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ACVM Act Implementation

It is likely that the HSNO Act and the ACVM Act will be implemented in early **July 2001**. All of the ACVM Act Regulations to support the start date have been ready for some time and are in the final stages of the Government process. MAF understands that most of the HSNO Act Regulations have also been drafted and will be ready for an early July start date.

When do applications under the current Acts cease to be accepted?

The ACVM Group would like to remind people that all applications accepted up to the implementation date will be processed under the current legislation (Animal Remedies Act, Pesticides Act, Fertilisers Act and Stockfoods Act). However, in order for an application to be considered 'accepted', **it must have passed the pre-screen process** (see article on page 2). Therefore, applications that come in late in June are unlikely to be processed under current legislation and may have to be considered under the HSNO and ACVM Acts.

How are we going to deal with products that will be exempt under the ACVM Act?

Companies that believe their products will be exempt under the ACVM Act should apply for a class determination to confirm the exemption early in the process. Any exempt products are subject to a zero or reduced annual fee, depending on the particular category in which they fit. Where there are no requests for class determinations, it is likely that the products concerned will remain approved under the current legislation (and subject to any annual fees) until late in the three year transition period when there is time to review them. Details of the process will be covered in the next issue of *AgVetLink* (previous related articles can be found on the website: www.maf.govt.nz/ACVM/).

AgVetLink is produced at least six times annually by the MAF Food Assurance Authority's Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Group. The newsletter is of special relevance to those interested or involved in all aspects of animal remedies and pesticides. It contains regular updates on implementation of legislation, notifications, new standards and policies, consultation, international agreements, and other information.

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The logo for MAF Food, featuring the letters 'MAF' in a bold, sans-serif font above the word 'Food' in a similar font, with a stylized wave or swoosh underneath.

Implementation of More Stringent Pre-screening Requirements

Pre-screen Process: Deficient Applications

Introduction of the pre-screen service in **January 1998** was a successful mechanism for referring incomplete or deficient applications back to the applicant. The principal advantage of this mechanism was that it freed up ACVM Group staff to progress applications that met the required specifications. The system has also helped to ensure that applicants have an appropriate understanding of the agricultural compounds and veterinary medicines they wish to sell or use in New Zealand.

We believe that the implementation of this process has allowed us to provide a more equitable service for all applicants. As the ACVM Group is funded predominantly from application and registration fees, it has also permitted us to reduce the subsidisation of deficient applications (through advice, time and resources spent assisting these applicants) by applicants who adhere to time frames, and supply the information required with their applications.

In general, since introduction of this process, the quality of applications received has greatly improved, allowing faster and more efficient registration/licensing. Nevertheless, the ACVM Group continues to receive large numbers of deficient applications that 'clog up' the system. Our experience indicates that the majority of such applications are submitted by applicants who do not have a good understanding of the products they wish to register or who are unfamiliar with the required process.

On 1 July 1999, the ACVM Group produced a series of documents setting out the requirements for the

registration of agricultural compounds in New Zealand. At that time our stated policy was to turn down:

- (a) applications that require more than one attempt to amend deficiencies noted at pre-screen; or
- (b) incomplete applications that have remained in pre-screening for more than two months.

In practice, though, we have tried to assist applicants as far as possible and have allowed some applications more than one attempt to amend pre-screening deficiencies without being turned down.

As discussed above, however, this practice does raise issues of unfair subsidisation and inconsistent service to our clients. For this reason, from **1 April 2001** we intend to enforce our stated policy. If an application does not provide the required information within the required time frame, or if the deficiencies are not sufficiently addressed as per the deficiency letter, the application will be considered to be incomplete and returned, and a new application will be required to register/license the product. Essentially, applicants will have 'one shot' at addressing deficient applications.

Should the applicant wish to resubmit the application at a later date, addressing previous deficiencies, the resubmission will be treated as a new application and a new pre-screen fee will be required.

The onus is on the applicant to ensure adherence to the appropriate standards and guidelines, so that the application is complete and valid upon arrival at the ACVM Group.

It should be noted that approved creditors will still be invoiced for the pre-screen fee, which is a non-refundable fee that pays for work

done during the pre-screen process for the application.

