

HISTORY OF AVMA INVOLVMENT IN INTERNATIONAL VETERINARY MEDICINE THROUGH 2013

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In April 2007, the AVMA Executive Board approved formation of a Committee on International Affairs (CIVA) charged “to study global issues affecting the AVMA in areas such as the role of the Association in international affairs, forming partnerships in influencing the potential disruption of food supplies, accreditation of veterinary education, and other evolving international matters arising, and recommend to the Executive Board courses of action in international affairs of the Association.” The Committee was chaired by the AVMA Globalization Monitoring Agent (now Director of International Affairs) with representation from the AVMA Executive Board, Council on Education (COE), and the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC). During the first two meetings (fall 2007 and spring 2008), CIVA members and invited representatives from the WVA, Department of Defense Veterinary Service Activity (DoD/VSA), and US Department of Agriculture/Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service/International Services (USDA/APHIS/IS) reviewed the Association’s history of involvement in global issues. This history, dating back to the 1990s, centered initially on accreditation of veterinary education at international institutions in accordance with the rigorous standards established by the AVMA Council on Education for US and Canadian schools, as well as building relationships with other veterinary associations. In 2001, the AVMA Executive Board also approved creation of a new volunteer position—the Globalization Monitoring Agent (now Director of International Affairs)—who was charged to conduct surveillance of national and international education, accreditation, and licensing activities and initiatives. Between 2009 and 2013, the AVMA representatives to the Pan-American Association of Veterinary Sciences (PANVET), World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA), and World Veterinary Association (WVA) were added as members. Until formation of the CIVA in 2007, no centralized infrastructure (eg, primary staff consultant/support, standing or ad hoc AVMA entity) existed through which the AVMA could become proactive and fully engaged in international efforts.

Despite not having a strong, centralized infrastructure throughout much of the final decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century, volunteer leaders and staff were able to establish numerous personal networks that led to several successes and allowed advancement of the Association’s international focus to its current position. Examples of these successes include:

- Strengthening the relationship between the AVMA, Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, British Veterinary Association, Australian Veterinary Association, New Zealand Veterinary Association, and South African Veterinary Association.
 - Through participation in the International Veterinary Officers Coalition (IVOC; formally International Veterinary Officers Council), officers and executive directors of the above associations meet annually to discuss issues of mutual interest, including animal welfare, veterinary education, workforce and economic challenges, and advocacy—the same five issues identified by the AVMA as the critical issues that formed the basis of the Association’s 2008-2011 strategic plan.
- Strengthening the relationship between the AVMA/COE with similar accrediting bodies (eg, Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons [RCVS], Australasian Veterinary Boards Council [AVBC]) to identify commonalities and differences among educational accreditation systems.

