

GOING THE EXTRA MILE

These NZVA Award recipients have spent their careers going above and beyond for the veterinary profession, their clients and their communities.



ANTIMICROBIAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD

Dennis Scott

Dennis Scott's career has taken him from rural veterinary practice and harness racing to international leadership in antimicrobial stewardship – a field he has been working in for more than 15 years.

A member of Massey University's veterinary class of 1972, Dennis began his career in rural practice in Morrinsville, predominantly servicing dairy farms. He later moved into equine practice, specialising in harness racing, before making a career change that would eventually lead him to the forefront of veterinary pharmaceutical stewardship.

"I was at a stage of life where I was looking at just doing something a little

bit different," he says. Having achieved many of the goals he had set himself in the equine world, Dennis joined New Zealand-owned veterinary medicines company Ethical Agents, where he remains today.

His clinical background gave him a practical understanding of how veterinary medicines are used in the field. He subsequently undertook further study to build his pharmaceutical knowledge and expertise, becoming particularly interested in the growing issue of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

His involvement in antimicrobial stewardship within the veterinary profession dates back to 2008, when he was asked by then-NZVA chief executive Murray Gibb to establish a group to develop recommendations around antibiotic use. The work continued over several years before gaining renewed momentum in 2015, when then-NZVA

president Steve Merchant brought together five veterinarians to develop a more definitive approach.

"That's when the five of us sat down and made the AMR statement," Dennis says. The resulting statement on antimicrobial use "rocked the world a little bit", but proved effective in bringing attention to the issue and establishing veterinary ownership of the challenge.

Dennis went on to chair the NZVA Antimicrobial Working Group and remains a member of the NZVA AMR Committee. The groups have developed practical antimicrobial prescribing guidelines for different species, designed to make responsible prescribing easier for veterinarians. He was also President of the NZVA's Industry special interest branch from 2005 to 2015.

Dennis says antimicrobial stewardship is not about eliminating antibiotics. It is about using them responsibly while protecting veterinarians' ability to prescribe them when they are needed.

"What we're really trying to do is ensure that veterinarians have access to antibiotics," he says. "We're not saying we're not going to use them."

He has also made a significant contribution to veterinary pharmaceutical education and leadership. Dennis became a member of the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists Pharmacology Chapter in 1997, served as its president in 2009, and twice held the position of head examiner. He was elected a life member in 2018.

His leadership has extended internationally, including five years as a member of the World Veterinary Association Pharmaceutical Stewardship Member Advisory Group. During that time, he contributed to global recommendations on responsible antimicrobial use.

Dennis says he was surprised to receive the Antimicrobial Stewardship Award, but particularly values what it represents.

"I'd like to see this award given out annually, so that it means more people are doing more for the cause." ■