Data Package Review Forms/ Overall Application Summary

Every data package received by the ACVM Group should contain:

- a Data Package Review
- an Overall Application Summary.

The **Data Package Review (DPR)** is an index supplied with each individual data package (Residues, Efficacy, Toxicology, etc.) that points the technical assessors to the critical data in those packages as itemised in the pre-screen process. DPRs are intended to assist applicants to indicate where data in individual packages might be deficient and to explain why this is so. This easy means of referring back to specific information in previous applications is also intended to improve the processing of queries from applicants and variations to the licence. Templates for the individual DPRs can be obtained at: <http://www.maf.govt.nz/ACVM/publications/forms/dpr.htm>

The **Overall Application Summary** summarises the complete application and contains any discussion or argument relating to the application. One copy must be supplied with the application form and one copy with the first part of any accompanying data package. This summary should provide information on formulation, details of pharmacology and other essential details. It must also address each of the data packages submitted.

In the August 2000 issue of *AgVetLink* readers were informed that the lack of DPRs with submitted data packages was causing significant delays →

Comparative Advertising

OIA requests

Recently the ACVM Group has had a number of Official Information Act requests concerning the release of information in support of competitors' claims.

There have also been challenges in the form of complaints to the Ombudsman where such requests have been refused. To date the Ombudsman has supported the decisions of the ACVM Group and the Board in question.

The Boards and the ACVM Group will continue to protect commercially sensitive data supplied in support of an application. Where there are

requests for the supply of this information, it is our policy to contact the company who owns the data in order to confirm the status of the information supplied. Because there is only a limited time available for the response to be made, companies should understand the Official Information Act and be prepared to provide the rationale to support withholding of information in terms of the specific commercial sensitivity. It is not sufficient to claim that all data supplied are commercially sensitive as some data are clearly in the public domain.

Changes to laws

There have been recent changes to

comparative advertising laws. To date there has not been any evidence of activity in the area of agricultural compounds and veterinary medicines but, if there is, it will significantly alter release of information to the public.

As soon as there is a claim that one product is better in some way than another, information in support of the claim (for all of the products concerned) is likely to become public information so that the basis for decisions and subsequent advertising claims can be judged.

This is likely to override any claims of commercial confidentiality.

Pre-screening...

during the pre-screen process for applications. The article also indicated that the inclusion of DPRs in all data packages received would become a requirement for applications received from **31 October 2000**. As of **28 February 2001**, we have noted that the majority of data packages submitted continue to omit these.

The lack of DPRs makes it very difficult for ACVM Group Technical Assessors to assess the data packages that are submitted and complicates the assessment of the whole application.

For that reason, as of **1 April 2001** all applications received that are not accompanied by an appropriate Data Package Review or Overall Application Summary will be considered to be incomplete and returned, and a new application will be required to register/license the product.

Brian O'Sullivan
National Manager, ACVM Approvals

Amendment of the Pesticides VPC Regulations

The ACVM Group is in the process of consulting with interested parties on the proposed amendments to the Pesticides (Vertebrate Pest Control) Regulations 1983.

The approach by the ACVM Group to the amendments is that they are predominantly internal measures that are necessary for the following reasons:

- to tidy up some administrative VPC operator licensing matters prior to the hand over to ERMA NZ;
- to provide increased assurances for the control of VPC toxins during the transitional period between control under the Pesticides Act and control under the HSNO Act; and
- to enable cost recovery for the management of the VPC operator licensing programme to be re-established at current actual levels.

Given that the target implementation date for the hazardous substances part of the HSNO Act and the ACVM Act is now early July 2001, it is necessary for the amendments of the VPC Regulations to be completed and notified in the *Gazette* before that date. If that does not occur, the amendments will not be saved during the transitional period. In collaboration with MAF Policy, a work plan has been developed to co-ordinate activities to meet the target deadline.

Bobby Calf Residues

Following a recent meeting between industry representatives, the Animal Products Group of MAF, and the ACVM Group, the following statement concerning the issues of chemical residues and, in particular, aminoglycosides in bobby calves was released:

“Several articles have been published in the past two months in relation to dry cow therapies and chemical residues in bobby calves.