- Meetings of International Accreditors Working Group (IAWG), which began in 2002, are now held approximately every three years. These meetings culminated in a joint accreditation site visit comprising the COE, AVBC, and RCVS at Murdoch University Division of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences in Australia in the fall of 2009. Although this program is accredited by all three accrediting bodies, the fall 2009 evaluation was the first time the school completed a single self-study document in preparation for evaluation by a multi-national team during a single evaluation visit. The March 2011 IAWG meeting built on the success of that first joint accreditation site visit; other joint visits have since been completed at the University of Sydney (2012) and University of Melbourne and University of Glasgow (2013), with a planned joint visit at Massey University (New Zealand) for 2014.
- Strengthening the relationship between the US and Mexican veterinary professions.
 - In the late 1990s, AVMA officers and staff recognized the importance of building a strong and mutually respectful relationship between the Mexican and US veterinary professions. Trade agreements and proximity meant that many issues that affected one country would very likely impact the other. Early efforts at relationship building, led by AVMA officers and the Globalization Monitoring Agent, resulted in what is now known as the North American Veterinary Leadership Meetings (NAVLM), which are held every 12 to 24 months and currently comprise AVMA officers and leaders from the AVMA and AAVMC, and leaders of the veterinary profession in Canada and Mexico. These meetings have allowed for regular discussion of cross-border issues and strengthened relationships among the veterinary profession in North America.
- Strengthening the North American presence within the WVA.
 - In 1999, the AVMA rejoined the WVA after an absence of many years. The AVMA appoints one of two WVA councilors from North America. In 2006, Dr. Leon Russell became the first US president of the WVA, and under his leadership, the WVA became a stronger, more cohesive organization. In 2012-2013, Dr. René Carlson (AVMA President and Immediate Past President during that time) chaired the WVA Constitution and Bylaws Working Group, which provided recommendations for changes to modernize and improve the WVA.
- Strengthening the relationship between the AVMA, AAVMC, DoD/VSA, and USDA.
 - In January 2004, the AVMA, represented by the Globalization Monitoring Agent, officers, and staff, participated in the “Global Veterinary Opportunities and Responsibilities Workshop,” together with representatives of the AAVMC, USDA, and DoD/VSA. This was followed by the September 2004 International Veterinary Conference in Kuwait City, the goal of which was to engage representatives of the professional associations, colleges, and government agencies in discussions concerning rebuilding animal health infrastructures in Iraq and Afghanistan. From this meeting came a joint AVMA/AAVMC Task Force on Veterinary Infrastructure in Iraq and Afghanistan, chaired jointly by AAVMC member Dr. Joe Kornegay, then Dean of the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine, and the AVMA Globalization Monitoring Agent, Dr. Jim Nave. The strong relationship between the AVMA, AAVMC, DoD/VSA, and USDA continues today. During 2008, the chairs of the AVMA and AAVMC international affairs committees participated fully in each other’s meetings, which further helped synergize the activities of these two groups. The

AVMA was invited to participate in a September 2008 DOD Veterinary Stability Operations Course to discuss professional association building as a means of advancing animal health infrastructure and facilitating stability. In addition, representatives of USDA APHIS/IS and DoD/VSA continue to serve as invited representatives to CIVA and provide invaluable expertise and insight to Committee deliberations.

During discussions at its first two meetings in the 2007-2008 Association year, the CIVA also recognized the synergy of its charge and objectives with activities on which the AVMA had embarked through the One Health Initiative. As such, the CIVA invited Dr. Roger Mahr, initially in his capacity as the AVMA representative to the Joint One Health Steering Committee, and then as the Project Director to that same Committee, to participate in its earlier meetings. The CIVA believed that with the establishment of the One Health Commission (OHC) in 2009, it was the time to strengthen the international infrastructure within the AVMA so that the national professional association would be poised to collaborate fully with the OHC both nationally and internationally. Subsequently, the AVMA representative to the OHC became an invited representative to the CIVA to maintain dialogue among the organizations.

As Committee members reflected on AVMA's involvement in the global veterinary profession, they recognized that without provision of greater continuity, expertise, and coordination through a stronger infrastructure, the Association would be unable to move forward from a passive and monitoring role to a proactive and more fully engaged role in the international arena. Members also recognized that the economic impact and risk of duplication of effort inherent in increasing the Association's international presence could be minimized through well-coordinated and strategic interactions of volunteer leaders and AVMA staff. To reflect a new focus on action in the international arena, the CIVA developed an updated position description for the Globalization Monitoring Agent. The CIVA not only recommended changes to the charge, responsibilities, and qualifications for this position, but also recommended a title change—from Globalization Monitoring Agent to Director of International Affairs—to reflect the more proactive role this position should play. The Executive Board approved these changes in 2009.

Also in 2009, to coordinate strategic international activities, the CIVA encouraged the AVMA, through the Executive Vice President and with necessary Executive Board action, to create an International Coordinator staff position, placed within the Office of the Executive Vice President (O EVP), with primary responsibilities to include supporting and facilitating the activities of the CIVA, Director of International Affairs, US Councilor to the WVA, AVMA liaisons to WSAVA and PANVET, AVMA representative to the US delegation to the OIE, and AVMA delegations to the IVOC and NAVLM. In making this recommendation, the CIVA believed that a highly-placed staff member who is well-informed of cross divisional international activities and issues would add the necessary continuity, expertise, and coordination to ensure the US veterinary profession's voice is heard—and listened to—as solutions are developed to best address global veterinary needs. As an initial step toward creation of an International Coordinator staff position, existing staff was identified in 2009 to first provide logistical support to the Director of International Affairs. A full-time veterinary position (Associate Director for International and Diversity Initiatives) was subsequently created within the O EVP , and in 2012, Dr. Beth Sabin was selected as the first person to serve in this new position.

