETERINARY IRELAND PRESS RELEASES

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VETS WELCOME PUBLICATION OF NEW BILL

Veterinary Ireland, the national organisation for the veterinary profession has welcomed the publication of the new Veterinary Practice Bill 2004 by the Minister for Agriculture and Food, Ms. Mary Coughlan TD.

Responding to the publication of the new legislation for the veterinary profession, the President of Veterinary Ireland, Peadar O Scanail, said that an initial review of the terms of the Bill had identified improvements over some aspects of the existing legislation. "Matters such as the provision for the first time in Irish legislation of a legal definition of the practice of veterinary medicine was one example of this", he said.

Mr. O Scanail acknowledged the reasoning behind the Minister's decision to broaden the membership of the profession's regulatory body, the Veterinary Council to reflect interests such as education, consumers and food safety. He did make the point however that the change in the balance between veterinarians and others on the Council needs to be undertaken in a way that does not adversely affect the functioning of the Council and its Committees. "Veterinary Surgeons, with their specialised knowledge, provide important insights and understandings into the functions of the profession and care should be taken not to lose this", he said.

"The statutory recognition of veterinary nurses for the first time is also a welcome development", according to Mr. O Scanail. "Nurses are an important resource and the profession has already made significant progress towards the development of formalised education and training programmes for them. What is needed now is an appropriate structure for their operations in conjunction with veterinary surgeons and we will be examining the Bill's provisions closely in this regard to ensure that the needs of both groups are appropriately dealt with. Our over-riding concern in this regard will be the health and welfare of the animals entrusted to our care", he said.

Concluding, Mr. O Scanail said that he would be consulting with members of the organisation with a view to providing advice and guidance to the legislators to ensure that the Act which emerges from deliberations in the legislative process is one which will best serve the Irish community in the years ahead".

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