



## FirstYearVeterinarian

By Amber Andersen, DVM

**Dr. Amber Andersen, a 2009 Western University graduate, is sharing her experiences during her first year as a veterinarian. This first column was written just prior to graduation.**

**I** am thrilled to write this year's column for the CVMA! Being a student representative has inspired me to be active in our professional organization as a doctor. As a lifetime Californian, I also realize the potential influence of this large state. Growing up in San Diego, I was the typical child who decided at age five to become a veterinarian. Attending a performing arts high school allowed me to develop communication and public speaking skills. In 2000 I left the city to play with the cows at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. As an animal science major I became experienced with food animal production and medicine. While at Cal Poly I continued to ride horses while living and working on an equine farm.

For senior year clinical rotations I elected to stay mostly in San Diego. The first part of the year was dedicated to small animal rotations and stressing over boards. The last few months were more exotic with externships at Sea World San Diego, the San Diego Zoo and the AVMA Government Relations Division in Washington, D.C. Being able to choose our fourth-year sites and location was ideal for this diverse schedule.

For the last month I have been digging out all the advice articles on new graduate job hunting. Mentoring, salary and location were my top three priorities. While I feel confident coming out, mentoring for any new graduate is ideal. It gives additional assurance and guidance to a new doctor. I am also looking for a specific salary so I can pay off an enormous student loan debt. Finally, I would like to be around my family and friends in San Diego. With these requirements I have set out searching. It has been difficult as the San Diego market is currently small for a new graduate. Still, in this economy I will just be thankful for a good job.

Next week we are on the Western U campus for the last time. The week will be filled with USDA accreditation, lectures on communication and many instances of free food. Our class is used to being apart for our clinical years. Still it is sad to know this is the last time we will all be together. Western U class of 2009 is a unique group. It is said each class has a personality. The Class of 2009 is extraordinary.