



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF BOVINE PRACTITIONERS
59TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
**DEVELOPING PRACTICES
OF EXCELLENCE**
AUGUST 27-29, 2026
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Bovine Veterinarians Tasked with “Developing Practices of Excellence” at the 2026 AABP Annual Conference

*The 2026 59th AABP Annual Conference
encouraged bovine veterinarians to
develop practices of excellence.*

The American Association of Bovine Practitioners' (AABP) 2026 59th Annual Conference Aug. 27-29 in Minneapolis, Minn., assisted bovine veterinarians in “Developing Practices of Excellence”. Beef and dairy veterinarians, students and veterinary technicians gathered for this conference for cutting-edge continuing education. Preconference seminars were held earlier in the week for in-depth instruction on a variety of topics.

Keynote speaker Dr. Eric Rooker presented, “Flourishing veterinary medicine: A game of dollars and sense”. He suggested to find some time as practice owners to let others, such as new associates, develop some competency of their own, and gave examples on how to do that. Following Rooker’s presentation, the 2026 AABP vice president candidates, Dr. Becky Funk and Dr. John Groves, were introduced to attendees.

AABP President and 2026 Program Chair Dr. Mark Hilton says, “AABP Annual Conference week is one of my favorite weeks of the year. I get to see many friends, former students and exhibitors. I leave the conference smarter because I have learned something to make my business better and the animals I treat healthier.” Hilton explains that the theme, “Developing Practices of Excellence,” represents the business of veterinary practice and the hands-on skill set of veterinary medicine.

“Our program committee found excellent speakers who could share information our attendees

could take home and use the very next week, whether that was how to improve retention of recent hires or how to ultrasound lungs,” Hilton explains. “Every doctor on the program committee is either in private practice or has been. Our membership is largely private practitioners, and we wanted to keep that focus.”

AABP Immediate Past President Dr. Callie Willingham says the conference offered a wide selection of topics supporting the theme. “The new mixed-animal track was very well-received,” she notes. “Many presentations sparked conversations that continued well after the session ended. One of the things I value most about the AABP conference is the opportunity to meet new colleagues, reconnect with friends and deepen the relationships that strengthen bovine veterinary practice.”

Willingham encourages all members who were not able to attend to take advantage of the recorded sessions CE opportunity through Kansas State University’s Beef Cattle Institute, where all CE sessions are available.

The 2026 conference gave in-person attendees up to 26.25 hours of continuing education (plus more for preconference seminars) on beef, dairy, clinical stills, retention, hot topics, mixed-animal, practice management, student/new graduate topics, practice tips and other sessions, plus preconference seminars and clinical forums. Awards, a scholarship auction and a 5K were also highlights of the conference.

“It is always rewarding to see the efforts of our volunteers and staff come to fruition each year at the AABP annual conference,” says AABP Executive Director Dr. Fred Gingrich. “Providing continuing education for bovine veterinarians, veterinary technicians and students is a major mission of our organization and this conference is our biggest event each year. I want to thank not only our volunteers who make this conference successful, but all of our members who attended.”

2026 AABP Annual Conference Program Committee



Front Row, L-R: AABP President-Elect Dr. Mark Hilton (Chair), Dr. Alexandru Pop (Practice Management)

Second Row, L-R: Dr. Elizabeth Homerosky (Beef), Dr. Jennifer Sexton (Research Summaries), AABP Vice President Dr. Elizabeth Quesnell Kohtz (Preconference Seminars), Dr. Kayla Clark (Clinical Skills)

Back Row, L-R: Dr. Justin Kieffer (Research Summaries), Dr. Joe Klopfenstein (Students/New Grads), Dr. Ben Bennett (Practice Tips)

Not Pictured: Dr. Oberlin McDaniel (Mixed Animal), Dr. Eric Rooker (Dairy), Dr. Brad White (Beef)

Keynote by Rooker Discussed How to Let Associates Flourish



time as practice owners to let others, such as new

Dr. Eric Rooker presented the AABP Keynote Session this morning at the 2026 AABP 59th Annual Conference in Minneapolis, Minn. Rooker's presentation was "Flourishing veterinary medicine: A game of dollars and sense". Rooker suggested to find some

associates, develop some competency of their own, and gave examples on how to do that.