New Zealand has had tight controls in place for several years to prevent the direct use of animal remedies on bobby calves and ensure bobby veal meat does not contain chemical residues that could jeopardise New Zealand trade.

In the past five years the low number of residue cases identified by MAF have been related to calves presenting pathological conditions and condemned during ante- or post-mortem inspections. In most cases, residues were associated with misuse or accidental exposure to oral products.

Bobby calves may be exposed to chemical residues from animal remedies used on the cow. Guidelines were issued in the past on indirect exposure to chemical residues. These guidelines indicated that:

- 1 if a cow calved within the meat withholding time of an animal remedy, the calf was eligible for slaughter only when the cow was eligible for slaughter;
- 2 if a calf was exposed to

contaminated milk, it should be fed residue free milk for seven days.

These guidelines need to be reviewed for risk products and reflect current scientific data available.

MAF will continue to investigate bobby calf residue findings and take actions based on the residue level, the source of contamination and the nature of offence committed.

If it is evidenced that residue levels in a bobby calf are due to dry cow therapy used in accordance with label instructions, farmers will not be prosecuted. Farmers are encouraged to keep accurate, up to date records in compliance with the product Safety Programme.”

Two Month Deadline for Final Label Receipt

Where final labels are required to finalise any type of application, the standard two month period for final labels to be processed as part of the original application applies. If the labels are received within five working days of the deadline, we can accept them as part of the original application. **There will be no extensions to this period.** Any longer than that and they must be treated as a new C9 – Administrative Change application and the applicable fee of \$364.50 (including GST) will be charged.

What Are ‘Acceptable’ Animal Remedy Residues and Withholding Periods?

The answer to this question is complex because there are three distinct places that specify residue limits in produce derived from livestock:

- the New Zealand (Maximum Residue Limits of Agricultural Compounds) Mandatory Food Standard 1999;
- the Meat Residue Regulations 1996; and
- the market access requirements of importing countries.

Taking them in order:

Either the specified residue limit or, if the **Mandatory Food Standard** has no MRL set for the active ingredient in question, the default MRL of 0.1 ppm applies.

Either the stated residue limit or, if the **Meat Residue Regulations** have no level formally set, their default provisions apply. If the active ingredient is not currently licensed as an

animal remedy in New Zealand, the default in these regulations is 0.001 ppm. If it is licensed but being used ‘off label’ (in an animal not specified in the licence), the default is 0.01 ppm. If it is being used in the animal for which it is licensed, and no level is specified, the default is the same as in the **Mandatory Food Standard** (0.1 ppm).

In terms of **market access requirements**, residues are unacceptable if they exceed the tightest standard in one of New Zealand’s major export markets and, if it is likely that no residue levels have been set in any one of those major markets, the default is the limit of detection.

Therefore, the answer to the question is that the tightest of these three requirements apply and will be used in the assignment of a withholding period for products containing the active ingredient in question.

Use of Animal Remedies on Minor Species

There has been some confusion lately, especially from goat farmers, about what can and cannot be legally used on minor species such as goats in light of the Meat (Residue) Regulations and the implementation of the Animal Products Act. The ACVM Group has prepared an information sheet (included in this issue and also available on the website) covering this fairly complex area.

If you or your organisation have any queries, please direct them to Gill Culliford (phone: 04 474 4245 or email: cullifordg@maf.govt.nz) who will arrange for a response.

Essentially, there are a number of commonly available substances or chemicals (such as copper sulphate) that farmers may purchase and use on their own animals. Unless the substance purchased is imported, manufactured, sold (which includes 'gifting') or advertised as an animal remedy, it does not have to be licensed under the Animal Remedies Act.

Under the Meat Act and the Animal Products Act, a licensed product may also be used in a species not on the label as long as there is no specific label instruction to the contrary. This means that licensed animal remedies may be used in minor species, such as goats and emus, providing the guidelines issued by the Animal Products Group of MAF Food are followed.

The ACVM Group strongly recommends that any 'off label' use is done under veterinary advice.

Regulations Review Committee

Recently there was a challenge made to the Regulations Review Committee of Parliament concerning the legality of the Meat (Residue) Regulations and the application of them by MAF. Questions were raised by the complainant over the definition of an animal remedy and the use of licensed products 'off-label'. Following a hearing in November 2000 and some subsequent correspondence, the report of the committee has been tabled to the House of Representatives. The complaint was unsuccessful. The report has the recommendation: **"We have examined these regulations and conclude that the regulations are not in breach of any of the grounds in Standing Order 382(2). We recommend that the House take note of this report"**.

