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AABP Recent Veterinary Graduate Conference Continues to Inspire

The future of the bovine veterinary profession looks bright as demonstrated by the attendance and interaction of veterinarians at the 2nd Annual 2019 AABP Recent Veterinary Graduate Conference held Feb. 7-9 in Columbus, Ohio.

The conference, limited to AABP members who have graduated veterinary school from 2011-2018, had a total attendance of nearly 200.

General topics, clinical skills, business management, beef and dairy-specific sessions and practice tips were offered, as well as three preconference seminars.



2019 AABP Recent Veterinary Graduate Conference Program Committee. Left to Right: Dr. Kia Hovden, Cow-Calf Coordinator; Dr. Tera Barnhardt, Feedlot Coordinator; Dr. Jess Simons, Program Chair; Dr. Alissa Wilhelm, Dairy Coordinator.

The program committee consisted of veterinarians who had graduated between 2011 and 2018. Program Chair Dr. Jessica Simons says, "The program committee had 100% control over selecting the topics for the meeting."

The conference was launched in 2018 as a result of the different needs of recent graduates, many of whom are unable to attend the AABP Annual Conference in September. "In my conversations throughout the conference with recent graduates, they were overwhelmingly supportive of this venue as a productive way to learn and network among peers in their age demographic," explains AABP President Dr. Glenn Rogers. "One veterinarian I visited with stated how much more comfortable she felt discussing the challenges of early experiences in practice with peers who were 'in the same boat'."

"It was extremely beneficial for recent graduates to plan the conference since we are and have been seeing similar opportunities in practice as well as encountering the same struggles."

Simons agrees and says reviews of the conference proved that attendees felt much less intimidated being surrounded by peers versus at the annual conference where recent grads might be less likely to ask questions, and less likely to initiate conversations about their concerns and hopes for their veterinary careers.

The conference also featured the use of the Slido app platform, an interactive program where attendees can ask questions, answer polls and more by using their smartphones. "This technology allowed attendees who might not stand and ask a question in front of the group to offer excellent questions to speakers," Simons says.

The conference offered 23.5 RACE-approved continuing education (CE) credits for individual attendees. AABP Executive Vice President Dr. Fred Gingrich says, "AABP is pleased to offer our first conference that has been RACE-approved. The AABP Board of Directors continues to offer membership

benefits that demonstrate the high value cattle veterinarians can place on AABP." RACE approval is one such benefit in addition to having online CE free of charge for members.

Retention of younger veterinarians to service the needs of cattle practice in rural communities is imperative for the continued growth and vitality of cattle veterinary medicine and to contribute to rural community sustainability. Rogers says, "The Recent Graduate conference goes a long way in not only providing cutting edge continuing education appropriate for this stage of a veterinary career, but to provide a nidus for networking and collegial support among peers in the early years of practice."

"AABP continues to hold true to the mission that started our organization 53 years ago, to offer relevant, practical and scientific CE to cattle veterinarians."

Three Preconference Seminars Added In-depth Instruction

BSE Seminar/Wetlab

In 2019, the Recent Graduate conference hosted three preconference seminars, one of which was a breeding soundness exam (BSE) wetlab/lecture held at The Ohio State University veterinary school. Drs. Caitlin Wiley and Tyler Dohلمان from Iowa State University conducted the seminar which included



working with a live ram and bull.

"It's one thing to sit in a room and talk about how to perform a BSE and evaluate semen," Wiley explains. "However, being able to actually utilize

equipment on live animals to see how they respond to the stimulation and then take the sample collected to evaluate and improve their semen slides, is key to

empowering these veterinarians in adding value to their practices."

Wiley added that she and Dohلمان hope attendees gained better understanding of equipment usage along with more confidence in semen motility and morphology to be able to improve this valuable service to their clients.



"It was nice to see recent graduates enthusiastic about offering adding services that have not always been available in their practice, such as BSEs, to their clients," Wiley adds. "It's an important exam that can definitely improve the profitability of their clients. While it isn't a hard service to do, it takes time and experience to gain better confidence in your evaluation."

DairyComp 305 Seminar Taught the Power of Data

The DairyComp 305 preconference seminar included participants from all areas of the country and Canada. While the starting knowledge base of the participants varied widely, everyone came prepared with enthusiasm, curiosity and the desire to learn skills they could take home and use immediately in their practices says co-instructor Dr. Michael Capel, who, along with Craig Walter, presented the seminar.

“The attendees were motivated, engaged and not afraid to ask practical and relevant questions,” Capel says. “It is essential for practitioners to understand and interpret data for their clients in order to perform our critical role as informed medical professionals whose goal is to optimize animal and farm health.”



Craig Walter discussed some of the finer points of DairyComp 305 at the preconference seminar.