He said people have three needs that can be frustrated or satisfied:

- Autonomy and choices
- Competency – do we have the resources to identify, develop and share a skill?
- Relatedness – do we have true relationships?

Rooker suggested practice owners read *The Progress Principle* by Teresa Amabile and Steven Kramer to help them understand what motivates all of us from a competency basis.

"What can we do to give the associate more of a choice in their tasks?" he asked. "Go and do the DA or the calving for them so they can read an article, learn how to scan calves, evaluate a parlor – have them go and do something they are interested in without having to bill for it. You've given them some control and a chance to develop some competency. It will do so much for them."

2026 AABP Awards

Boehringer Ingelheim Bovine Practitioner of the Year

Dr. Mark Fox
Sandusky, Mich.

Pictured with presenter Dr. Pam Ruegg (right)



AABP Award of Excellence

Dr. Richard Wallace
Bonita Springs, Fla.

Pictured with presenter Dr. Matt Boyle (left).





Merck Animal Health Mentor of the Year

Dr. Margaret Masterson
Plain City, Ohio

Pictured with presenter Dr.
Eric Gordon (right)

James A. Jarrett Award for Young Leaders

Dr. Kaitlyn Briggs
Sherburne, N.Y.

Pictured with presenter Dr.
Kathryn Bach (left)



Other awards given at the 2026 59th AABP Annual Conference include:

2026 AABP Foundation Competitive Research Grant Award

- **Dr. Jenna Bayne - Auburn University**
Diagnostic imaging agreement and the feasibility of diagnostic stifle arthroscopy via needle arthroscope in cattle
- **Dr. Marc Caldwell – University of Tennessee**
Assessing the Impact of Maternal Mannheimia haemolytica Vaccination and Passive Immunity on Respiratory Clinical Outcomes, Performance, and Acquired Immunity of Pre-Weaned Dairy Calves
- **Dr. Lisa Gamsjaeger – North Carolina State University**
Impact of Reconstitution Temperature on Antibody Concentration in Commercial Bovine Colostrum Products

2026 AABP Research Summaries Graduate Student Awards

- **First Place**
Katherine Koebel, Cornell University
Antimicrobial use indicators, patterns and attitudes on five New York dairies
- **Second Place**
Erica Schmidt, University of Minnesota
From fast-acting to long-lasting: Comparing cornual nerve blocks in goat kids
- **Third Place**
Grace Jakes, Colorado State University
Effects of a parental innate immune stimulant on calf vaccine responses and bronchoalveolar lavage fluid cell gene expression

2026 Student Case Presentation Competition Winners

- **Overall Winner**
Macy Moore, Iowa State University
Antemortem vs. postmortem: Creating a real-time electronic dashboard to evaluate diagnostic accuracy in three large commercial feedyards
- **Clinical Case Report**
 - First Place – Sonati Puri, Texas A&M University
Bilateral pyelonephritis and elevated copper in a 4-year-old Brahman
 - Second Place – Fredrick von Lillienkjold, Texas A&M University
Ashes, ashes, the Brangus fell down
- **Research Report**
 - First Place – Macy Moore, Iowa State University
Antemortem vs. postmortem: Creating a real-time electronic dashboard to evaluate diagnostic accuracy in three large commercial feedyards
 - Second Place – Rachel Antonutti, University of Minnesota
Effect of maternal bovine appeasing substances versus a placebo

Minneapolis Welcomes AABP!



Conference By the Numbers

AABP Executive Director Dr. Gingrich shares these stats from the 2026 AABP Annual Conference:

- 909 attendees
- 269 veterinary students
- 8 veterinary technicians
- 83 exhibiting companies with 321 exhibitor representatives
- 56 accompanying persons
- 141 signed up for the 5K Stampede Fun Run/Walk

**Find more conference recaps and photos
on the AABP Facebook page!
#AABP2026**

Social Hour Kicks Off Conference

What better way to kick off the Annual Conference than the AABP social hour!



Conference Spotlight: In-home Companion Animal Euthanasia a Benefit to Clients and Veterinarians



In the Mixed Animal Session, Dr. Oberlin McDaniel discussed the advantages to veterinarians and their clients of adding in-home companion animal euthanasia. “Many rural communities continue to have limited access to timely, compassionate end-of-life care,” McDaniel said. “Mixed animal veterinarians are uniquely positioned to meet this need through established client relationships, experience providing mobile veterinary services, and comfort navigating difficult medical conversations. Incorporating peaceful in-home companion animal euthanasia into a mixed animal practice strengthens continuity of care while providing a meaningful service to families during one of the most difficult days they will experience.”



