8 newsletter, December 2013

# EAVLD Newsletter

## Foreword

### This newsletter...



Dear colleague

In this eighth issue of EAVLD Newsletter you will find announcement of the next EAVLD Congress 2014 and information about the WAVLD Congress 2013. Further there is an invitation to stand for the EAVLD board and to join Linkedin and a forum for isothermal amplification technologies. Finally, there is a presentation of a European reference laboratory for fish diseases, which is the first in a series to come in the following Newsletters.

## The 3rd Congress of the EAVLD, 12-15 October 2014 in Pisa, Italy

EAVLD and the Italian Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (SIDiLV) are happy to announce, that the 3rd EAVLD Congress on veterinary diagnostics will be held from 12th to 15th October 2014 in Pisa, Italy.

The EAVLD Congress takes place every two years. The first Congress was held in 2010 in Lelystad, the Netherlands, and the second in 2012 in Kazimierz Dolny, Poland. Both events showed that there is a need to present and discuss the development and use of veterinary diagnostic tools on a European level. Over the last decade, technological developments have given a huge boost to the possibilities in diagnostics in general, including the veterinary field. Our 3rd Congress in Pisa will be an excellent opportunity to share information about present and future developments.

Known worldwide for its leaning tower, Pisa is one of Tuscany's oldest and most fascinating cities. Pisa is a city of culture and art, with its historic churches, ancient palaces and bridges across the River Arno.

We are looking forward to meeting you in Pisa in 2014! Further information and updates are available on **www.eavld2014.org**



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## WAVLD Congress in Berlin 2013

The 16th International Symposium of the World Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (WAVLD) was held in Berlin, Germany from the 5th till the 8th of June 2013.

In total, 650 participants from 57 countries got informed during highly relevant and exciting presentations and were engaged in discussions. Presentations were given in plenary and parallel sessions, and participants received new information during satellite workshops organised by companies producing diagnostic test methods, the 10th OIE seminar and the 32nd symposium of AVID.
In total, 4 keynote lectures, 63 oral presentations and more than 200 posters were presented to the audience. This congress focussed on novel technologies in diagnostics, on-site tests and direct detection methods for pathogens (OMICS and biomarkers), but also on items more related to serology and epidemiology.

The 10th OIE seminar discussed the OIE and its network of Reference Centres, high-throughput sequencing, metagenomics and next-generation sequencing which might open new views on virus detection, virus evolution and epidemiology, the development of rapid and simple diagnostic test methods, mobile nucleic acid amplification and laser-based technology for the identification of pathogens.

One remarkable quote that we would like to share was presented by Andrew Soldan. During his keynote lecture he used a quote of Donald Rumsfeld, and related it to the detection of new pathogens and diseases: *"There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know"*.

***WAVLD member honoured and new board members.***
During the WAVLD conference diner, Dr. Yoshihiro Ozawa received the K.F. Meyer/James H. Steele Gold Headed Cane Award. Dr. Ozawa spent over ten years in developing a tissue-culture vaccine for African Horse Sickness which resulted in near eradication of the disease in the Near East and most Mediterranean countries. His is also well-known for his role in the eradication of Rinderpest, a joint campaign of the FAO and OIE.

Six board members left the WAVLD board and new members joined the board. The current WAVLD Board members are Craig N. Carter, (Executive Director; USA), Peter D. Kirkland (Australia), Analia Cobo (Uruguay), Terry F. McElwain (USA), Irene Schiller (Switzerland), Luis F. Calvinho (Argentina), Estela Cornaglia (Canada), Katsuaki Sugiura (Japan) and Gerard Wellenberg (The Netherlands).

In summary, this congress offered participants perfect opportunities to build up their network and knowledge. The congress was characterised by a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. See for more information: www.wavld2013-berlin.com

Photo: Six members, joining the WAVLD Board between 1980 and 1994, left the WAVLD Board (from the left to the right): Bernardo Carrillo (Argentina), Gerrit Borst (the Netherlands), Tony van Dreumel (Canada), Walter Bommeli (Switzerland) and Yoshihiro Ozawa (Japan). Konrad Eugster (USA), not on this photo, also left the WAVLD board.

