

## **ASVCP QA and Lab Standards Committee Quality Control Guidelines: SCOPE**

### **Historical Perspective**

The ASVCP QA and Laboratory Standards Committee was formed in 1996 in response to concerns by ASVCP members about quality assurance and quality control in laboratories doing veterinary testing, a topic of ongoing importance that had been partially addressed by other committees in the past.

The Committee was charged: "To **encourage and promote the establishment of standards** for the performance of laboratory procedures" on veterinary samples.

Quality assurance and standards for veterinary laboratories is a broad topic and a large assignment. As an organization of clinical pathologists and individuals interested in clinical pathology we are in a unique position to provide leadership and direction in clinical laboratory diagnostics in veterinary medicine. Although government regulation controls many aspects of human clinical laboratories, the lack of such regulation for veterinary laboratories requires that we demonstrate a commitment to self-monitoring and regulation from within the discipline. By providing leadership in this area, we hope to raise the quality of veterinary laboratory medicine, and thereby improve the health of veterinary patients.

These guidelines are not meant to be all-inclusive. This is a dynamic document that will undergo additional revisions and modifications based on periodic reviews conducted over time. There may be additional inclusions as topics are addressed on an ongoing basis. The topics covered, to date, include areas of perceived need, as well as areas which reflect the interests and expertise of various clinical pathology professionals participating as members of this Committee. To facilitate revisions to specific sections of the guideline and additions of new topics without revising the entire document, the guidelines were partitioned into subsections (eg, hematology, cytology, urinalysis, et al) within the preanalytic and analytic sections.

These guidelines have undergone extensive review and comments by members of the Committee and the membership of ASVCP in order to provide information reflecting the membership of this society. The ASVCP is a nonprofit scientific organization dedicated to the promotion of scientific advancement, education, and standards in veterinary laboratory medicine.

### **Purpose**

These guidelines provide **minimum guidelines for quality assurance and quality control** for veterinary laboratory testing. We use the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments definitions for these terms. A guideline is a document developed through the consensus process describing criteria for a general operating practice procedure, or material for voluntary use. A guideline may be used as written or modified by the user to fit specific needs. This is slightly different and more flexible than a standard. A standard is a document developed through the consensus process that clearly identifies specific, essential requirements for material, methods, or practices for use in an unmodified form. A standard may, in addition, contain discretionary elements, which are clearly identified

It is hoped that these guidelines will provide a basis for laboratories to assess their current practices, determine areas for improvement, and/or to guide continuing improvement or continuing professional development/education efforts.

## **Intended Audience**

These standards are applicable to any laboratories doing veterinary testing (including in-clinic laboratories), but specific recommendations for statistical QC as described in this document are considered suitable for university, reference or commercial laboratories. This document is not meant to address pharmaceutical/toxicologic laboratory activities since these are regulated by Good Laboratory Practice (GLP), but does contain areas of overlap with these regulations.

Until recently, in-clinic instrument performance capability has not been well characterized to allow specific recommendations for QA and QC for in-practice laboratories. These are currently being addressed by a Subcommittee within this Committee and should be forthcoming by end of 2010.