Families may be forced to transport geriatric, painful, anxious or terminally ill pets long distances during one of the most emotionally trying days of their lives. “Transportation itself may become an obstacle,” she

explained. “Large-breed dogs may no longer be able to stand or walk. Arthritic patients often experience increased pain during travel.” Animals with respiratory disease, heart failure, or neurologic conditions may deteriorate with the stress of leaving their familiar surroundings. “Even when transportation is possible, owners frequently express the same wish – they want their companion's final moments to occur at home.”

McDaniel pointed out that mobile practices already carry the medication, equipment and logistical experience to provide veterinary care outside of a hospital setting. “Most importantly, mixed animal veterinarians have something that cannot be purchased or advertised – they already have the trust of the family.”

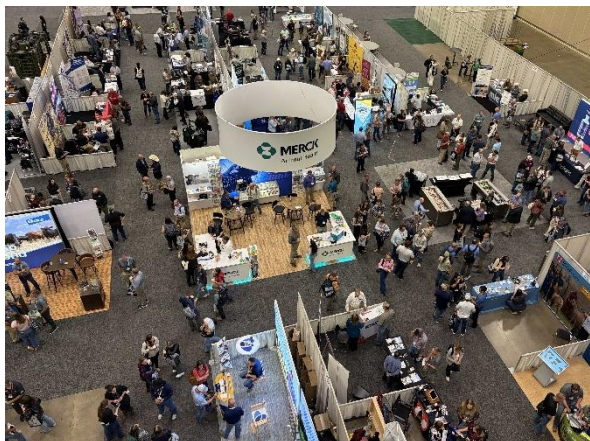
She added, “Mixed animal veterinarians spend years earning the trust of farm families. We celebrate healthy calves delivered after difficult dystocias, help horse owners return beloved athletes to soundness, and guide producers through disease outbreaks and

herd health challenges. When those same families invite us into their homes to help a cherished companion animal pass peacefully, they are extending that trust to another member of their family.”

Thank You AABP Exhibitors!

The trade show at the 2026 conference was fantastic! A total of 321 exhibitor representatives from 83 exhibiting companies including animal health and related businesses and organizations that offered products and services to large animal veterinarians were in attendance.

Along with exhibitors, the exhibit hall was home to two lunches, milk/coffee breaks, the live and silent auction posters, the annual Quiz Bowl, a poster session, lounges and an entertainment area.



AABP thanks all of its exhibitors for showcasing their products and services, and the attendees for taking advantage of all the great information offered!

2026 AABP Scholarships

In 2026, the AABP Foundation received 357 scholarship applications and awarded 43 for a total of \$350,000. Adding to the Amstutz scholarship funds were the Amstutz live and silent auctions, the annual 5K Stampede Fun Run/Walk sponsored by Boehringer Ingelheim, and direct donations from members.

“Few things are more meaningful than having the opportunity to invest directly in the future of our profession,” says AABP Foundation Chair Dr. Tera Barnhardt. “Each scholarship is more than financial

support. It is a vote of confidence in a student, an investment in their potential, and a commitment to ensuring our profession remains strong for generations to come.”

2026 Amstutz Scholarship Recipients

Ten veterinary students received the \$12,000 2026 Harold E. Amstutz Scholarships. Funding comes from AABP member contributions, investment fund interest and dividends, proceeds from the 5k Stampede, and proceeds from the AABP Live and Silent Auctions and raffle. The 2026 recipients are:

- Caroline Berge, University of Wisconsin
 - Tayler Chamberlain, Oklahoma State University
 - Maggie Cronk, Iowa State University
 - Kaden Eisenbraun, University of Minnesota
 - Robert Feiock, University of Minnesota
 - Loren Foley, The Ohio State University
 - Cade Gustafson, University of Missouri
 - Bryer Jones, Washington State University
 - Kali Linville, Texas Tech University
 - Esmeralda Lopez Hernandez, Cornell University
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2026 Merck Animal Health Bovine Veterinary Student Recognition Awards

