

SPVS provides advice on prescription fees

THE Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons (SPVS) has published advice to help practitioners set realistic and reasonable script fees for POM-V medicines.

The document, which is now available to all practitioners via the SPVS web site (www.spvs.org.uk) or can be emailed or posted upon request, has been produced following extensive consultation with SPVS members, principally via the Society's active and influential discussion list, and in conjunction with the BVA Medicines Group, which backs the advice.

The document constitutes a valuable framework for practitioners in calculating a prescription fee that is fair and workable for clients wanting a written prescription as well as for those who do not want a prescription issuing. Furthermore, it also provides a framework that is fair to practitioners themselves.

The Society firmly believes that the act of preparing and providing a prescription is a professional service and as such, that it should attract a professional fee.

Richard Hillman, SPVS President, explained: "We welcome whole-heartedly the re-introduction of prescription fees, which will mark the end of a bureaucratic and fundamentally unfair situation for many thousands of small businesses that have had their trade and profitability restricted for three long years.

"The time element involved in writing subscriptions will need to be taken into account, and this will no doubt form a sensible basis on which to base a fee. Script fees should be calculated rationally to reflect true business costs, like any other service that a business provides to its customers."

He added: "We would, above all else, urge practitioners to exercise restraint in setting script fees, as it is by no means certain that they will still be in place even two years from now. We will also not condone any form of 'punishment' of clients taking away prescriptions by punitive fees. We are already cooperating with the RCVS as they work with the OFT in the monitoring period to ensure that there is fair competition in the veterinary medicines market."

To obtain your copy of the document Advice on Prescription Fees, go to www.spvs.org.uk where it can be downloaded or call SPVS Secretariat on 01926 410454 or email office@spvs.org.uk.