



Mission: "The ACVO® advances the quality of veterinary medicine through certification of veterinarians who demonstrate excellence as specialists in veterinary ophthalmology."

## THE ACVO® VISION FOR ANIMALS FOUNDATION

## ACVO®

"...that light shall prevail over darkness..."®



In 2001, with the support and sponsorship of the ACVO®, the ACVO® Vision for Animals Foundation (VAF) was established to support research leading to

the elimination of ocular diseases causing vision loss and suffering in animals.

The VAF is a 501(c)(3), not-for-profit organization, which strives to realize its mission by funding animal eye disease research conducted by qualified animal health care professionals and research scientists. The VAF is funded exclusively through tax deductible donations from private individuals such as concerned animal owners, industry supporters, and Diplomates of the ACVO®. More information can be found at [www.visionforanimals.org](http://www.visionforanimals.org).



*The ACVO® is continually involved in basic and clinical research developing new diagnostic procedures and treatment regimens. The genetics committee of the ACVO® works closely with breeders to better define and help eliminate inherited ocular diseases. The name of a Diplomate closest to you may be obtained from a general practitioner in your area or on-line at:*

**[www.ACVO.org](http://www.ACVO.org)**

*For information about our free eye exams for Service Dogs, visit:*

**[www.ACVOeyeexam.org](http://www.ACVOeyeexam.org)**



## PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists (ACVO®) is to advance ophthalmology care and training in all phases of veterinary medicine including training of veterinary students, continuing education of primary care veterinarians and veterinary ophthalmologists' research and practice. Through high standards of acceptance, the ACVO® credentials individuals who continue to set new standards for excellence in service, teaching, and research.

*Only a veterinarian who has completed all phases of training through an approved ACVO® residency and passed all examinations can legally claim to be a specialist or ophthalmologist.*

## HISTORY

In 1957, a group of veterinarians interested in eye disease organized the ACVO®. Organization of the College was completed in 1969 when provisional approval for the ACVO® was granted by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). Final approval by the AVMA was granted in 1974 allowing the ACVO® to set and maintain standards for veterinarians interested in ophthalmology to become specialists. The ACVO® is an approved veterinary specialty organization of the American Board of Veterinary Specialists.

## SPECIALIZATION

Primary veterinary care providers want the best possible care for their patients. To meet the need for advanced eye care, a general practice veterinarian may refer a patient to an ACVO® certified specialist. Ophthalmology specialists provide expertise and equipment needed to diagnose and treat animal eye disease. General practitioners view specialists as an extension of their own practice and a method of providing a level of ocular health care not available in general practice.

## VETERINARY SPECIALISTS

Only a veterinarian who has completed all phases of training through an approved ACVO® residency and passed all examinations can legally claim to be a specialist or ophthalmologist. Knowledge and skill gained through rigorous advanced training allow a specialist in veterinary ophthalmology to diagnose and treat eye disease in animals. Once training is complete and exams are passed, a specialist is referred to as a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists®. A veterinary specialist is required to maintain their skills through annual continuing education.

## MEMBERSHIP & REQUIREMENTS

As of early 2010 there are over 345 veterinarians who have met the stringent requirements necessary to become a Diplomate of the ACVO®. Becoming a Diplomate of the ACVO® requires the prospective candidate to complete a number of specific tasks which include but are not limited to the following:

- Graduation from an accredited College of Veterinary Medicine and be licensed to practice veterinary medicine;
- Complete a one year internship or two years of private practice;
- Three years of specialized training in an approved ophthalmology residency program;
- Successful completion of written and practical examinations by the Board of American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists Examiners.

ACVO® Diplomates practice throughout the world in private practice, universities, and industry. Diplomates are involved in all phases of animal eye care and in all species except humans. They treat animals with the same types of eye diseases that affect humans such as glaucoma, cataracts, corneal ulcers, dry eyes, eyelid defects, and conditions affecting the retina. More information about these and common eye conditions can be found at [www.ACVO.org](http://www.ACVO.org).

## ACVO® National Service Dog Eye Exam



The ACVO® hosts an annual public service event in veterinary medicine during the month of May. Our board certified veterinary ophthalmologists donate their services to provide eye examinations to Service Dogs across the US and Canada. Best of all, the Service Dog's owner/handler incurs no cost for these services. It is anticipated that through these efforts Service Dog health can be improved and potential disease averted for thousands of animals. For more information please visit [www.ACVOeyeexam.org](http://www.ACVOeyeexam.org).