State of the Association Address

Dear colleagues,

It’s exciting – and also a challenge – to sum up the fantastic progress made by the WSAVA this year in supporting our members and strengthening our global veterinary community. During the last 12 months, despite a global pandemic, we have transformed our work in so many ways thanks to the efforts of our member representatives, our many expert volunteers and the progressive attitude of the central secretariat. I have set out some of our key achievements below and congratulate everyone who has helped to deliver them.

Offline to online
Moving much of our work online was a major disruption that we were, fortunately, well prepared for. Our readiness ensured that we were could continue supporting our members through COVID-19 lockdowns and beyond. The secretariat had already initiated many platforms to expand our ability to connect, communicate and engage. These include our online learning platform, the WSAVA Academy, the launch of our podcast series; our COVID-19 related e-shots and, of course, our regular free webinars, which give all of us an opportunity to update our knowledge on both the clinical and non-clinical aspects of our work.

Our presence on Social Media has also grown exponentially this year (find us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn). Given the importance of connecting with younger veterinarians as the future of the profession, this is a key priority for us and we are excited at the momentum now building behind our social platforms, as well as our more traditional external communications.

But moving our work online would not have been so successful if, you, the members of our global community, had not also transformed yourselves into digital pioneers of this new era! Our Regional Members’ Forum, held in September 2020, followed by the highest ever attended Assembly Business Meeting in WSAVA history showed that even a pandemic could not keep us apart.

WSAVA World Congress
WSAVA World Congress in March 2021 was one of the first major online global veterinary congress in the world. The online format meant that many veterinarians, who may not previously have been able to attend, perhaps because of distance or cost, could now participate and benefit from the amazing learning on offer. We are grateful for our partnership with FECAVA and Local Host Committee PSAVA, as well as our valued Industry Partners, who show such faith in our global community. We also thank Kenes International, our PCO, for always delivering a world class event no matter what obstacles confront them.
Expansion of WSAVA Committees and creation of an Expanded Leadership Circle

We were delighted to welcome two new Committees this year. The WSAVA Oncology Working Group and the Reproduction Control Committee are already working hard to support our members in these critical and fast-changing areas of practice. We have also launched an internship program in partnership with the International Veterinary Students Association in order to ensure that some tomorrow’s veterinary leaders are able to contribute to our work now and to share it with their colleagues.

In addition to our highly-respected Global Guidelines and other educational resources, the deliverables produced by our Committees include position statements on key issues to support our community in speaking with one voice. We are proud that many of our member associations were able to use our position statements to lobby their government on the position of the veterinary profession during the pandemic.

We welcome our new Committee members and thank all of our volunteer committee members for their outstanding contribution to raising standards of veterinary care around the world.

All of our 18 Committee Chairs are now members of the WSAVA’s Expanded Leadership Circle, which also includes the Executive Board and Central Secretariat. This strengthened team is now working closely to drive the WSAVA forward in the delivery of its strategic plan.

WSAVA Committees & Working Groups

WSAVA Global Community Congress

With travel restrictions still in place for many, we have rethought WSAVA Congress for 2021 and, this November, we are proud to premiere ‘WSAVA Global Community Congress’. This Congress will, for the first time, enable us to fully showcase the ground-breaking work and resources being undertaken by all of our Committees, and is the next step on our journey towards creating ‘One Community, One Care, One Voice.’ We look forward to seeing you there!
Our member representatives rise to the challenge!
We’re pleased to say that demands to social distance seem to have actually boosted our member engagement and, following the great success of our first ‘around the world-around the clock’ Member’s Forum in September 2020, the online format is set to become the norm. We held a follow up Members’ Forum in February and look forward to our final 2021 Members Forum on October 30.

Following feedback from our member representatives, we also formed Membership Taskforce at the end of 2020. The Taskforce is addressing feedback that we should refresh our current membership structure to reflect who we really are. We look forward to hearing its proposals during 2022.

With the importance of effective leadership within our community a priority, earlier this year the WSAVA One Care Initiative facilitated the creation of a Global Leadership Series for 37 participants from around the world. With the aim of developing a collaborative approach and a leadership mindset, the program consisted of six online modules which took place between January and April this year.

Our member representatives have also played a key role in ensuring that the member benefits we offer are relevant to all our members. As a result of their feedback, online WSAVA CE events are now being offered, where possible, with translations. Some of the translations are provided by members of our volunteer Translation Committee and, in other cases, member representatives have sourced translators or even done the translations themselves.

As all this show, our members representatives are the cornerstone of our global veterinary community and we thank them for their commitment and support this year!

So, what’s next?
Now what? Given the success with which our community has tackled the disruption caused by the pandemic, we are determined to continue to disrupt and challenge ourselves in order to ensure that we move forward in a positive way. 2022 is the second year of our current strategic plan and our focus will be on the importance of developing a strong and sustainable association, worthy of our members and volunteers. Our priorities include the following:
• **Organizational structure and governance.** Our Expanded Leadership Circle will embark upon a review and restructure of the association in order to ensure we offer a diverse and inclusive environment that is inviting to the next generation of veterinary leaders.

• **Advocacy and Partnerships.** We will continue to foster collaboration with strategic partners, including:
  - HABRI
  - Four Paws and FECAVA (via Animal Wellness and Welfare Committee)
  - ENOVAT (via Therapeutic Guidelines Group)
  - IPFD (via HDC)

• **Exclusive WSAVA member benefits.** We will launch an exciting program of member benefits designed to ensure that both association and individual members view their WSAVA membership as an attractive and essential support to their career.

So, overall, it has been a great year but, believe me, we are just warming up and there is much more to be achieved in 2022. I would like to thank our Committees, our Industry and Educational Partners, the Secretariat, the Executive Board and all of our other volunteers for helping us to move forward.

During 2022, let’s all work together to support our mission of building a global community of veterinary leaders - one that the next generation will be proud to join.