

What You've Told Us....

AVMA Members' Satisfaction is High

Introduction

In keeping with its mission to advance the science and art of veterinary medicine, in May 2001 the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) initiated research to update and gather new information about the needs of veterinary professionals and how well those needs were being met by the AVMA. A comprehensive qualitative and quantitative research process was developed.

In the first phase of the research, a series of four 90-minute focus groups of AVMA members were professionally facilitated at the 2001 AVMA Annual Convention in Boston. In the two weeks following the convention, 10 30-minute telephone interviews were conducted with other AVMA members. The qualitative first phase of the research provided valuable anecdotal information and insights. This information was used to shape and refine the eight-page, 54-question survey instrument subsequently created.

In the second phase of the research, the printed survey was tested in December 2001, engaging additional AVMA members in the process. After this extensive and exhaustive process, the survey instrument was finalized and distributed twice in hard-copy form during a six-and-a-half week period from February to March 2002 to 7,549 of AVMA's 67,000 members—11% of the total membership. More than half the recipients (52%) completed and returned the survey—3,894 responses. The outstanding 52% response to the hard-copy survey enables an accurate portrayal of the entire AVMA member universe.

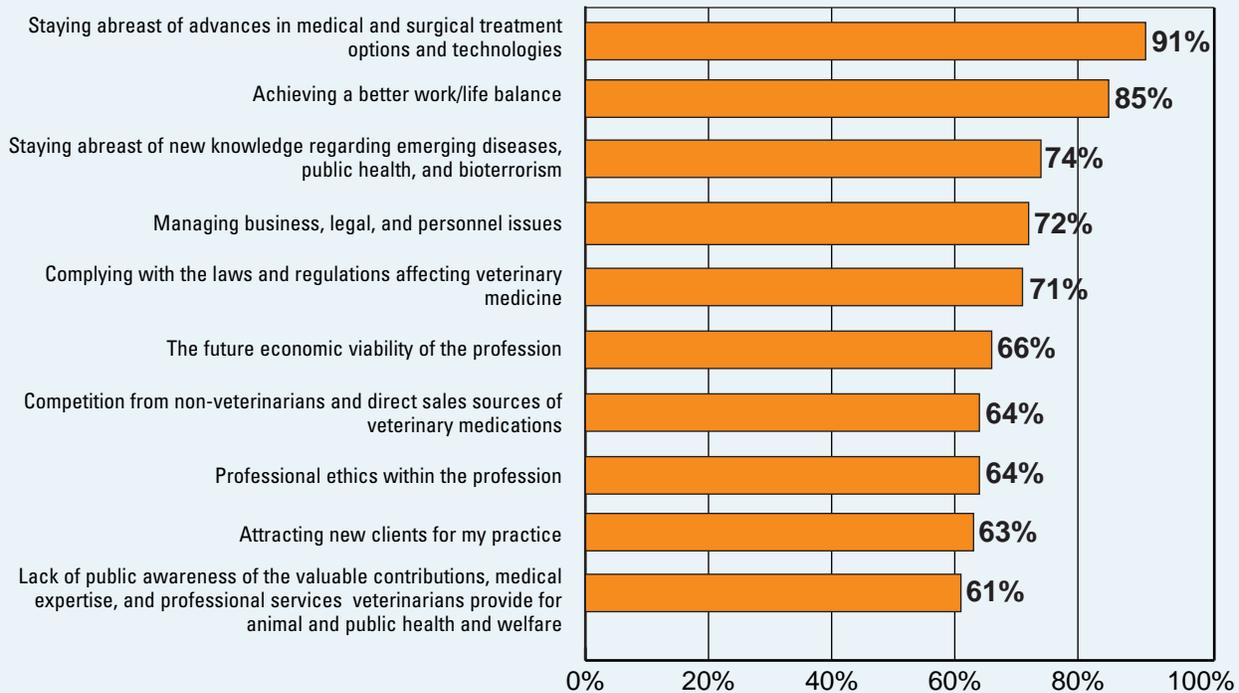
Association Research Inc. (ARI), an independent research company specializing exclusively in nonprofit survey research, conducted all data collection, tabulation, analysis, and reporting functions. All individual responses were and remain completely confidential.

Member Profile and Priorities

Survey respondents generally reflected the overall AVMA membership in demographic terms. Responses were weighted, where necessary, to reflect overall percentages of practice setting, age, and gender. This makes the attitudes expressed likely to be those of the entire AVMA membership.