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## Time again for elections!

During the General Meeting at the third EAVLD congress in Italy, 2014, new board members for the EAVLD will have to be elected. During this meeting we will bid farewell to several board members who were already part of the provisional board that founded the EAVLD in 2009. After 5 years of service, their terms are up, and they cannot be re-elected. These board members are: Andrew Soldan, Frederik Widén, Sven Erik Jorsal, Jose Antonio Garcia, and Martin Beer.

Board members will participate in regular board meetings (on average every two months) by teleconference. Besides the secretarial and treasury duties, board members have active roles as web master, editor of the newsletter, coordinator for country representatives, etc. If you want to be involved more actively in the EAVLD, you can contact any board member for more information. If you consider putting yourself up for election, please contact the secretary of the EAVLD (Gerard Wellenberg or Kirsty Line: secretary@eavld.org).

Board members serve for a period of two years, with a possible extension for one other term of two years. An exception is the election for the vice-president, who will, following his two year term as vice president, serve for two years as president and another two years as past-president.

## EAVLD ISOTHERMAL AMPLIFICATION FORUM

LAMP/SDA/HDA/NEAR/RPA?

Are there any EAVLD members who would be interested in exchanging knowledge and ideas on the use of isothermal amplification technologies in veterinary laboratories? Would you like to share your experiences of these techniques and learn from the experiences of others? If so would you like to join an EAVLD forum on this topic? The format of the forum can be tailored to the wishes of members involved.

In the first instance please e-mail your interest to Andrew Soldan (andrew.soldan@ahvla.gsi.gov.uk). In one or two sentences please state your past experience with isothermal amplification techniques and what you would hope to gain from an EAVLD forum on this subject. If enough people are interested the first forum will probably be by telephone conference in early 2014.

## Join our group on LinkedIn!

Since 2011, EAVLD also has a group on LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/groups/European-Association-Veterinary-Laboratory-Diagnosticians-4010747/about). This group has now close to 450 members and is growing on a weekly basis. It is not a full alternative to our association, as none of the benefits of being an EAVLD member apply to the members of the LinkidIn group.

EAVLD members joining the LinkedIn group can, however, also connect to other professionals in the same field who are not (yet) a member of EAVLD. In addition, The LinkedIn group contains a discussion forum, which is open to all members of the group. So if you are not yet a member of our LinkedIn group (or not even a member of LinkedIn at all), consider joining us.

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network with over 250 million members and growing rapidly. LinkedIn is a way to stay connected to your most valued colleagues, keep track of them, communicate to them, but also to expand your network through them. Also for career development and finding (international) job opportunities, LinkedIn is becoming more and more important.

## European Union Reference Laboratory for Fish Diseases

National Veterinary Institute, Technical University of Denmark, Copenhagen

# The coordinator and supervisor of the European fish diseases laboratories

The European Union Reference Laboratory (EURL) for Fish Diseases was established at the National Veterinary Institute in Denmark, in 1995. The laboratory ensures the quality of the diagnosis and surveillance of serious infectious fish diseases in Europe both through counseling and control. This work is crucial for the aquaculture industry in Europe.

The aquaculture industry in Europe produces more than 1.3 million tons of fish annually with a value of 3.2 billion Euro, and it directly employs 65.000 people. Those are numbers that the EU would like to see increase, partly because farmed fish can relieve the pressure on marine fish stocks. Nevertheless an increase of production requires a sustainable and healthy aquaculture, and in this matter the National Veterinary Institute plays an important role.

Why is that so? Well, in 1994 the EU appointed this Danish institute as the 'European Community Reference Laboratory for Fish Diseases' (EURL-Fish) a title it has carried ever since.

