



SAVA CONGRESS 2022: Veterinary History Session

Prof Gareth Bath



For the first time since the World Veterinary Association Congress was held in Cape Town in 2011, the Veterinary History Society (previously a SAVA Committee) arranged a whole-day session on Veterinary History at the 2022 SAVA Congress.

The first speaker was Ivan Lwanga-Iga, who gave an account of veterinary services in the former Transkei and Ciskei between 1979 and 1994, with all its difficulties as well as the achievements under very challenging circumstances in the then Bantustan era.

An account followed this presentation by Annette Boshoff of the great number of varied items of historical interest that she had extracted and carefully recorded and classified from the earliest copies of SAVA VetNews to the present. These items are now available to anyone seeking historical information related to veterinary science and the profession.

The third speaker was Gareth Bath, who outlined the events and forerunners that eventually led to the formation of the South African Veterinary Association in 1920, and its subsequent expansion of services to members and the profession over the following century.

After lunch, Livio Heath summarized the research done by Onderstepoort on local Foot-and-Mouth Disease. It was clear that many major differences have been identified between the disease caused by local serotypes and the serotypes found in the Northern Hemisphere. These differences require very different control measures.

The next speaker was Johan Schoeman, who summarised the research carried out by the Onderstepoort Faculty into canine babesiosis over many decades.

The knowledge generated has led to a much clearer understanding of the many factors involved in determining the course and outcomes of the disease, its prognostic indicators and recommended treatments.

A presentation by Ken Pettey followed, an account of the proud history of the short-lived Medunsa Veterinary Faculty and its achievements, including many illustrious graduates, as well as the events and circumstances that led to the amalgamation with the Onderstepoort faculty.

The last contribution was presented by Rudolph Bigalke and was a record of the most important veterinary historians of the past century.

He summarised briefly what each contributed to our knowledge of important events, people, veterinary science and the profession. Without their research, much more of our history would have remained unknown or been lost.

More information about the seven presentations can be obtained directly from the presenters or through the VHS Secretary, Mrs Susan Marsh, at susan.marsh57@gmail.com