

Pet Talk with Turner Vet Service

Want to put your love for animals to work for you? Become a Vet Tech!

By Rhonda Baillargeon, LVT

I introduce myself to people every day as a “veterinary technician” but have often wondered if these people understand what that means. “Technician” means that a person is technically skilled in a certain area or field. The preface “veterinary” means that those skills are based in the medical knowledge of animals. As a licensed veterinary technician in the state of Maine, I graduated from an accredited college with an associate degree and then took the state licensing exam in order to earn the title “licensed veterinary technician”. Each state determined the credentials required to take the exam and administered their own exams. In the years since I graduated from school, the veterinary profession has standardized the credentials and administers a national examination. Some states do not require licensing at all. In the state of Maine, licensing is required but not strictly enforced. Because there are not many licensed technicians to fill the jobs available, many veterinarians train on-the-job and these technicians are very skilled and knowledgeable. There is a group of veterinarians and technicians working on a plan so that all the states have the same requirements.

On a daily basis, I am responsible for the care and medical treatments for the pets in the hospital and those visiting for examinations. These treatments may include collecting blood, urine, and stool samples for testing and, in some cases, performing the tests needed. Taking radiographs, gathering information for patient histories, administering medications, and client education about what is happening to their beloved fur baby are all important tasks. Helping a pet through pre-op, surgical and dental procedures, and recovery from anesthesia are some of the most rewarding. In addition to all of these tasks, it is important to keep up to date with new and developing information by taking part in continuing education. But I have to say that counselling a family through the growth and change from a young puppy or kitten through a long, healthy life and then witnessing that family’s euthanasia visit can be the most memorable.

The next time you have to take your pet to see the doctor, thank the veterinary technician for helping to make the visit pleasant for you and your pet. Help us celebrate National Veterinary Technician Week, October 15th thru 21st by recognizing the hard-working technicians across the nation. For more information on how you can become a veterinary technician, visit www.navta.net or talk to your favorite technician!