- AVMA members are experienced in the profession, averaging 17.5 years overall. More than one in nine have MA and MS degrees (13%). Fewer than one in 20 (4%) have PhD degrees, and less than one percent (1%) have an MBA. One in 10 members (11%) is board certified.
- Most members are in private practice work settings (87%). Teaching and research is the second most prevalent employment setting, one in 31 respondents (3%) is in government, and one in 37 (3%) is in an industry/commerce setting. Most AVMA members practice full-time (85%).
- Tenure by work setting averaged 14.4 years and is highest for those engaged in private food animal practice (17.2 years) and lowest for those in non-private settings (5.5 years). Two-thirds of those in private practice are owners or co-owners (64%). The average number of veterinarians in private practices is 3.2.
- One in eight AVMA members (13%) reported their spouse or significant other is a veterinarian. Among members engaged in clinical practice and having a veterinarian spouse or significant other, one in three (34%) practice together. One in five members (21%) reported that their practice and/or professional employment is conducted from their home.
- Nearly all members could access the Internet (93%) and have an e-mail address (89%). More respon-

Figure 1—Top 10 professional priorities/concerns



dents could access the Internet from home (38%) than from work (21%), but two in five (41%) could do so in both places. Approximately the same percentages frequented the Internet one or more times a day (29%) as did so weekly (27%) or no more than once a month (29%).

AVMA members were asked to rate issues and/or concerns facing them as a veterinary professional. AVMA members generally agree on their concerns and priorities for the profession (Figure 1).

Member Satisfaction

AVMA members indicate they are satisfied with the AVMA. Overall, four of five survey participants (80%) are “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with membership in the AVMA, less than one in 25 (4%) is in any degree dissatisfied, and one in six (16%) is “neutral.”

- The value of AVMA’s insurance programs—Professional Liability Insurance Trust programs (PLIT) and the Group Health & Life Insurance Trust (GHLIT)—was underscored by the fact that 75% and 51% of all respondents, respectively, participate in them. These programs are espe-

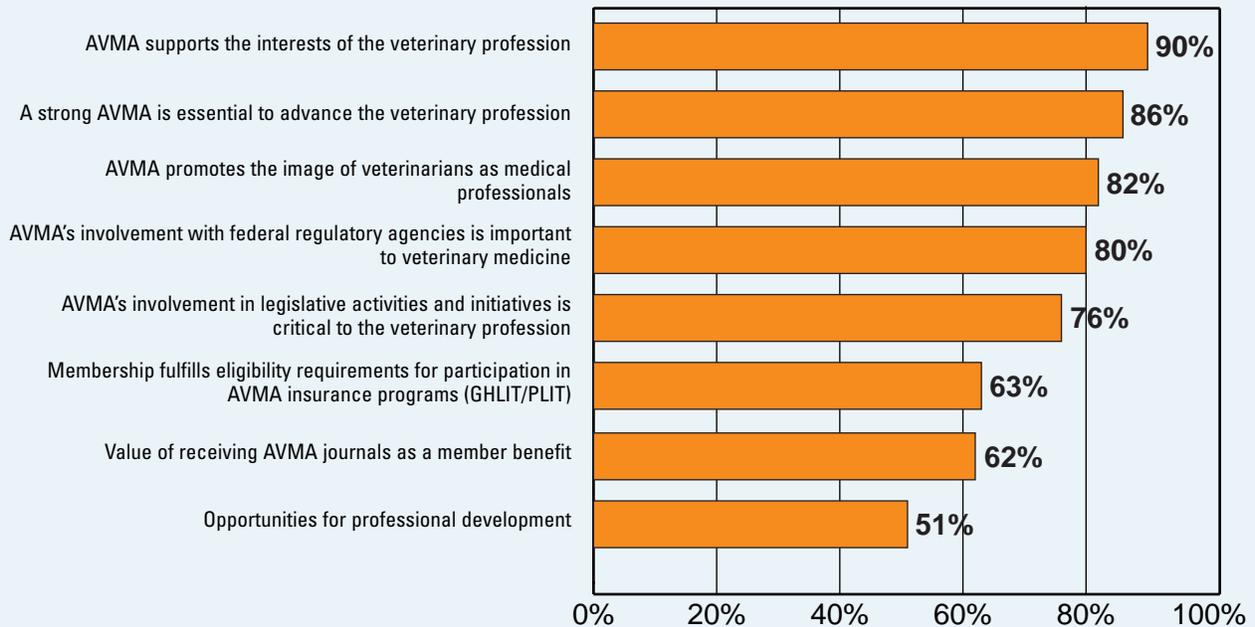
cially important to members in private practice settings.