Nine 3rd and 4th year veterinary students will receive this \$10,000 scholarship generously sponsored by Merck Animal Health. The 2026 recipients are:

- Caroline Berge, University of Wisconsin
- Faith Bergman, The Ohio State University
- Luke Daniels, Texas Tech University
- Derrick Goldammer, Kansas State University
- Jillian Grantz, Purdue University
- Alexandria Henderson, Cornell University
- Jonathon Macmillan, Atlantic Veterinary College
- Anna Spoth, Texas A&M University
- Alex Webster, Iowa State University

2026 Zoetis Foundation Scholarship

Veterinary students graduating in 2027 were eligible for the Zoetis Foundation Scholarship. This year, 16 students received the \$7,500 award which is generously funded by the Zoetis Foundation. The 2026 recipients are:

- Caroline Berge, University of Wisconsin
- Faith Bergman, The Ohio State University
- Raquel Dimond, Washington State University
- Kaden Eisenbraun, University of Minnesota
- Kaitlyn Forrest, North Carolina State University
- Emma Guasta, Cornell University
- Jaedyn Johnson, Texas Tech University
- Elpida Liakos, Iowa State University
- Kagan Migl, Texas Tech University
- Macy Moore, Iowa State University
- Allen Moulton, Washington State University
- Sarah Nafziger, University of Pennsylvania
- Nathan Schank, Lincoln Memorial University
- Elizabeth Skapley, Cornell University
- Destiny Smith, University of Minnesota
- Meghan Van Althuis, Cornell University

2026 James H. Bias Scholarship

James H. Bias was the first Black man to graduate from The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine in 1910. He went on to establish veterinary medicine as a critical component of the Tuskegee agricultural science department, and fostered a positive image of veterinarians in the community. This influential \$5,000 scholarship is named in honor of this historic trailblazer who opened many doors for veterinary students of color. The 2026 recipients are:

- Kourtnei Curry, North Carolina State University
- Joyce Lopez, The Ohio State University

Hunter Lang Dairy Welfare Scholarship

The purpose of the \$2,000 Hunter Lang Dairy Welfare Scholarship is to provide a one-time financial award to two veterinary students interested in dairy practice and animal welfare. This scholarship was created by the family of Dr. Hunter Lang who served

on the AABP Board of Directors, AABP Animal Welfare Committee and as an AABP delegate in the AVMA House of Delegates. The 2026 recipients are:

- Rebecca Dorn, University of Minnesota
- Jillian Grantz, Purdue University

2026 Francis Welcome Future Dairy Practitioner Scholarship

The Francis Welcome Future Dairy Practitioner Scholarship supports superior 3rd year veterinary students who demonstrate the character, knowledge and potential to become outstanding dairy veterinarians upon graduation. This \$2,500 memorial scholarship was created by the Welcome family to honor the memory of AABP Honor Roll member Dr. Francis (Frank) Welcome. The 2026 recipients are:

- Chaiden Duitscher, Iowa State University
- Tessa Scheler, University of Minnesota

2026 Edwin Robertson Memorial Scholarship

The Edwin Robertson Memorial Scholarship, administered through the AABP Foundation, provides a \$1,000 award to two veterinary students to help fund a theriogenology, embryo transfer or advance reproductive techniques experience. The 2026 recipients are:

- Aaron Brown, University of Missouri
- Michaiah (Mikey) Galvin, Purdue University

Conference spotlight: Congestive Heart Failure



Congestive heart failure (CHF) is contributor to feedyard mortality, and can be defined using



chronic passive hepatic congestion, serous or serosanguineous body cavity effusions, and abnormal cardiac morphology. Dr. Brad White spoke on this in his presentation "Bovine heart disease: Practical insights from feedyard

data". He said changes in cardiac morphology and CHF may occur alone or in conjunction with other common illnesses including respiratory disease.

Surprisingly, he noted, cattle with confirmed CHF rarely exhibit extensive myocardial necrosis or fibrosis despite advanced gross cardiac remodeling. In contrast, hepatic fibrosis and chronic passive congestion appear much more closely associated with CHF. "These findings suggest hepatic evaluation as a key component of the CHF diagnostic process."