Ethylene bis-dithiocarbamates (EBDCs)

The Pesticides Board has finally resolved the issues surrounding the re-evaluation of the EBDC fungicides, carried out under section 28 of the Pesticides Act 1979.

Proprietors will shortly receive (and may already have) a letter detailing the outcome of the review which began in 1993, but has been dogged with issues arising from the changes made to the Act after the GATT-Uruguay Round agreements relating to confidentiality of the data submitted by proprietors. Resolution of these issues was imperative if any further reviews were to be carried out either under the Pesticides Act 1979 or the ACVM Act 1997.

In the process, the Board has reconfirmed its policy that data submitted after a call-in by the Board will be given five years exclusive use to the submitter, from the time of notification of the outcome of the review.

This is in line with the provisions for innovative pesticides, inserted in the Act in 1994.

Transition for Animal Remedies to the HSNO Act

Because there are limited transitional provisions in the HSNO Act for animal remedies, it is important that licensees ensure that any products and their components are notified as toxic substances. Forms are available on the ERMA NZ website: www.ermanz.govt.nz

(See *AgVetLink* articles on transition in the June and August 2000 issues.)

Data Assessment Service

On 1 March 2001 the ACVM Group split the internal processes used to register agricultural compounds and to license veterinary medicines into individual 'services':

- Data Assessment Service
- Review and Evaluation Service.

From now on, the data assessment of applications and the review and evaluation of applications submitted to the ACVM Group will be carried out by separate Technical Assessors.

Data Assessment Service

The Data Assessment Service is provided by the ACVM Group to applicants who wish to have their applications to register a pesticide or to license an animal remedy assessed by the Group. These applications are assessed by our Technical Assessors who produce a Risk Assessment Report for each application. This report summarises the risks associated with registering/licensing that particular product in New Zealand, and it is used in the review and evaluation of that product.

At this time only the ACVM Group is permitted to carry out data assessment of applications. However, the ACVM Group plans to facilitate the introduction of accredited **independent data assessors (IDAs)** during the forthcoming year. It is intended that these accredited IDAs will act as 'consultants' or 'advisors' to companies or other entities that wish an assessment of their application independent of the ACVM Group or to a timeline different to the ACVM Group.

Review and Evaluation Service

At Review and Evaluation, the data assessment report produced during the Data Assessment Service is reviewed, and the risks identified in the report are evaluated by a separate ACVM Group Technical Assessor. The Technical Assessor evaluates the application and may:

- accept the application;
- accept the application with certain conditions to ensure that the risks are managed; or
- decline the application.

The Review and Evaluation Service will remain within the ACVM Group.

This physical split in our internal processes is intended to help us develop an operational framework to facilitate the introduction of accredited IDAs.

Independent Risk Assessor (IRA) Scheme

To further facilitate the introduction of IDAs, the ACVM Group implemented Phase I of the Independent Risk Assessor (IRA) Scheme on 1 March 2001. This is a pilot scheme designed to test the feasibility of providing the overall Data Assessment Service and implementing a training scheme to allow the accreditation of IRAs. The principle objectives are:

- to select an initial group of assessors to become provisionally accredited IRAs;
- to design and initiate a training process that will instruct provisionally accredited IRAs in

the process for carrying out a risk assessment on applications submitted for the registration/licensing of agricultural compounds/veterinary medicines;

- to provide provisionally accredited IRAs with the opportunity to carry out risk assessments on genuine applications at appropriate rates;
- to test the internal processes of the ACVM Group to allow us to move to Phase II of the scheme.

All provisionally accredited IRAs who pass through the training scheme and are believed to meet the ACVM Group selection criteria will be accredited as IDAs.

On 20 February the ACVM Group invited expressions of interest from potential IRAs who wished to participate in Phase I of the scheme. Over thirty expressions of interest were received and, of these, a shortlist of six candidates was compiled.

