

In 2006, the AB.VMA proposed changes to the definition of veterinary medicine for the Veterinary Professions Act (VPA). These changes were withdrawn in part due to concerns from animal owners, farmers, and the food production industry, especially AB Beef.

In 2006, AAAOR was created by animal owners to help inform Alberta animal owners about the AB.VMA's proposed changes to the vet act. We felt their public consultation process was inadequate.

AAAOR believes that animal owners are capable of making informed decisions regarding the health of their animals. There has been no overwhelming evidence "the public has fallen prey to unqualified people with improper training" and is asking for protection.

Our animals are legally considered private property. They are currently protected under the Alberta Animal Protection Act. A health practitioner would be subject to being charged under this act if their services are considered inhumane or painful.

The AB.VMA still plans on proposing changes to the Alberta definition of veterinary medicine in the future. They have yet to reveal when they will re-initiate those changes, what those changes include, and if there will be a public consultation process.



Photo courtesy of **Alberta's TK Ranch** supplying *Ethical By Nature*® Grass-fed Beef, <http://tkranch.com>

#### **AAAOR's Mission:**

Final decisions about animal healthcare to be entrusted and made by the animal's owner.

The freedom of non-veterinarian practitioners to provide humane animal wellness services for pay without the threat of legal recrimination.

The freedom of veterinarians to associate with non-veterinarian practitioners without the threat of disciplinary action by their governing body.

#### **What Does AAAOR Do for You?**

- ✓ Keep you up-dated on proposed changes to legislation that affects animal owners.
- ✓ Resource for animal health education and animal wellness tips for animal owners.

**Join AAAOR and support your freedom of choice.**

Individual membership is FREE.

[www.aaaor.ca](http://www.aaaor.ca)



**Alberta Association for  
Animal Owner's Rights**

Do you feel you are capable of making informed decisions regarding the health of your animals?

**We believe you are capable.**

We feel it is your right to be able to freely choose complimentary care for your animal.

We feel it is your right to be able to freely choose any non-veterinarian animal health practitioner with humane services.



You make these same choices for your children, why not for your animal, too?

Are you interested in learning and trying natural based ways to enhance the well-being of your animals? If so, then the following information is very important to you.

The Alberta *Veterinary Profession Act* grants, with few exceptions, veterinarians the exclusive right to engage in the practice of veterinary medicine. What defines veterinary medicine and what is exclusive?

The 2012 AB.VMA Council **Guidelines** state the services of non-veterinarian health care practitioners can only be provided to animals within the context of a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship. This relationship involves a conventional patient assessment, recommendations, owner consent, a specific treatment plan for the non-veterinarian practitioner, along with ongoing supervision. Sound expensive?

*“Ultimately the responsibility for the healthcare of the animal remains the veterinarian.”* **AB.VMA** with AB.VMA Council Guidelines, [www.abvma.ca](http://www.abvma.ca)

The current opinion of the AB.VMA is non-veterinarian practitioners providing a service without the supervision of a vet are **illegally practicing veterinary medicine** and can be subject to prosecution.

The current fact backed by the Sept. 2002, AB Court of Queen’s Bench ruling is the Alberta VPA definition of veterinary medicine allows complimentary animal health practitioners to legally provide humane health care services to animal owners. Justice Myra Bielby ruled the AB.VMA had “no authority to grant itself a wider jurisdiction than that accorded by the provincial legislature”. She also commented that an opinion stated boldly and advertised to be true by AB.VMA, does not make it a fact. The Alberta *Veterinary Profession Act* is available on-line.



*As depicted on the popular Alberta filmed CBC Heartland TV series, complimentary therapies are becoming more popular. But how much longer will these therapies be freely accessed by animal owners?*

## How to Choose a Competent Complimentary Practitioner

When searching for a complimentary practitioner for your animal, remember 5 simple steps and the acronym **RELAX**. The first four steps can be done over the phone or by email.

### Referrals

Ask people that you trust such as your friends, family and veterinarian for referrals.

### Education

Inquire about the practitioner’s education. What institute are they credited by? How much experience do they have? Do they belong to a provincial or national organization? Are they insured?

### Learn

If you already know what therapy you are looking for, do your homework and educate yourself on that particular therapy. Your search for information will likely leave you with questions.

### Ask

Ask questions! Have questions prepared and written beforehand. Does the therapy work in conjunction with other therapies? Are there any risks or side-effects associated with the therapy?

### X-Factor

The “X” factor has to do with your gut feeling and intuition. When you meet the practitioner in person, how do you feel around them? How does your animal respond to their presence? Do you feel genuine compassionate care from them towards your animal? Are they professional? Do they keep records?

Remember it is YOU, the animal owner, which makes any final informed decisions regarding your animal.

*“Our power remains authentic when we refuse to give it away by surrendering to the illusion that others know more than what our hearts tell us...”* says author and dog trainer, Suzanne Clothier. If something doesn’t feel right with a particular practitioner, speak up and say that you don’t feel 100% comfortable and you’d like to rethink things before continuing with the therapy.

Key points of an informed decision include continuously learning new knowledge, testing and trying new things, and observing and comparing your observations for positive results. The next time you need to make an informed decision for your animal regarding choosing a complimentary health practitioner, remember the word: **RELAX**.