



# Forensic sciences in Brazil. Toward a Wide Horizon



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## Opinion

The use of technical, scientific, and methodological resources to aid justice increased exponentially throughout the twentieth century. Thus, forensic science has been essential to promote a formidable body of knowledge and giving the methodological accuracy and reliability. Some veterinary forensic interfaces in Brazil are noteworthy, such as quality analysis in food industry, fight against animal trafficking and wildlife threats, and all efforts to claim a new status to animal welfare—mainly pets, and last but not least the endeavor to establish a high level of organization as a reference specialty.

Forensic sciences have experienced a remarkable development in Brazil in recent years in several areas, including veterinary medicine. Brazil is among the 10 biggest global economies and continues to be an important animal protein producer in the world. This ensures to Brazil an enormous strategic importance in world food security. However, there is an increase in concerns about food safety in the world. So, it is also important that companies and agents involved with animal products be aware of the fact that crimes and lapses can be demonstrated through use of techniques and procedures advocated by the forensic sciences.

A recent and significant example is the investigation triggered by the Brazilian Federal Police against fraud and bribes in some meat industry, known as “Operation Weak Flesh”. The exuberant and diversified Brazilian fauna also implies in efforts and resources to fight against an intense and criminal animal trafficking. The Brazilian territory continental dimension is combined with the difficulty to monitor borders. The hot spots borders that require attention to the sanitary surveillance system are the same to criminal traffic, including weapons, drugs and animals. Therefore, veterinary forensic science is aligned with a continental agenda to combat organized crime. Other prominent role of Brazilian veterinary forensic science is in defense of pets and animal welfare in broad sense. According to the Brazilian Association of the Industry of Products for Pets (ABINPET), the pet food and products market in Brazil presents a very optimistic scenario, from a technical and economic point of view. In Brazil, the domestic pet market is stable and demands for constant improvement, to meet

the expectations of a highly demanding public. Has been emerging new industries and employment opportunities. Brazil is the world's third largest pet market, with a market share of 6.3%, behind the United States (41.8%) and the United Kingdom (6.5%). Therefore, the increased number of pets has raised the availability of veterinary medical services, the demand for specialized services and, as a natural consequence, greater relevance in assessing conditions of animal abuse and criteria for the classification of these crimes.

In 2003, Conselho Regional de Medicina Veterinária [Brazilian Veterinary Medicine Council] recognizes Veterinary Forensics as an official veterinary specialty. Other important Brazilian landmark is the Associação Brasileira de Medicina Veterinária Legal-ABMVL [Brazilian Veterinary Forensics Association] foundation, in 2009 in São Paulo. ABMVL became a touchstone to the specialty in Brazil. The association has organized three important international meetings (2013, 2015 and 2017), a pioneer interinstitutional project—Legal Fauna Project (sponsored by government research funds), and accepted the responsibility of spreading the specialty among students and professionals. ABMVL collaborated to publish in 2017 the Treatise of Veterinary Forensics, as a result of the participation of more than 30 researchers from important Brazilian institutions linked to the same besides international partners. The first book in this area was published originally in Portuguese language, including data about veterinary forensic reality in Brazil as well as discussions about Brazilian legislation.

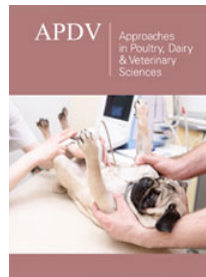
Despite all the analysis elements, veterinary forensic science remains as an incipient area in Brazil and demands efforts to consolidate it. On the other hand, the Brazilian government policy in effect today is the biggest dismantlement in the financing of research and investments in science and technology. Multiple actions challenge the veterinary forensic future globally. Confronted with the urgency of now, Brazilian veterinary forensic science as an important role in providing and extending legal cover to animal protection, put the government under pressure to expand the infrastructure of the official network, demand investment and collaborate to promote systematic professional training and qualification.



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