Despite advances in ante-mortem diagnostics, necropsy remains the gold standard for diagnosis of congestive heart failure. A systematic examination should evaluate all major organ systems before assigning a final diagnosis. The case definition of CHF should include three key findings:

- Abnormal cardiac remodeling (heart score 3-5)
- Chronic passive hepatic congestion ("nutmeg liver")
- Serous or serosanguineous effusion within the pleural, pericardial or abdominal cavities

Continued refinement of case definitions and integration of multiple diagnostic approaches will be essential for improving surveillance, clinical decision making, and ultimately reducing losses associated with CHF in feedyard cattle.

VOTE for AABP VP!



AABP Vice President candidates Dr. Becky Funk (left) and Dr. John Groves introduced themselves in the Keynote session. Voting is open! Log onto the AABP website and click on the ballot on the

scrolling banner or go to <https://aabp.org/ballot/>.

You can read candidate bios on that page. The November AABP newsletter also has a Q&A with each candidate. The direction of AABP depends on its members! Your vote counts!

Deadline to vote is December 18, 5pm Eastern.

Zoetis Sponsors Thursday Morning Breakfast

It's always great to start off the day with breakfast and food for thought! Thanks, Zoetis, for sponsoring the Thursday breakfast. Dave Erf presented "Translating Genomics into Herd Strategy for Animal Welfare, Profitability and Environmental Impact".



Conference Spotlight: Transportation of Neonatal Calves

For dairy operations moving neonatal calves long distances, the challenge is to protect the calf during a period of rapid physiologic change while maintaining a reliable, repeatable logistics system, said Dr. Brett Boyum in his presentation, "On the mooove: Advancing best practices in bovine transportation". AABP emphasizes that transport decisions should prioritize animal welfare, fitness, careful handling and appropriate disposition of cattle that are injured or otherwise compromised. The objective of calf transportation is to deliver calves that are adequately prepared, handled safely, and received into an environment that supports recovery and continued growth.

Calves selected for transport should have no signs of illness, should be adequately hydrated and nourished, and should have dry navels before departure. Newborn calves should be administered high-quality colostrum and receive navel disinfection, identification and routine processing before moving to individual housing. These steps are especially important because the health status with which a calf enters the transportation system can affect every subsequent stage of the trip.

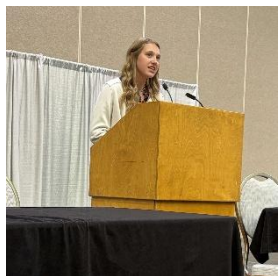
He described at a calf depot, calves received pasteurized waste milk and were fed approximately



12 hours after arrival. Before long-haul transport, calves were offered milk and electrolytes; for the Southwest movement, calves were fed one hour before loading. Adequate energy and hydration status are part of fitness to travel.

Other factors include logistical such as timeliness, temperature monitoring, standardized training, clean trailers, and improved harness systems. Stocking density, calf size, transport duration, compartment design, temperature, bedding or footing, loading efficiency, and the health status of calves are also important.

Macy Moore Wins Student Case Competition



Macy Moore, Iowa State University, was the overall winner of the Student Case Competition with her research report, "Antemortem vs. postmortem: Creating a real-time electronic

dashboard to evaluate diagnostic accuracy in three large commercial feedyards".

She presented her case again on Friday in the Exhibit Hall.



Conference Spotlight: Bovine Dystocia and Fetotomy Preconference Seminar

Preconference seminar "Bovine dystocia and fetotomy", was a sold-out success! This hands-on seminar led by Drs.

Caitlin Wiley, Jen Roberts and Meredyth Jones Cook included discussion of bovine dystocia and fetotomy fundamentals, including evaluation and local anesthesia. Attendees used pelvic models and real calves for to practice evaluation, mutation and extraction techniques.



Dr. Caitlin Wiley (left) assists an attendee at the seminar.

