POST–EVENT REPORT

7,100+ Delegates
100+ Countries
80+ Speakers
190+ Lectures
17,123 Webinar Views
The 36th World Veterinary Association Congress was held from the 25th of April to the 15th of May, 2020. The congress was initially set to take place in Auckland, New Zealand, but unfortunately, because of the restrictions imposed by the outbreak of COVID-19, the WVA along with the New Zealand Veterinary Association (NZVA), was forced to seek alternative options. Out of adversity, however, came innovation, with the NZVA and the WVA partnering with The Webinar Vet to deliver the WVAC online for the very first time! This online festival of veterinary learning consisted of live and recorded lectures from over 80 expert speakers from all regions of the world. The event was a resounding success, attracting over seven thousand delegates from more than 100 countries. Whereas in the traditional congress model one can only access CE during the live event, the 2020 WVAC now remains available as over 100 hours of recorded lectures, which are accessible from any connected device, at a time most convenient to the delegate.

Some of the topic areas explored by the speakers included academia/education, aquaculture, veterinary business, public health, veterinary nursing, large animal, equine, companion animal medicine, and more! These lectures will continue to be available via The Webinar Vet through September, 2020.

This report is a brief summary showcasing selected Congress events and WVA activities from the 2020 WVA Virtual Congress.
The 2020 WVA Congress kicked off on April 25, 2020 (April 26\(^{th}\) NZST) with a virtual Opening Ceremony, wherein the delegation was welcomed by the WVA President, Dr. Patricia Turner, and the NZVA President, Dr. Grant McCullough. The Opening Ceremony was immediately followed by the 7\(^{th}\) annual WVA Global One Health Summit. The theme of this year’s summit was: *Climate Change and its Future Impact on Disease Burdens, Food Security, and the Economy*. The WVA President, Dr. Patricia Turner, moderated the meeting and facilitated discussions with participants.

Dr. Carmen Savelli of the WHO began the summit with a discussion on *climate change and its impact on foodborne diseases*. He explained that climate change is likely to have considerable impacts on food safety, both directly and indirectly, placing public health at future risk. He reiterated that although the challenge of halting and reversing climate change is bigger than any one country, mitigating its health-related impacts is both possible and necessary.

Dr. Savelli’s presentation was followed by a talk by Dr. Matthew Stone of the OIE, who discussed *supporting veterinary services to adapt to future challenges*. He explained that the role of Veterinary Services in animal health, animal welfare, and veterinary public health, across terrestrial and aquatic production sectors, is critical to achieving many of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Veterinary Services in many OIE member countries face important capacity challenges, requiring the support of international organizations and development partners. On top of this current state, they face uncertainties that can be considered either threats or opportunities, associated with globalization of world trade, environmental sustainability, and climate change.

Daniela Battaglia of the FAO followed with a discussion on the *interconnections between climate change and the livestock sector*. This was in turn followed by a presentation by Dr. Lujain Al-Qodmani of the World Medical Association, who discussed *climate change and its impact on disease management: a practitioner's perspective*. Finally, Elwin van Oldenborgh of the International Veterinary Students’ Association, concluded with *climate change and its impact on food production and disease management: a students’ perspective*.

The Summit was brought to a close with a *Q&A panel discussion*, addressing questions posed by members of the public.
WVA Global Seminar on Animal Welfare

On May 2, 2020, the WVA Global Seminar on Animal Welfare returned – this year with a theme of equine welfare. The seminar began with a variety of eye-opening presentations centered on the quality-of-life of equids, and addressed many situations commonly encountered in the equine field, including: retirement, rescue and rehoming, sanctuary care, slaughter for meat and by-products, and euthanasia. Among the panelists included Daniela Battaglia (FAO) on One welfare— the welfare of working equids and its contribution to the UN SDGs. In her presentation, Ms. Battaglia discusses the role working equids play in improving livelihoods, increasing the productivity of the agricultural sector, and enhancing gender equity, thereby contributing to a number of the UN SDG’s. She also touches on SDG #17, Partnerships, and how the FAO is partnering with other major players to advance the health and welfare of working equids around the world. Additional panelists included Prof. Natalie Waran (Eastern Institute of Technology) on Utilising a ‘One Welfare’ approach for advancing animal welfare, Dr. Ben Sturgeon (The Society for the Protection of Animals Abroad) on Assessing the impact of a welfare project, Dr. Joe Collins (The Donkey Sanctuary) on Donkey welfare assessment; hearing their voice, Prof. Josh Slater (The Horse Trust) on How NGO-funded research improves equine well-being, Dr. James Kithuka (Brooke) on The donkey hide crisis in East Africa; impact of the trade on donkeys and the people who rely on them, Alana Chapman (World Horse Welfare) on Responsible ownership – to the end, Dr. Roly Owers (World Horse Welfare) on Promoting social license; what role for the veterinarian?, and Martin Burns (New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing) on Development of thoroughbred welfare assessment guidelines: the New Zealand experience.

