

## Book reviews

**VETERINARY LAW, ETHICS, ETIQUETTE AND CONVENTION** by D. C. Blood. Law Book Company Limited, Sydney, 1985, xviii + 368 pp. (including appendix and index). Reviewed by A. H. Angelo.\*

There is a great dearth in New Zealand of texts,<sup>1</sup> and for that matter legal writing of any sort, on the law relating to its agricultural interests and rural community. In Australia in recent years there have been texts produced in this area. Hopefully those texts will, because of the basic similarity between the Australian and New Zealand legal systems, be useful in New Zealand. This text is another of that general kind. It has been written "to be a basis for courses in veterinary law and ethics. It is also meant to provide a readily available reference manual, for practitioners and others who need to refer frequently to an authoritative document which sets out their responsibilities to their clients and patients and to each other".<sup>2</sup>

All the main Australian legal systems are dealt with in the book though it has been based on the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1958 of Victoria. The Veterinary Surgeons Act 1956 of New Zealand<sup>3</sup> is a differently structured statute from that of Victoria. The two Acts are nevertheless very close relatives and therefore one might hope that the text will have some practical value for members of the veterinary profession in New Zealand.

The Australian jurisdictions mentioned in the text are Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia, the Australia Capital Territory, and Northern Territory. Other smaller jurisdictions of Australia are not dealt with. As with New Zealand it is expected that there will be little difference in principle from the rules elaborated for the main system.<sup>4</sup>

An extensive Appendix lists the range of Australian legislation of veterinary interest under specific heads on a chart. Those heads are veterinary practice, allied professions, animal disease control, animal breeding, animal contests, medicine and food for animals, pure foods of animal origin, animal welfare (which includes a

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1 *Wills Farming Law in New Zealand* (Simpson and Williams, Christchurch, 1941), and *Morgan The Law of Animals* (Butterworths, Wellington, 1967) are among the few.

2 Page vii.

3 The Veterinary Services Act 1946 (N.Z.) and the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1956 (N.Z.) are currently under review and it is likely they will be replaced in the not too distant future by a new statute.

4 It may well be however that the particular rule of Norfolk Island well known to tourists — that animals have the right of way on the roads — is not typical of other systems: Road Traffic (General) Regulations, reg.6(f)(i): A person shall "not negligently or wilfully prevent, hinder or interrupt the free passage of any . . . , horse or cattle on a road".

sub-heading dealing with the export of animals by sea). This Appendix and the several other graphic charts through the book are likely to be the most useful parts of its for a lawyer.

*Veterinary Law* is in legal professional terms not a law book but rather a discussion of veterinary practice and the rule of law that may impinge on it. A New Zealand lawyer would be likely to find it helpful as a background text when involved with matters of veterinary practice or where problems are encountered by clients in the bloodstock industry. At a more general level the lawyer is likely to find it interesting to peruse the treatment consent forms and to read the discussion of the "informed consent rule". Also there is much basic information about the operation of professions, the role and calculation of fees, and the reduced or nil fee rule applied to members of other professions.<sup>5</sup>

5 The author says at p.219 "this rite is becoming less commonly observed". Clearly this is one practice of the professions that appears to be uniformly suffering a demise. Nowadays it is only when on the receiving end of a bill for professional services that one would wish it otherwise.