AABP Leadership and Board of Directors



First row, L-R: Dr. Callie Willingham (President), Dr. Mark Hilton (President-Elect), Dr. Kaitlyn Briggs (Treasurer)

Second Row, L-R: Dr. Julia Herman (District 9), Dr. Elizabeth Q. Kohtz (Vice President), Dr. Lynne Acebey (District 5)

Third Row, L-R: Dr. Jennifer Koziol (District 8), Dr. Jess Simons (District 11)

Fourth Row, L-R: Dr. Jodi Wallace (District 12), Dr. Sam Bryant (District 7)

Fifth Row, L-R: Dr. Erika Nagorske (District 6), Dr. Liz Brock (District 1), Dr. Paul Cook (District 10)

Sixth Row, L-R: Dr. Erick Stoltzfus (District 2), Dr. Jenna Bayne (District 3), Dr. Dave Sjeklocha (Past President)

Back Row, L-R: Dr. Justin Kieffer (District 4), Dr. Ryan Rademacher (District 13)

AABP Students Live It Up at the Endovac Student Reception

There were almost over 260 veterinary students registered for the AABP Annual Conference, and it seemed like they were all in attendance at the Thursday night student reception sponsored by Endovac Animal Health. Held at The Local in



downtown Minneapolis, there was great food, drink, entertainment and hospitality!

Two lucky students were drawn to receive \$500 Endovac scholarships, Julie Diebel of Texas A&M University and Matthew Van Otterloo of Iowa State University.

Thanks for supporting our AABP students, Endovac Animal Health!



Photos courtesy of Endovac Animal Health



Conference Spotlight: Spaying and Neutering Pet Pigs

The conference program committee offered a very popular Mixed Animal Session. One speaker, Dr. Chris Burrows, spoke on “Spaying and neutering pet pigs”. He said pet pigs are increasingly presented for companion-animal-level preventive, anesthetic and surgical care, yet their anatomy, behavior, body conformation and anesthetic response can make routine sterilization challenging.

Burrows said, “Successful spaying and neutering of pet pigs depends less on a single surgical trick than

on preparation, handling skill, appropriate chemical restraint and familiarity with porcine anatomy and body conformation.”

Castration is usually straightforward when a single prescrotal approach, secure hemostasis and careful evaluation of the inguinal rings are used.

On female pigs, ovariectomy requires more deliberate patient selection and surgical planning, particularly in very small, obese or older



pigs. Familiarity with pig handling and appropriate equipment can substantially improve safety and surgical efficiency.

“Safe restraint, effective premedication, gas anesthesia, vessel sealing, suction, secure closure and proactive postoperative management can make these procedures practical in a mobile or field-based surgical setting while meeting companion-animal owners’ expectations for high-quality care,” Burrows said.

5K Stampede Race Results

Over 100 participants in the 2026 Stampede 5K Fun Run/Walk sponsored by Boehringer Ingelheim on Saturday of the conference had a rainy start for the event to raise money for the AABP Amstutz Scholarship Fund! The Stampede 5K contributed \$7,000 to the Fund this year.



Male overall winner was Dr. Randy Bond and overall female winner was Dr. Chloe Stenkamp-Strahm.

View race results and other medal winners at https://results.raceroster.com/v3/events/srcbn3kzgxh2he/dr/race/304312?filter_search=.

Conference Spotlight: Artificial Intelligence in Bovine Practice

Artificial intelligence (AI) is entering veterinary practice while regulatory oversight is limited and medical liability rests with the veterinarian. Dr. Petra Harms said in food-animal medicine and agriculture, AI is applied to remote monitoring and disease detection using movement, appearance and acoustic data; to activity monitoring of individuals and groups; to precision livestock management and finishing optimization; and to breeding. Vision



systems monitor the behavior of housed dairy cattle, and thermal imaging combined with sensor data has been studied for early detection of mastitis in dairy



cattle. Acoustic systems analyze livestock vocalizations for health, behavior and welfare monitoring.

Artificial intelligence and connected-sensor systems have been described for smart veterinary disease detection. Generative AI is also applied in drug discovery, and AI has

been used to model disease spread and to support veterinary education. Harms added that in agriculture, 14% of North American farmers surveyed reported using AI-assisted automation in 2026.

Harms noted that practitioners can manage the associated risks by treating these tools as prediction systems built on data, recognizing their characteristic failure modes, and applying a documented process to evaluate each tool, assess practice readiness, score risk and govern adoption over time. "Food-animal veterinarians positioned to inform the responsible development of these tools through their practice experience stand to benefit from centering the veterinarian's experience; driving improved tool quality; more effective integration; and innovation opportunities," Harms said.

Childcare Room a Hit with Families and Kids!



Heritage Vet Partners sponsored the very popular Childcare Room at the conference that was enjoyed by 18 families! Snacks, toys, games, TV, quiet area, mom's room, etc. were well-used by children and their parents or caregivers.