During its first two years of interaction, CIVA members reviewed the 2008-2011 AVMA Strategic Plan as they considered what direction the AVMA should take to create its future in the international arena. The CIVA believed that the AVMA—as one of the world’s largest professional veterinary associations—must be sensitive to global issues and be actively involved internationally to promote the profession through collaborative discussion and action. Committee members also noted that globalization and international affairs were inherent in the 2008-2011 Strategic Plan—with language indicating that “globalization strengthens our nation,” and the “AVMA values ... inclusiveness, unity, compassion.” Further, core competencies of the Association as defined in the 2008-2011 Strategic Plan included that, as the leading advocate for the veterinary profession, the AVMA “serves its members at local, state, federal, and global levels,” sets and preserves “...professional standards,” and serves “the needs of all veterinarians.” Consideration of the 2008-2011 Strategic Plan in light of past international successes and current challenges culminated in the development of a CIVA White Paper, titled *International Opportunities to Promote the AVMA Strategic Plan*. In April 2009, the AVMA Executive Board accepted the White Paper. This White Paper served as the basis on which CIVA made many of its recommendations for AVMA action through the end of 2013. The following successes were realized:

- Recognition of AVMA as global leaders in the areas of animal welfare and veterinary education.
 - As the leading advocate for animal welfare, the AVMA must not only be at the table, but also must be seen as leading discussions, debate, and decisions with its science-based animal welfare resources. Otherwise, the US veterinary profession may be forced to accept global animal welfare standards to which it did not adequately contribute. To achieve this, the AVMA:
 - Provides input and expertise to the US Delegate to the OIE on global animal welfare standards.
 - Identifies key staff and volunteer leaders with the appropriate expertise to speak and participate at international animal welfare conferences.
 - Coordinates and shares animal welfare curricula for veterinary students that are in development by the AVMA and other associations around the globe (eg, FVE).
 - Develops additional and appropriate joint policy and position statements on animal welfare with veterinary and animal health and welfare organizations in other countries.
 - As a premier standard for veterinary medical education globally through the educational accreditation practices of the AVMA Council on Education, the AVMA must not only be at the table, but also must take a lead in advocating rigorous standards in education and accreditation of individual schools rather than acceptance of a global accreditation standard. Toward this end, AVMA Executive Vice President, Dr. Ron DeHaven, was appointed to Chair an OIE ad hoc Group on Veterinary Education (AHG). This working group was established in 2010, and between its first meeting in June of that year and January 2013, the OIE AHG developed two documents (*Recommendations on the Competencies of graduating veterinarians to assure National Veterinary Services of quality* and *Guidelines on Veterinary Education Core Curriculum*), and supported development of an OIE Guide to Veterinary Education Twinning Projects. All three of these documents have been adopted by the OIE and incorporated into its Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) assessment tool. Dr. DeHaven presented on the work of the AHG and the status of veterinary education

and accreditation in the USA at several OIE global conferences, including the Global Conference on Veterinary Education and the Role of the Veterinary Statutory Body in December 2013. In 2012, Drs. DeHaven and Sabin also published a solicited paper titled *Veterinary education: a basis for good governance leading to effective Veterinary Services*, in the August 2012 issue of the OIE Scientific and Technical Review.

