

The International Association of Equine Dentistry continues to pursue the advancement of Equine Dentistry.

The International Association of Equine Dentistry concluded its eighteenth Annual Conference dedicated to continuing its effort to advance equine dentistry into the twenty first century, creating a dynamic, sophisticated modality of care for equines.

The IAED, made up of equine veterinarians and non-veterinarian dentists (aka equine dental technicians), reasserted its commitment to involving both veterinarians and non-veterinarians in the development of the equine dental industry. At its recent meeting, a mission statement promoting the vision of both veterinarians and non-veterinarians working together to advance equine dentistry throughout the world was unanimously passed.

This occurred just prior to the AAEP (American Association of Equine Practitioners) releasing an announcement that it is moving away from a working relationship with non-veterinarian equine dental practitioners. The AAEP is assuming this position while there are decreasing numbers of equine veterinarians, increasing demands being heaped upon equine veterinarians currently in practice and a significant number of equine veterinarians content to have routine dental procedures performed by competent, qualified non-veterinarian equine dental practitioners.

The IAED recognizes and accepts that non-veterinarian equine dental practitioners should be competent and qualified, and respect both the primary equine veterinary provider's position and practices regarding the administration of equine sedatives. To this effect, the IAED at its recent conference, committed to redoubling its efforts to help qualify competent and tested non-veterinarian equine dental practitioners and sanction those who violate the IAED's code of conduct.

At its annual general meeting, the IAED made some firm and decisive moves toward strengthening the Association, educating horse owners and equine practitioners of every type and publicizing current problems in the equine dental industry.

Firstly, the IAED Board voted unanimously to double its membership dues and committed to use the new income to build a stronger, more powerful and better represented group. The board also formed a grievance committee. This committee will address issues of accountability. Members and certified members will be held accountable for any wrong doing in violation of the Association's codes of conduct. Those found guilty of prohibited or illegal behavior will be processed by the grievance committee and face sanctions deemed appropriate.

The IAED also committed to initiate phase 2 of 'The Smiling Horse Campaign'. The IAED membership was excited and encouraged by the supportive response to the initial phase of the campaign. The campaign has gathered petition letters of support for qualified equine dental technicians from horse owners and veterinarians. The membership found educational value in the letters regarding negative veterinary associations' policies and

the association's proposals to help rectify current unworkable positions which some non-veterinarian dentists find themselves. Many thousands of interested horse owners were reached through the internet and in over a half dozen national magazines beginning a wide distribution of the Smiling Horse campaign's message. Details about Phase two of the Smiling Horse Campaign can be found at www.IAEqD.org.

Recognizing the power of the internet, the IAED also committed to increasing its investment in its website, www.IAEqD.org, to improve and expand this point of interaction with the growing number of horse enthusiasts and caregivers who use the internet as a source of education.

The 2004 Annual Conference in Fort Worth, Texas proved to be an invigorating meeting for the IAED. Improved attendance, increased new membership and improved certification pass rates all served to encourage and uplift a growing and vibrant equine dental association. Committed to the advancement of equine dentistry for qualified equine dental practitioners, to the needs of horse owners and most of all to improved health for hundreds of thousands of horses, an even more active IAED looks forward to playing a constructive role in the equine dentistry industry.

Further information about the IAED can be found at www.IAEqD.org. Your comments regarding this piece are encouraged and received with appreciation.