

# What Moves You?



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For its 2016 Conference, the NAVC asked veterinary professionals to share their stories:

- What drives you?
- What inspires you?
- What moves you?

Throughout the year, *Today's Veterinary Technician* will be publishing veterinary technicians' answers to these questions.

### What moves you?

Do you have a story you'd like to share? Send it to us at [TVTech\\_submissions@NAVC.com](mailto:TVTech_submissions@NAVC.com).

Submissions should be approximately 500 words or less and may be posted on our website or edited for publication in the journal.

### Tell us your story!

*"I realized that I was not in this for the income, I was in it for the outcome."*

—Sammie Thibodeaux, CVT

## Making a Difference



Sammie Thibodeaux, CVT  
The Woodlands, Texas

Ever since I was a little girl, I have been surrounded by animals. My parents tell me that from the time that I could walk, I was always in the boarding kennel my grandmother owned. I would walk up to the cages, no matter what kind of dogs were in them, and even the ones who were snarling and scared would start wagging their tails and lick my face. I loved it! I think from that point on, my career working with animals was destined to be.

When I turned 9, my parents got me a boxer puppy named Briggs, who would forever touch my heart. He was my best friend, and with him, I really began to notice my love for animals. I had a bond with him like no other, and in a way, he taught me about how sacred an animal's life can be.

When I was 17, my mother helped me land my first job as a kennel technician at the veterinary hospital where she worked as a receptionist. There, I learned that there was so much more to owning a pet than just feeding it and playing with it! While my job was part time and really only involved handling the animals that were being boarded, I was intrigued by what was happening in the veterinary side of the hospital.

After I turned 18 and graduated from high school, I became a full-time staff member and started to be trained as a veterinary technician. My coworkers taught me how to hold animals properly for doctors in examination rooms and how to prep patients for surgery. I caught on so quickly that they moved me on to drawing blood and running SNAP tests. Eventually, I started talking with clients and educating them on proper animal care. Clients were impressed with me and how I handled their animals with such care and passion for what I was doing. The doctors I worked for noticed all my hard work and dedication, and after 3 years, they paid for my schooling and I became a certified technician.

I saw so much in those years, from dogs that had been shot and were still able to trust people, to dogs that had been left out in the Texas summer heat and were too far gone to save, that my passion for my job only grew greater. I realized that I was not in this for the income, I was in it for the outcome.

Fast forward to me now, at 26. I am working as a full-time veterinary technician in a high-paced small animal clinic, and I have started my own petsitting company because of how much I am in love with what I do. I am moved by each animal I have encountered and will encounter because of how they persevere no matter what they are going through. I have seen animals fight with all they have to get better. I have seen animals in more



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appalling conditions than I have ever seen any human in, and they still have trust for people and want to please and love.

For every hurt animal that comes through the doors of my clinic, I feel an obligation to help make it better and reassure

its distressed owners. Whether I'm placing a catheter in a dehydrated parvo pup or simply giving an annual FVRCP vaccine to a cat, I feel as though I am making a difference.

And that is what moves me. ■

*Iron Toxicosis, continued from page 66*

Chelation of excess iron may require 2 to 3 days of treatment.<sup>1,2</sup> Patients should be monitored for at least 4 to 6 weeks after exposure for evidence of GI obstruction caused by scarring of the tract.<sup>1,2,7</sup>

### PROGNOSIS

The patient's outcome depends on the amount of iron ingested and how quickly the owner seeks medical attention for the pet. If signs do not develop within 6 hours of exposure, or if the patient receives early decontamination, the prognosis is good.<sup>1,6,8</sup> The prognosis is guarded after signs have developed,<sup>1,6,8</sup> and it is poor when the SI level is >500 mcg/dL and a chelator is not available.<sup>1,8</sup>

### THE ROLE OF VETERINARY TECHNICIANS

Veterinary technicians should educate owners about the signs of iron toxicosis and instruct them to keep iron-containing products away from pets. However, if a product containing iron is ingested, the owner should immediately contact the hospital or an animal poison control center.

When a client contacts the hospital to report that his or her pet has ingested a product containing iron, the technician should determine what type of product was ingested (e.g., multivitamins), how much the pet ingested (e.g., 10 tablets),

and how much time has elapsed since the exposure. To help the veterinary staff calculate the amount of elemental iron ingested and administer the appropriate treatment, the client should bring the packaging that contained the ingested product (e.g., multivitamins, birth control pills, fertilizer).

Although severe iron toxicosis, with the need to chelate, is infrequent, iron ingestions are common in pets and the veterinary staff should be knowledgeable about how to manage affected patients. ■

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