



# president's COLUMN



## Enhancing collaboration with our overseas veterinary partners

The COVID-19 pandemic has given us a better appreciation for how interconnected our profession is, and how working together on common issues makes all of us stronger. It has opened people's eyes to, and reinforced the importance of, the one-health concept, and how each of us has a critical role to play.

In my remarks to the AVMA House of Delegates last summer, I mentioned how critical it is that we continue to promote one-health, and recognize that the impacts of connections between people, animals, and their shared environment are more significant than ever. I also emphasized how we need to remain focused on cultivating relationships and working with global veterinary associations and intergovernmental entities to support public health, animal health, and animal welfare around the world.

I am proud to have served as chair of the Committee on International Veterinary Affairs (CIVA) as part of my years-long service with the AVMA. This committee advises the Board of Directors on trends and activities that enhance and sustain our role in global veterinary medicine, and creates and expands global opportunities for AVMA and Student AVMA members. Through the tremendous work of the CIVA, the AVMA continues to strengthen its engagement with international veterinary stakeholders.

An important step in extending our international relationships came last year when the AVMA was invited to apply for membership in the Federation of Asian Veterinary Associations (FAVA), which consists of national veterinary associations in 20 countries across the Asia-Oceania region. Our application for membership was unanimously approved at a FAVA Council meeting in April. Our membership allows us to better represent our members who live and work in Asia-Oceania. It also enhances our ability to exchange ideas and best practices as we collaborate with the FAVA and its other member associations in addressing issues of mutual importance to the profession in our two regions of the world. These issues include food safety and security, antimicrobial use and resistance, animal welfare, disaster preparedness, quality assurance of veterinary education, and so much more.

Collaborative efforts have also extended into DVM teaching curriculums. The U.S.-China Joint DVM Program builds strong connections between the profession and people within our two countries. The program, established in 2012, epitomizes the collaborative spirit of the U.S. and the Chinese veterinary professions by bringing top Chinese students to the United States to study

veterinary medicine at U.S. veterinary colleges, with the goal of having them return to China once they receive their veterinary degree to teach students at universities in China. The AVMA is proud to collaborate with the program, and has had the pleasure of hosting a number of these students as part of our headquarters externship program. In August, I participated in the U.S.-China Joint DVM Program's homecoming celebration at the Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine. I was impressed by the students' knowledge of veterinary medicine and the issues facing the profession, and can attest that they are well prepared to move forward and serve society.

Earlier this year, the AVMA was named the recipient of the 2021 World Veterinary Day Award. This prestigious award is given annually by the World Veterinary Association (WVA) and its World Veterinary Day nonprofit partner, HealthforAnimals. The AVMA was specifically recognized for the contributions made by our 97,000-plus members and staff in protecting animal and human health during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am deeply grateful to the WVA and HealthforAnimals for honoring us with this award, and continue to be amazed by the work done by our members and their teams, and by the AVMA staff, throughout this historic crisis. In the face of personal risk and hardship, the U.S. veterinary community—and our colleagues around the world—rose to the challenge and our response embodied the highest ideals of our profession. Disease knows no borders, and more than 75 percent of emerging human diseases, such as COVID-19, originate in animals. Veterinarians truly are a key part of the first line of defense in keeping our world safe and secure.

As we go forward, it's important that we develop strategic partnerships with our allies around the world, influence developing global policies related to veterinary medicine, and promote quality assurance in veterinary medical education. Continued collaboration with our international colleagues will give the AVMA an even stronger voice so we can more effectively advocate here in the United States and around the world for the importance of veterinary medicine to society, which will, in turn, enhance animal, human, and ecosystem health.

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*I want to hear from you. Please reach out to me with your comments, questions and concerns at [presidentcolumn@avma.org](mailto:presidentcolumn@avma.org).*