It is intended that each of these candidates will be interviewed and that three people will be selected as provisionally accredited IRAs. It is intended to select a second, larger 'wave' of provisionally accredited IRAs on the completion of Phase I.

The ACVM Group's main priority throughout this process is to ensure continuity and quality of core services over this evolutionary period.

Any queries or requests to be included in the Data Assessment Service Scheme mailing list should be directed to Brian O'Sullivan:
phone: 04 460 8765 or
email: osullivanb@maf.govt.nz

Mutual Recognition Agreement for Good Manufacturing Practice with EU

Regular contact continues between the ACVM Group and the European Medicines Evaluation Agency (EMA) in London to develop the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) for the assessment of Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP).

Progress has been made on agreeing how the EMA will assess inspection equivalence. It has been decided that during the GMP inspections due to be carried out by the Medicines Control Agency (MCA) for the EMA in July 2001, a further week will be added to the inspector's visit to observe an inspection being carried out by a New Zealand inspector. In addition, the MCA inspector will review the management of the GMP programme by MAF.

Meanwhile MAF will observe Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) inspections carried out in New Zealand in March and the MCA inspections to be carried out in July. MAF will also observe two inspections within the EU conducted by European inspectors to assess parity of inspections. Selection will be based on importation statistics relating to products coming into New Zealand. The European GMP management system will also be reviewed. This is likely to be in October to coincide with an ad hoc meeting of European inspectors.

Both parties agree to do all possible to complete the transitional confidence building period by 31 December 2001, including preparation of a joint MAF

and EMA report to the Joint Sectorial Committee. A framework and format for the report have been agreed.

Given the timetable for the VMD and MCA inspections, and the dates for ad hoc meetings of the EU inspectors, the following timeline has been developed for completion of the MRA:

Mar:	VMD visit NZ
July:	MCA visit NZ
Oct:	MAF visit EU
Nov:	Development of joint report
Dec:	Sign off veterinary pharmaceutical GMP agreement
Jan 2002 onwards:	MRA maintenance programme assures agreement remains valid.

Harmonised Batch Certification

In the framework of Mutual Recognition Agreements, the Sectoral Annex on Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) requires a batch certification scheme for veterinary medicinal products covered by the Pharmaceutical Annex. The internationally harmonised requirements for the content of a batch certificate have now been agreed by Australia, Canada, the European Community, New Zealand and Switzerland.

This means that products passing between these countries should be accompanied by a batch certificate set out in the prescribed and agreed format.

A batch certificate will be issued by the manufacturer in the exporting country following full qualitative and quantitative analysis of all active and

other relevant constituents to ensure that the quality of the products complies with the requirements of the Marketing Authorisation of the importing country.

This certificate will detail the specifications of the product, the analytical methods referenced and the analytical results obtained. It will also contain a statement that the batch processing and packaging quality control records were reviewed and found in conformity with GMP. It will attest that the batch meets the specifications and has been manufactured in accordance with the Marketing Authorisation of the importing country.

The batch certificate will be signed by the person responsible for releasing the batch for sale or supply/export at the manufacturing site.

The importer of the batch is to receive and maintain the batch certificate issued by the manufacturer. Upon request, the certificate must be readily available to the staff of the Regulatory Authority of the importing country. This certification by the manufacturer of the conformity of each batch is essential to exempt the importer from re-control (re-analysis) in the importing country.

Although New Zealand has not completed its MRA with the European Union (see article above), the ACVM Group is promoting the introduction of the new batch certificate to standardise the batch information passing to Europe.

The batch certificate template can be found on the website (www.maf.govt.nz/ACVM/) under B in the Index.

Recent Meetings

OECD Work Sharing Workshop

Work sharing in the registration of pesticides includes the sharing of data assessments (monographs) on pesticides carried out by one authority with others entitled to receive those assessments, and the splitting of the work in assessing data and preparing the monographs amongst countries.

An example of this would be, for example (in a three-country co-operation) one country does the acute toxicity and mutagenicity studies, another the reproduction and developmental toxicity, and the third does the long-term toxicity. In addition, the regulatory authorities of two countries 'swap' individuals so that each can gain confidence in the other's work.