“Through research, we’ve been able to move beyond the original five freedoms, and to start to look at welfare being a far more multidimensional phenomenon.”

Prof. Natalie Waran, WVAC 2020

The seminar was concluded with a stimulating panel discussion, mediated by Dr. Roly Owers, on end-of-life decision-making. During the discussion, the panelists addressed a number of relevant topics including: measuring quality of life in equids, ejiao trade, challenges of equine euthanasia, and more! The recording of the panel session is FREE for all to watch, and will remain available via The Webinar Vet through September, 2020.
COVID-19 Live Panel Session

The final session of WVAC 2020 was held on May 15, 2020 as a COVID-19 live panel session, bringing together some of the world’s most influential veterinary voices. The session was facilitated by Dr. Anthony Chadwick (The Webinar Vet) and was carried out in a Q&A format, with panelists addressing a variety of challenges of the present COVID-19 pandemic. Panelists included Prof. Michael Baker (University of Otago), Dr. Daniella Dos Santos (British Veterinary Association), Prof. Nigel French (Massey University), Dr. Grant McCullough (NZVA), Dr. Scott Newman (FAO), Dr. Matthew Stone (OIE), and Prof. Scott Weese (University of Guelph). Some of the topics addressed by the panelists included COVID-19 origin, the role of animals in the COVID-19 pandemic and associated risk mitigation, food safety and security, public health impact, vaccine development and implementation, the differing approaches taken by various nations and their efficacy, the role of veterinary organizations in the pandemic, and long-term challenges for the veterinary profession. How must the veterinary profession evolve in light of COVID-19? Find out by watching the FREE online recording of this panel session, available now through September, 2020.

WVAC 2020 Closing Ceremony

The Closing Ceremony of the 2020 World Veterinary Association Congress was held on May 15th 2020. The Congress was officially concluded with closing remarks from Dr. Grant McCullough, NZVA President, and Dr. Patricia Turner, WVA President. In her closing address, the WVA President commended veterinarians around the globe for their selfless contribution and unwavering commitment to tackling the current SARS-CoV2 pandemic, while gently reminding the veterinary community that our work here is not done. Dr. Turner urged veterinarians to remain abreast of this rapidly-evolving situation through veterinary associations and international agencies such as the OIE,
FAO, and WHO. She also urged veterinarians to capitalize on the recent surge of global interest in One Health, by partnering with human and environmental health leaders and lobbying for global animal health and welfare, ecosystem health and public health, as well as improving veterinary education and competency, so that all countries will have sufficient veterinary capacity and veterinary services to respond to current and future infectious disease challenges that may impact human and animal populations. “These are all priority areas for the World Veterinary Association,” she reiterated, “and are areas that we will continue to work with our partners on over the coming months.” The WVA President concluded with a thank you to everyone responsible for making this virtual WVA Congress a success: the New Zealand Veterinary Association, the 2020 WVAC Organizing Committee, WVA Secretariat, The Webinar Vet team, contributing speakers, WVAC partners, and WVAC sponsors; without whose support this event would not have been possible.

“[COVID-19] has resulted in significant interest in One Health-related issues – an area that veterinarians, with their training in comparative medicine and public health, are uniquely situated to deal with.”

All proceedings from the 2020 World Veterinary Association Congress will remain available as recordings on The Webinar Vet through September, 2020. REGISTER TODAY and gain access to 100+ hours of CE/CPD from the comfort of your own home!

“Thank you for such an incredible online educational experience! The program talks are fantastic, and I am looking forward to the additional access time following the live “festival” in which to explore the recorded sessions! Because of your online festival, I shall be able to attend enough presentations to achieve nearly twice the CE hours that would have been possible at a physical conference!”

- 2020 WVAC Attendee