"We are a cornerstone in terms of having healthy fish and a sustainable aquaculture production in Europe, because we help ensuring the quality of the diagnostic methods and disease surveillance programs of all the national reference laboratories for fish diseases," says Niccolò Vendramin, coordinator of the European Reference Laboratory at the National Veterinary Institute.

The main purpose of the European Reference Laboratory is to check the quality and to harmonize the procedures and methods used in diagnosis and monitoring of fish diseases in the EU Member States.

"Our job is partly to improve the techniques that are being used to diagnose the various fish diseases, and then to communicate the techniques to the national laboratories. This requires that we constantly keep ourselves updated on what's new in diagnostics and fish diseases," says Niccolò Vendramin.

The primary focus of the EURL-Fish is on infectious diseases that can have major consequences to fish farming in Europe. These include the extremely lethal viral haemorrhagic septicemia in rainbow trout, infectious hematopoietic necrosis in trout and salmon, infectious salmon anemia (salmon flu) that leads to anemia and organ bleeding in Atlantic salmon, as well as Koi herpes virus that affect carps.

**Test and support**

One of the annual tasks of the reference laboratory is to conduct an inter-laboratory proficiency test in which the diagnoses of fish diseases in the different European national laboratories are being tested. Between 40 and 45 national laboratories participate in the proficiency test and they are tested on both methods based on cultivation in cell cultures, as well as the DNA method PCR.

"Every year we choose which virus isolates we will send out in the proficiency test, and each participating laboratory receives about ten ampoules only labeled with numbers. The laboratories must then identify the virus in each ampoule, and send their answers back to us. There may also be tricky samples without any virus or several viruses at the same time," says Niccolò Vendramin.

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Afterwards, the Reference Laboratory analyzes the results from the laboratories, and reports them back to the participants as well as the EU authorities.

But Niccolò Vendramin and his colleagues in the Reference Laboratory are much more than just a control unit, they also work as consultants who visit and give advice to laboratories about their diagnostic methods and techniques.

The Reference Laboratory also organizes courses where the participants are taught topics such as diagnostic procedures, molecular biology techniques, and bioinformatics. Each year the Reference Laboratory also holds a conference, that runs for a couple of days, where delegates from the national laboratories update each other on the latest research in the field and exchange knowledge on diagnostics and data on diseases in each country.

Through reports from the national laboratories, the Reference Laboratory also monitors and surveys the occurrence of emerging diseases and outbreaks in Europe. Furthermore, the Reference Laboratory assists the national laboratories in outbreaks by confirming their diagnosis and by analyzing the prevalence of the disease through tests and characterization of shipped samples. Besides working with known diseases, the Reference Laboratory is also responsible for collecting and communicating information on exotic and endemic diseases that may be transmitted to the European aquaculture. As part of this EURL-Fish developed and established the database Fishpathogens.eu that offers a platform for sharing available information on fish pathogens' isolates and their sequences. It is the only one available in Europe that merges biomolecular features of aetiological agents and epidemiological information of fish disease pathogens.

**Enhancing the quality**

"I can tell through our proficiency tests, courses and workshops that the quality has increased significantly over the years and close collaborations between laboratories have now been established in Europe, within a veterinary field that is not given much attention in several EU Member States" says Professor Niels Jørgen Olesen who have been director of the European Reference Laboratory for Fish Diseases since 1995.

Read more about the European Reference Laboratory at the website www.EURL-fish.eu.

Contact Niels Jørgen Olesen, njol@vet.dtu.dk, DVM, PhD, Niccoló Vendramin niven@vet.dtu.dk, DVM Coordinator, Mette Buck Jensen mebu@vet.dtu.dk, Communication Manager

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Two training courses on diagnostic methods for fish diseases 2013 were held at DTU Vet in Aarhus, Denmark in February 2013

The Annual Workshop for fish diseases laboratories was held at DTU Vet in Copenhagen in May 2013