Team #2 from Calgary takes the 2026 AABP Quiz Bowl Championship!



The winning Quiz Bowl team from University of Calgary, L-R: Calgary AABP Faculty Rep Dr. Gordon Atkins, Austin Kalev, Terese McNabb, Katie Paul, Tulsen Fawcett.

It was an exciting 2026 AABP Quiz Bowl as the University of Calgary #2 team triumphed over Oklahoma State University to take the championship.

Quiz Bowl masters Drs. Tanner Leon, Paige Schmidt and Conrad Schelkopf kept match running and on time. Thank you, Vaxxinova, for your longtime sponsorship of the Quiz Bowl breakfast and Quiz Bowl!

2026 AABP Quiz Bowl teams ready to compete!



Conference Spotlight: Early Castration can Benefit Respiratory Health



In her presentation, "Practices that support excellent respiratory health", Dr. Amelia Woolums said one important practice is to castrate male cattle when they're young – really young. "One of the most evidence-based risk factors for BRD is castration of a male animal at arrival to a feedlot or backgrounding operation," Woolums explained. "Over many decades, researchers have found that BRD morbidity,



and sometimes mortality, is significantly, and sometimes substantially, higher in cattle castrated at arrival vs. cattle that arrive as steers.”

She said in a study of 315 auction-market-derived bulls and steers managed over a 44-day receiving period, morbidity and mortality in cattle castrated at arrival was 42% and 23%, vs. 11%

and 4% in cattle that arrived as steers. In 279 auction market derived steers and bulls backgrounded for six months, morbidity in cattle castrated at arrival was 60%, vs. 28% in cattle arriving as steers.

“Given that morbidity of bulls castrated at arrival has repeatedly been described to be two-fold to 10-fold higher than steers, substantial gains in animal productivity and welfare could be realized if all male cattle were castrated in time to heal completely before leaving the farm or ranch where they are born.”

Amstutz Auctions Contribute \$71,000 to Amstutz and Foundation Scholarship Funds



At the conference, the live and silent auctions benefiting the Amstutz and Foundation scholarship funds raised just over \$71,000. There were 46 silent auction items donated by members, student chapters and exhibitors.



Auctioneer Bryan Mergen helped AABP raise a lot of money for the Foundation and scholarships!

Fifteen items were featured in the live auction including the Mark Hopkins bronze bull, vacation homes, a Henry Big Boy rifle, vet school swag and an ultrasound system, among other items.

The auction was presided over by very entertaining and longtime auctioneer Bryan Mergen of Red Garage Auction Co.

Thank you, Zoetis, for once again providing the scholarship dinner prior to the auction. We appreciate your continued support!

AABP members are always invited to donate to the AABP Foundation at <http://aabp.org/foundation/donate.asp>, and it's never too early to think about what you might want to donate to next year's auction!



AABP Past President Dr. Reilly Glore donated this vintage AABP buckle for the live auction.

Conference Spotlight: Field Management of Urolithiasis in Small Ruminants



Obstructive urolithiasis remains a significant emergency in male goats and sheep, particularly under field conditions where advanced surgical resources may be limited. Dr. Clare Scully said that key objectives include rapid diagnosis, stabilization, assessment of bladder integrity, establishment of urinary drainage and restoration of urethral patency.

Scully said prevention remains the most effective long-term strategy for urolithiasis. “Because the disease is multifactorial, no single intervention prevents all types of calculi. Nevertheless, adequate water intake, appropriate calcium-to-phosphorus ratios, avoidance of excessive concentrate feeding, and careful mineral management are fundamental preventive measures.”

She added that dietary manipulation of urine pH can be beneficial in some production systems. “Diets designed to promote mild urinary acidification may help maintain urine within a desirable pH range without producing significant systemic acid-base disturbances. However, urine acidification should be incorporated into a comprehensive nutritional program rather than used as an isolated strategy.”

Water consumption is equally important. Animals should have continuous access to clean, palatable water, particularly during hot weather and when consuming dry feeds. Sudden dietary changes and excessive grain feeding should be avoided. Animals recovering from obstructive urolithiasis remain at risk



for recurrence. “Consequently, successful treatment should be followed by correction of nutritional and management factors that contributed to stone formation,” Scully noted.