Capel notes that most new practitioners graduate with tremendous knowledge and excitement but find themselves focusing on mostly technical skills and emergency work during the start of their careers. “The ability to evaluate disease and performance trends for their clients is critical to helping them transition from a veterinary service provider to valued consultant.”

Participants in this seminar left with the confidence that they have a great deal to offer their clients, Capel says. “By gaining a basic understanding of how to manage their client's data, they set themselves up for success in building a strong and valued relationship.”

Practice Valuation Seminar Gave Tools for Ownership and Expansion

Evaluations from the 2018 AABP Recent Veterinary Graduate Conference indicated that participants would like more practice and business management instruction. This preconference seminar, led by Dr. David Welch and Denise Tumblin, CPA, aimed to teach recent graduates how to look at practice valuation as well as look at strategies for expansion.

“This was an amazing group of practitioners – very engaged, very bright and with a lot of initiative,”



Denise Tumblin, CPA, instructs attendees on practice valuation and other financial topics.

Tumblin says. “They were fun, thoughtful, intentional and interested in learning more about how practices

are valued, how a buy-in works/what’s the “process”, and how will they pay for the practice. I think this group will contribute tremendously to the profession.”

Tumblin’s goals were to give attendees a better understanding of how a practice is valued, why cash flow is important and how to use cash flow to assess if the asking price is reasonable, how their cash inflow (i.e., income) and outflow (i.e., taxes and loan payment) will change once they become an owner, and how to improve cash flow. She gave them a better understanding of what questions to ask when they have the opportunity to buy into/buy all of a practice.

It seems people think only practice owners looking to sell are interested in practice valuation, Tumblin explains. “Why is it important for young veterinarians to understand practice valuation as they move through their career? Understanding the valuation process and the factors that impact practice value are helpful for buyers to know, so they’re in a better position to know if an offer is fair/reasonable/financially feasible.” Having a clear understanding of how to improve profit (and thus practice value) impacts everyone in the practice, she adds.

“The stronger the cash flow, the more resources available to invest in new medical services, new equipment, and pay the doctors and healthcare team fairly so patient care continues to improve and everyone in the practice benefits from a higher standard of living,” Tumblin says.

52 Jobs posted on the Job Board

Recent grads seeking new jobs had a lot to choose from out of the 52 submitted job notices displayed on a double-sided bulletin board at the Recent Graduate

conference. Others perused the job notices to see how different practices advertised for veterinarians.

Do you have a job to post or are looking for a new job? Visit <https://aabp.org> and click on the Jobs tab on the home page where you can view current job postings or add a new job posting to the most-visited page on the site!



Networking Abounds at Welcome Reception

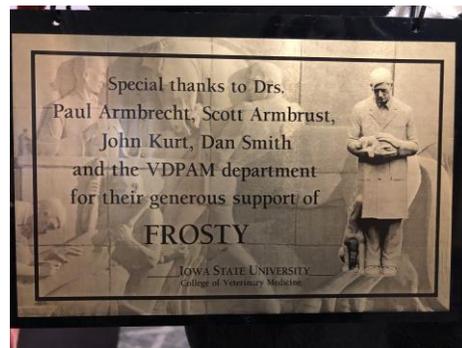
Kicking off the Recent Veterinary Graduate Conference was a welcome reception sponsored by Boehringer Ingelheim. Attendees were encouraged to reconnect with friends and former classmates as well as make new connections with peers.



“Frosty” Provided Hands-on Instruction

A special appearance by Iowa State University’s “Frosty”, a full-size, fiberglass cow used as an obstetric teaching model (and her full-size calf Snowflake), enabled attendees to get instruction and practice on normal and abnormal presentations of a calf at birth.

Dr. Caitlyn Wiley hauled Frosty from Iowa State to Columbus where she was parked in the corner of a ballroom (and the star of many selfies with hotel staff). After dinner Friday night, conference attendees were able to work with Frosty and her calf in a variety of obstetric situations.



Frosty was donated to Iowa State by Dr. Scott and Nancy Armbrust and others and has been an invaluable teaching model.

Giving Back to Scholarships

At the conference, attendees were encouraged to give back via a raffle to the scholarships they may have received in school, namely the Amstutz Scholarship Fund and the AABP Foundation-Zoetis Scholarship. Nearly \$2,300 was raised from the raffle (choice of an embroidered Carhartt vest or veterinary coveralls). Raffle winners were (L-R) Dr. David Walton, Dr. Marissa Hake, Dr. Elizabeth Alexander and Dr. Blaine Melody.



PRACTICE TIPS

Friday night dinner included a few great practice tips!

Palpating with Both Arms and Indispensable Surgery Tools

Dr. Jessie Bridges, De Pere, Wis., provided a great tip on the advantages of learning to palpate with both arms.