This type of activity has been going on for a few years, and the OECD organised a workshop in Brussels on work sharing on 12-14 February 2001 so that participating countries could share their experiences. This (it is hoped) will encourage others to join in the process. Non-OECD countries were invited to attend, and some took advantage of that invitation.

The workshop opened with participating countries (including New Zealand) giving brief talks on the benefits and downsides of the programme, and how the process was being utilised to their advantage. Issues arising in countries were discussed, and it was decided to draft a detailed report on the benefits of work sharing so that senior policy makers in governments might be persuaded to support adoption of the programme in all (particularly OECD) countries as the normal approach to assessing applications for registration.

John Reeve (National Manager Toxicology and Residues) attended and gave the New Zealand perspective. He was also asked to be a rapporteur for one of five breakout groups (a task shared with an Irish delegate), and so will have a hand in the final report of the workshop.

Industry Liaison Group Meeting

A meeting of the ACVM Group Industry Liaison Group (ILG) was held on Tuesday, 13 March 2001. Those present were:

- Jack Richardson (ACGARM)
- Richard Paxman (ARPPA)
- Murray Gibb (NZVA)
- Peter Ensor (NZ Fruitgrowers & Vegetable Growers' Federations),
- Tony St Clair (Federated Farmers)
- Bob Diprose (NZ Feed Manufacturers Association & Poultry Industry)
- Tony Ivecivich (Observer)
- Debbie Morris (Director, ACVM Group)
- Brian O'Sullivan (National Manager ACVM Approvals)
- John Reeve (National Manager Toxicology/Residues)
- Brian Pidford (National Manager ACVM Verification) and
- Larry Moolenaar (Technical Advisor Standards/Policy).

At the meeting, Jack Richardson advised that AGCARM is preparing a Code of Practice for Labelling under the ACVM and HSNO Acts. For further information on this, please contact AGCARM.

Peter Ensor advised that representatives from VEGFED would be going to Australia the following week to explore the possible harmonisation of the registration processes between Australia and New Zealand. Debbie Morris would be attending this meeting also.

Brian Pidford reported on the following compliance issues:

- A trial capsule had been found in a carcass at the meat works. The section 63a approval was revoked and the research organisation concerned is now under extra scrutiny to ensure that it does not happen again.
- An unlicensed selenium product has been recalled.
- Four unlicensed oral nutritional products are now going through the processes of being licensed as low risk products.
- A report was lodged on the lack of a withholding period on the label for Cydectin. Investigation determined that there is no withholding period assigned for this product.
- The licence for the product 'Cartrophen Vet' has been revoked due to the licensee's continued refusal to comply with Board requirements.
- There have been a number of cyanide incidents on walking tracks.
- A food residue survey has found what was thought to be a banned substance. Internal control and the audit programme implemented by the grower organisation will be monitored to prevent a recurrence.
- Protestors were present at a large controlled pesticide drop against possums. Assistance was sought for inspectors authorised under the Pesticides Act to clear the site. →

AVMAC Meeting

A meeting of the Agricultural Compounds & Veterinary Medicines Advisory Council (AVMAC) was also held on Tuesday, 13 March 2001.

Brian Pidford updated members on the VPC Regulations. The proposed fee increase for new applications was discussed, and Brian advised that a consultation process on the proposed increase was about to begin. The proposed increase would not take effect until commencement of the HSNO Act.

Bruce Burdon (MAF Policy) updated members on the new legislation to be introduced 1 July 2001. The ACVM Act will be implemented with or without the HSNO Act.

Members were informed about the MAF Food roadshows that had taken place over the previous two weeks.

The next AVMAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 17 May 2001.

ILG meeting...

- A report of an email advertisement to purchase surplus veterinary hormonal drugs was received. This was referred to the Ministry of Health for investigation under the Misuse of Drugs Act.
- Fur processors found a broken tube of cyanide among some furs that they were processing. The local regional council is taking the lead to investigate this.

The next meeting of the ILG is scheduled for Thursday, 17 May 2001.