Christian Veterinary Mission Breakfast



Dr. Craig Boekennoogen to attendees at the Christian Veterinary Mission Breakfast on Saturday at the conference. The presentation by Boekennoogen was titled “Sippin’ Tea, Storytelling and Teaching Herders All the Way from Timbuktu”. Dr. Brant

Carpenter led the music on his guitar.

Find out more about the Christian Veterinary Mission at <https://cvm.org/>.



Conference Spotlight: Networking and Interviewing

Wrapping up the student session, AABP President Dr. Mark Hilton gave some sage advice in his address, “What is on President Hilton’s mind?”. Two things he spoke about were networking and interviewing for jobs.



“Networking is one of the most important – and frequently underestimated – parts of finding the right veterinary position,” Hilton said. “Nearly half of my graduates obtained jobs that were never publicly advertised. Opportunities frequently arise because

someone knows someone. A veterinarian mentions that an associate may be leaving. A classmate knows a practice owner. A faculty member knows that a clinic is thinking about adding another veterinarian. These opportunities are difficult to find by searching only job advertisements.”

Hilton noted that networking helps to develop genuine professional relationships. “Attend veterinary meetings,” he advised. “Introduce yourself to veterinarians. Stay in contact with people you respect. Tell people what type of practice interests you and where you hope to live. You never know which conversation will lead to your first job – or a later opportunity that changes your career.”

When you find that job to interview for, Hilton says to make three lists – must haves, nice to have and won’t accept. Your “must have” list should contain the things genuinely necessary for you to be happy and successful. Your “nice to have” list contains things you would prefer but could compromise on. Your “won’t accept” list identifies circumstances that you already know will make a position unacceptable. Then use those lists when evaluating practices.

“Students sometimes become so focused on receiving a job offer that they forget they are also interviewing the practice,” he said. “A practice can have many wonderful attributes and still be the wrong place for you. Conversely, a job that does not initially ‘wow’ you may provide the mentorship, caseload, responsibility and opportunity you need.”

He said to be cordial and reasonable, and make sure the position provides your “must-haves”. “When I have looked at surveys from 4th-year veterinary students, mentorship, practicing quality medicine, practice culture/core values and having a learning environment are nearly always at the top of the list. While salary is important, it generally ranks below the previous four. I think most students should have the four mentioned above on their list.”

Conference Spotlight: Building an Efficient Cow Herd



Dr. David Lalman’s presentation “Strategies to build an efficient cow herd”, he said reports show that a reproductively successful cow that uses forage economically is central to cow-calf profitability. “Building a forage-efficient cow herd is not a contest to find the smallest or lowest-intake cows,” he said. It is a disciplined sequence: require fertility, health, soundness, and adaptation; match mature size and milk potential to available forage; then select for moderate intake among cattle that maintain acceptable production.



“Current forage-based research shows that cows with similar weight, body condition, milk yield, and calf performance can differ substantially in forage intake, with part of that difference associated with maintenance energy demand.” He said the

practical objective is a cow herd that weans more pounds of calf per female exposed and per acre while requiring less purchased feed and carrying less risk when forage is limited.”

Get Your CE Certificate!

The 2026 59th AABP Annual Conference offered 26.25 RACE-approved continuing education (CE) credits (plus preconference seminar hours). RACE approval is one benefit in addition to having online CE free of charge for AABP members.

If you attended the 2026 AABP Annual Conference you can access and print your CE certificate by logging on to the AABP website at <https://aabp.org>, and in the upper righthand corner at “Member Log On”, click on “My CE Certificates”. You can edit the certificate and check the presentations you watched, then click Create Your CE Certificate and print.

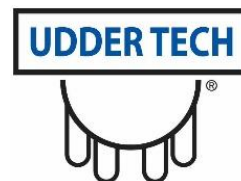
See you in 2027!

Plan ahead for 2027 AABP conferences!

- 2027 10th Recent Graduate Conference, Feb. 12-13, Baton Rouge, La. Registration is open at https://aabp.org/Recent_Grad/default.asp.
- 2027 60th AABP Annual Conference Sept. 16-18, Louisville, Ky.



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!



AABP post-conference newsletter created by Geni Wren, AABP Director of Marketing and Communications. AABP would like to thank those who contributed conference photos!