



## **Office of Hon David Carter**

**Member of Parliament**

**Minister of Agriculture**

**Minister of Forestry**

**Minister for Biosecurity**

**Acting Minister for Economic Development**

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### **Speech to New Zealand Veterinary Association**

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**Thank you Ron and welcome, everyone, to Parliament.**

**It's a pleasure to be here this evening to celebrate the launch of the new Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinarians, and the new Veterinary Toolkit.**

**During my farming career I've worked closely with a number of vets and as a result of my experiences, I have a great respect for the profession.**

**Earlier this year I had the privilege, along with the French Ambassador and Richard Wild of NZVA, of officially opening World Veterinary Year in New Zealand.**

**2011 is an exciting milestone for your profession – while of course for me, it has the added importance of being election year.**

**As I said at that launch, modern vets are not only animal doctors and animal welfare advocates. They play a very important role in New Zealand's wellbeing.**

**Our primary sectors are the backbone of our nation. No other developed country relies on agricultural exports like we do.**

**The health of our economy is therefore dependent on the good health of our animals.**

**Veterinarians are increasingly working at the “front end” of primary production. Working with farmers on “wellness maintenance and improvement” rather than just treating animal illness.**

**This contributes to increased productivity, improved animal welfare, improvements in food safety, while also providing a close expert eye on potential disease outbreaks.**

**But animal welfare is not just the responsibility of those who work with animals; it is the responsibility of every New Zealander.**

**This is the vision of *Safeguarding our Animals; Safeguarding our Reputation*, a plan released by the Government last year to improve animal welfare compliance in New Zealand.**

**Led by MAF, the plan is designed to increased voluntary compliance and involves a coordinated approach between government agencies, industry groups and non-government agencies.**

**MAF is also in the process of reviewing the Animal Welfare Act.**

**When the Act came into play 10 years ago, it was seen to be at the forefront of animal welfare legislation.**

**While it's still comprehensive and flexible, the way people expect animals to be treated and cared for is always changing, and so too must legislation.**

**Your new Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinarians is also the result of change.**

**Three years in the making, the new Code is a modern and easily accessible document that outlines the principles expected of vets.**

**I'd like to congratulate the Council and those involved in developing this document which reinforces our world class veterinary standards and adjusts the requirements for 21<sup>st</sup> Century practice.**

**I also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the collaborative work of the Veterinary Association and MAF in developing a practical resource for vets.**

**The Veterinary Toolkit being launched this evening demonstrates the profession's commitment to animal welfare and provides sound guidance for veterinary activity on farms.**

**The role of veterinarians in raising animal welfare issues with their clients and ensuring humane treatment of animals is to be encouraged as a positive, rather than intrusive, approach.**

**Every step taken to maintain our international credibility in animal welfare matters deserves to be applauded.**

**Congratulations once again on the launch of your revised Code of Professional Conduct, and for the Veterinary Toolkit. I know these will prove invaluable for those working in your profession.**

**And all the best for the remainder of World Veterinary Year. Thank you.**