The pros of being ambidextrous include:

- Reduced wear and tear on one arm/joints
- Able to continue herd work if one hand or arm is injured
- Better positioning for safety and efficiency depending on which way the cows are turned on the palpation rail

The con is that you can get really dirty!

Bridges also discussed surgery tools she can't live without:

- **Large cruciate needles** – These are great for the uterus, abomasum, muscle, etc. as they are a taper needle with an easy to grab curve.



Dr. Jessie Bridges offers some practice tips to attendees.

- **Air mattress pump** – Using the deflate function is good for displaced abomasums, gas-filled cecums and other situations. Bridges covers the pump with a sterilized towel to operate the buttons.
- **Spiked lidocaine for sedation** – one bottle of lidocaine with 100-200mg of xylazine.
 - For smaller calves, use 100mg of xylazine. Bridges notes that it keeps the animal still and sleepy. She cautions that if you are

working in a very hot or cold area, to make sure to leave the animal in a comfortable temperature until it is fully awake.

- For springers and bulls, use 200mg xylazine. Bridges says this takes the edge off, especially will bulls that get too big before procedures have been done.
- Once the animal is sedated, block as per protocol.

Lumbosacral CSF Tap

Dr. Christine Navarre, Louisiana State University, provided some tips on performing a lumbosacral cerebral spinal fluid (CSF) tap. A CSF tap can be used in a diagnosis and prognosis of bacterial meningitis, even looking at it grossly in a field situation.

- The animal can be standing, sternal or in lateral recumbency (“dogsit” a downer).
- Keep the pelvis level.
- Use a sterile prep on the lumbosacral space.
- Use an 18-gauge 1.5” – 5” spinal needle – the longer it is the easier it is to get the angle off which you don’t want. Positioning is critical—straight up and down when looking from the back and perpendicular to the back when looking from the side. Do not hook the syringe to the needle to prevent blood contamination from laceration if the animal moves suddenly.



Dr. Christine Navarre gives a practice tip on CSF taps.

- Violent reactions to a CSF tap are rare in cattle.
- Gross visualization—if cloudy, suspect meningitis with poor prognosis; if clear, may still have mild meningitis but a better prognosis.
- You can analyze quickly within 30 minutes or fix with an equal volume of 90% ethanol to send to a lab.

Selfie Station a Hit with Attendees

#AABPRecentGrad2019 was the hashtag for the 2019 conference, and attendees were invited to share their pictures on social media to let their peers, colleagues and even clients know where they were.



View Sessions Using the BCI App

AABP members can also receive free CE credit by viewing presentations from the Recent Graduate conference (and other AABP conferences) on the Beef Cattle Institute (BCI) website which can be accessed from the www.aabp.org home page.



You can also download the mobile BCI Conference app by searching for it in the app store and get some education during your windshield time!

Presentations are available on the BCI site now!

Get Your CE certificates

Attendees can download and print their CE certificates from the 2019 AABP Recent Veterinary Graduate Conference. Log on to www.aabp.org and click on My Account under your name in the upper right hand corner. Scroll down to the Recent Graduate Conference and click on the RFID number. A record of sessions attended will come up which you can modify if it is incorrect. Click on "create your CE certificate" and print.

Who Attended the Conference?

The second AABP Recent Veterinary Graduate Conference was limited to veterinarians who graduated between 2011 and 2018. Here are some stats on the attendees:

- Almost 70% indicated their practice spent 50-100% of its time in cattle practice.
- 55% of attendees were predominately dairy, 33% were predominately beef, and 12% were equal beef and dairy.
- The major clinical skills attendees felt they were not well-prepared for post-graduation were surgery, C-sections, OB/calving and palpation.
- 94% of attendees felt externships were very important in learning clinical skills.
- 77% indicated that mentorship was important in their decision to join a practice.

Heard from Attendees Post-Conference

"I have a very deep appreciation for the small conference size, the top-level roundup of speakers, and especially the focus on practicality and briefly incorporating recent research updates into the larger clinical picture."

"...feeling heard and cared-for by the larger organization is of inestimable value."

"I found it to be especially beneficial to interact with other new practitioners who have the same daily struggles. It was a great way to recharge and be excited about the profession again as I think we tend to get caught up in the stress of the learning curve post-graduation."

"It allows us to have our own opportunity to interact with the organization and experts in our field. Developing these bonds will help the longevity of our careers."

"I really enjoyed that the material was applicable and something I can bring back and offer to my clients right away."

"I enjoyed the social aspect of the conference, meeting colleagues my same age or similar years out of practice and engaging in conversations. This was extremely positive from a mental health standpoint and expanding our network."

"Very good networking with peers and AABP leaders."

"I appreciated how approachable the speakers were."

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