- More than half the members pay for their own annual AVMA membership dues (54%), AVMA insurance products and services (53%), and AVMA publications (51%).
- Three-fifths of the membership (63%) are satisfied with how AVMA currently communicates, and only one in 26 (4%) is dissatisfied.
- Across all groups “AVMA’s support for the veterinary profession” is the primary reason for joining and remaining an AVMA member (Figure 2).
- Less than half of the members identify networking opportunities, access to member benefits, and volunteer opportunities as reasons for renewing or maintaining their memberships.

Member Benefits

At the heart of the survey, respondents were asked to assign importance and satisfaction levels to AVMA programs, products, and services categorized under

Figure 2—Top eight reasons for renewing and/or maintaining AVMA membership



three headings: representational, personal, and information. Five-point scales were used throughout. Response options ranged from “very important” to “not important at all,” and from “very satisfied” to “not satisfied at all.” Respondents also could indicate that they were “not familiar with” and/or “have not used” specific items. At the conclusion of each category an overall evaluation was requested.

Members were asked to evaluate the importance and their satisfaction with the AVMA’s professional repre-

sentation activities (Table 1). More than four out of five members indicate that they are aware of AVMA’s efforts to represent the profession.

Members were asked to evaluate the importance and their satisfaction with the AVMA’s five personal professional programs (Table 2). At least nine of 10 members were familiar with all but the group benefit and discount programs (eg, credit card, moving services, car rentals). Younger and newer AVMA members rated the AVMA’s career placement services highly.

Table 1—Professional representation importance/satisfaction

Professional Activities	Important	Satisfied
Promoting excellence in education	92%	74%
Enhancing the professional image of veterinarians	92%	68%
Influencing regulatory and legislative matters	87%	64%
Promoting the welfare of animals	84%	67%
Enhancing the economic viability of the profession	84%	42%
Promoting excellence in scientific research	81%	62%
Fostering cooperation among all sectors of the profession	73%	46%
Promoting the profession’s role in all aspects of food safety	73%	51%
Promoting the availability of therapeutic products	73%	50%

Personal Professional Programs	Important	Satisfied
Professional Liability Insurance Trust (PLIT) programs	87%	84%
Continuing education programs	77%	59%
Group Health and Life Insurance Trust (GHLIT) programs	74%	57%
Career information and job placement services	62%	49%
Group benefit and discount programs	28%	24%

Members were asked to evaluate the importance and their satisfaction with the AVMA’s information resources (Table 3). Overall, more than four out of five members (86%) consider AVMA information

Table 3—Information resources importance/satisfaction

Information Resources	Important	Satisfied
Membership Directory and Resource Manual	78%	81%
Scientific articles in the Journal of the AVMA	78%	66%
Occupational safety and health information	75%	58%
News articles in the Journal of the AVMA	75%	70%
AVMA policy and position statements	73%	58%
Materials on government regulations	73%	54%
Hazardous waste handling information	69%	49%
Client education materials	64%	51%
Emergency and disaster preparedness materials	61%	49%
Economic and demographic statistical research reports	60%	54%
Online information services on AVMA’s Web site	60%	51%
National public education campaigns	60%	52%
Materials for in-house staff education	59%	41%

resources “very important/important.” Two-thirds (66%) are satisfied or very satisfied.

AVMA Leadership

A hallmark of AVMA is its important position within the profession. It serves an essential leadership role influencing the practice of veterinary medicine.

- Most members consider each of the four AVMA long-range goals to be “very important” or “important”: strengthen and unify the profession through effective communication (89%); strengthening the value of membership in AVMA for unity of the profession while addressing diversity and economic viability (87%); developing and enhancing strategic alliances with internal and external groups to advance the profession and achieve common goals (83%); and evaluating and refining governance to ensure it is responsive, efficient, and inclusive (77%).
- One in 15 members (7%) attended any one of the AVMA conventions in the past five years (1997 to 2001). Since 1997, the largest percentage of members attended the conventions in 1998 (Baltimore), 1999 (New Orleans), and 2001 (Boston).

- Two-thirds of members (67%) in private clinical practice indicated that they would find it valuable for AVMA to develop a public, searchable online directory of veterinarians and/or practices in the United States.
- One in 18 members (6%) was currently or previously an AVMA volunteer. While most members (94%) have never served in any AVMA volunteer capacity, one in five (21%) is interested in doing so. The two reasons most cited for not serving as an AVMA volunteer were that they were too busy or had other personal obligations.
- Nearly three of four respondents belong to a state veterinary medical association (75%); half belong to a local veterinary organization (53%), two out of five to an allied or species-oriented association (41%), and three in 10 to other veterinary-related organizations (30%).

Members were requested to indicate one professional association that first comes to mind as the best source for each of 13 types of information. Results are listed in order of decreasing percentage frequency for AVMA as the best source of information (Figure 3).

Figure 3—AVMA is best the source of information and services