- Establishment of the Global Health Summit as an annual AVMA Convention event. In 2009, the CIVA organized the first Global Health Summit at the AVMA Annual Convention in Seattle to raise awareness among AVMA members about links between animal health, economic development, and human health in a global environment; inform the membership of current global programs involving veterinary medicine; market future opportunities for US veterinarians in global enterprises; and create networks among summit participants. Since then, a Global Health Summit has been organized by the CIVA for each subsequent Convention. Summit themes have focused on global career opportunities in One Health, veterinary education, World Veterinary Year—celebrating 250 years of improving animal and human health, and veterinary futures. With sponsorship from organizations as varied as Pfizer Animal Health (now Zoetis), the World Veterinary Congress, and the World Society for the Protection of Animals, the Summits typically conclude with networking reception. These events have been well received by Convention attendees and have allowed new relationships to be forged to advance the profession globally.
- Enhanced AVMA’s global advocacy efforts through ongoing dialogue between AVMA leadership and leadership of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) that led to development and subsequent approval of the following four AVMA-FVE joint position statements:
 - The Essential Role of Veterinarians in Protecting Animal, Human, Public, and Environmental Health-A Global Public Good
 - The Roles of Veterinarians in Ensuring Good Animal Welfare
 - Veterinary Education
 - Responsible and Judicious Use of Antimicrobials
- Continued involvement in the WVA. The AVMA increased its involvement in the WVA, largely through the service of Dr. Leon Russell (US Councillor to the WVA from 1999-2002, Vice President from 2002-2005, and, from 2005-2008, the first WVA president from the USA), and Dr. Jim Nave, who served as US Councilor to the WVA from 2002 to 2009. In 2012-2013, Dr. René Carlson (AVMA President [2011-2012 Association year] and Immediate Past President [2012-2013]) chaired the WVA Constitution and Bylaws Working Group, which provided recommendations for changes to modernize the WVA’s organizational documents and enhance the efficacy and impact of the WVA. In late 2013, the AVMA nominated Dr. Carlson to the WVA presidency position for 2014-2017. Elections will be held in fall 2014.
- Representation on the PANVET Directive Council. The AVMA joined PANVET in the early 1970s but discontinued membership in 1984 due to concerns regarding lack of organizational structure and financial issues. In 2003, on recommendation of the AVMA president, the AVMA rejoined PANVET. Between 2003 and 2009, although PANVET invited the AVMA to nominate a representative to its Board of Directors, the AVMA remained more of an observer without a dedicated liaison. In 2010, and on recommendation from the CIVA, the Executive Board approved a new liaison relationship with PANVET and nominated the AVMA liaison to the PANVET Directive Council (board of directors). The CIVA believes PANVET will continue to be an important organization through which

the AVMA and its members can build coalitions to better ensure the profession's voices from across the Americas are heard as discussions regarding global veterinary standards take place in Europe and elsewhere. In recognition the potential for PANVET to serve as a conduit for ongoing international advocacy, the AVMA will be facilitating necessary approvals for member veterinarians to attend the 2014 PANVET Congress, which will be held in Cuba.

- Joined the WSAVA. In 2010, and on recommendation from the CIVA, the AVMA Executive Board approved applying for membership in, and establishing a formal liaison relationship with, the WSAVA. The WSAVA is an internationally recognized leader dedicated to the continuing development of companion animal care around the world. Its mission is to foster exchange of scientific information between individual veterinarians and veterinary organizations. A majority of the AVMA's members comprise small animal practitioners, and as such, many AVMA initiatives overlap with WSAVA initiatives. As such, AVMA membership in the WSAVA is seen as a key international opportunity to promote the AVMA strategic plan and will strengthen AVMA's international efforts to promote small animal health and welfare and the Association's global partnership with other WSAVA members.

As the AVMA moves into a new era of strategic management in 2015 and beyond in order to better guide its operational plans and ensure its programs, policies, and initiatives best meet member and stakeholder expectations, the CIVA believes that consideration must be given to the continued global role of the Association. The CIVA believes that the AVMA cannot afford to lessen its involvement in international affairs lest global decisions are reached that have the potential to inflict economic or professional hardship on the US veterinary profession. In addition, the CIVA suggests that maintaining a strong international presence may also result in new, and as of yet unrecognized, revenue streams for the Association. The CIVA is committed to ensuring the AVMA is prepared to shape the future of the veterinary profession in an ever-increasingly global marketplace.