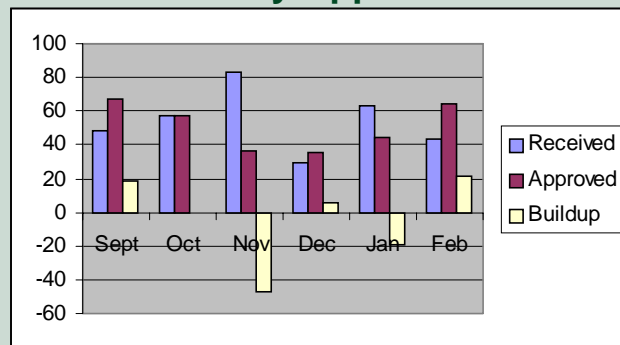
Operational Update

The ACVM Group now has a full team of Technical Assessors on Board (Toni Tana, Neil Kennington, Warren Hughes, Warren Tully and Sarah Ball) along with a new National Manager ACVM Approvals, Brian O'Sullivan.

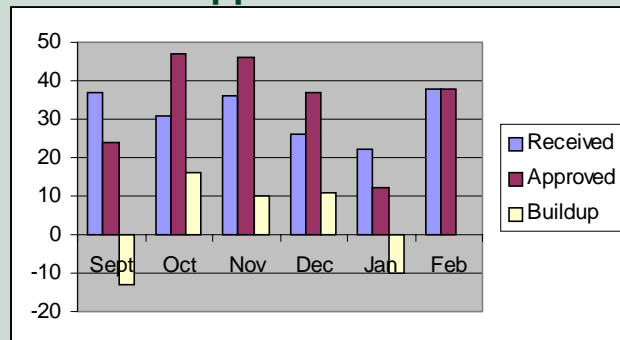
As can be seen from the graphs below, there has been a build up of application numbers in the system. Primarily this is because the year to date has been the busiest ever application-wise for the ACVM Group. Although the new staff members are not fully up to speed yet, this will not impact negatively on the throughput of applications because a fair percentage are handled by the external assessors who have been with the ACVM Group for some time. In addition, we are expecting the implementation of the DAS service to have a positive effect on throughput times.

Several initiatives have been put into place to speed the process for applications – there is still considerable staff time spent in the pre-screen process in the attempt to get a proper application into the system. As advised in the article on page 2, the ACVM Group will allow only one 'free chance' in future to avoid spending unnecessary time on applications that are not up to standard. The Customer Service team is also taking the lead on a number of the simpler application types (low risk, provisional, direct cross references and some of the simpler changes) so they do not get caught in the longer queues managed by the Technical Assessors.

Animal Remedy Applications



Pesticide Applications



Staff Update

New National Manager ACVM Approvals



Brian O'Sullivan, who comes from the barren and windswept Beara Peninsula in County Cork, Ireland, received a BSc in microbiology/biochemistry from University College Cork. He has worked and lived in several countries (England, Greece, France, Australia) and arrived in New Zealand five years ago.

His first job in New Zealand was with the then Agricultural Compounds Unit (three months) before joining Medsafe (Ministry of Health). For the last two years, Brian has worked as a freelance contractor/trouble-shooter, specialising in project management of issues/projects with a scientific bent for the Ministry of Health, New Zealand Blood Service, ESR etc. His input into projects includes:

- establishment of the New Zealand Blood Service;
- National Strategy for Genetically Modified Foods;
- evaluation of National Maori Health Strategy;
- patenting of biotechnological inventions.

After a full day at work Brian relaxes through running, meditation and creative writing.

Farewell to Customer Service Officer

It is with sadness that we will farewell one of our long serving team members on 12 April. **Bronwyn Glavin** has decided to pursue other avenues. Bronwyn has been with the ACVM Group for nine years and most of you would have had many dealings with her over this time. She has been a stalwart employee, offering outstanding and efficient service to all internal and external customers. We are sure that those who come in regular contact with Bronwyn will miss her helpful advice, but wish her well in her endeavours. You can rest assured that we will all miss her valiant efforts within the ACVM Group. Good luck, Bronwyn.

Welcome to Deborah Alexander

We are pleased to have appointed a permanent staff member in the Administrative Assistant position. **Deborah Alexander** replaces **Mary Burnett** and, more recently, temp **Jacinda Clarke**. Deborah, who will be the first point of call by phone, will be Secretary to the Boards and will be responsible for meeting agendas, minutes and other administrative tasks. Deborah and her husband have recently moved to Wellington after selling their winery in the Martinborough district.