

Evolution of the Veterinary Technician

In honor of veterinary technicians nationwide, and in celebration of the 21st National Veterinary Technician Week this past October, *Veterinary Team Brief* presents an historical snapshot to recognize all that veterinary technicians do. Although veterinary technology is a relatively new profession in the U.S., today's technicians have the expertise and client skills that are at the frontiers of veterinary medicine and an integral part of practice success.¹



The first American woman graduates with a DVM in the U.S.
1910



The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) urges state veterinary medical associations to consider establishing animal technician training
1968

1960
The American Association of Laboratory Animal Science certifies research technicians who received on-the-job training



1963
The first class of animal technicians graduates in the U.S. from the State University of New York at Delhi



1972
The AVMA votes to accredit animal technician training programs

1973
The AVMA accredits the first 2 animal technician programs at Michigan State University (East Lansing, Michigan) and Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (Curtis, Nebraska)



The North American Veterinary Technician Association (NAVTA) is established
1981

1986
The first national examination for animal technicians is held in Maine



The AVMA approves changing terminology from *animal technician* to *veterinary technician*
1989



NAVTA forms a specialty certification committee; emergency and critical care is the first approved specialty 2 years later
1994

1994
The first National Veterinary Technician Week (3rd week of October) is celebrated



Two distance-learning programs are accredited for veterinary technician education, along with 84 brick-and-mortar schools
2000

1999
The AVMA issues its definitions of *veterinary technician* and *veterinary assistant* as part of the model practice act



More than 80,000 veterinary technicians practice in the U.S.

2013

2002
NAVTA changes its name to the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America



Today, 217 veterinary technology programs are accredited²; accreditation is handled by the Committee on Veterinary Technology Education and Activities (CVTEA). Specialty certifications, which earn the appellation VTS, are now available in anesthesia, behavior, clinical practice, clinical pathology, dentistry, emergency and critical care, equine medicine, exotics, internal medicine, nutrition, surgical nursing, and zoological medicine.

The profession may be relatively new, but it has grown fast. As Dr. Doug Aspros, 2012–2013 AVMA president, said recently (September/October 2013 issue): “Many of the advances we’ve made in clinical practice would have been unthinkable without veterinary technicians.”