

Plenary Session

Tuesday, September 1

Welcome
Dr. Gordon A. Atkins

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Plenary Session of this unique and historic meeting marking the 25th Conference of the American Association of Bovine Practitioners and the 17th Conference of the World Association for Buiatrics. I am honored to serve as president of AABP during this special year and have the opportunity of welcoming so many colleagues from around the world.

To WAB President Espinasse, his Executive Committee, and all our international visiting members of the World Association for Buiatrics, may I extend a warm welcome from all of us at AABP.

Over the next few days as we renew old friendships, develop new ones and learn together, I hope we will all come to more fully appreciate the major significance of this gathering. We have men and women from around the world, from different countries, from different languages, from different cultures, all working together toward a common goal. That is to ensure mankind access to the safest and most wholesome animal food products from a cattle population receiving the most advanced care with regard to disease prevention and treatment, nutrition, and comfort.

AABP is delighted to host all of you and we hope your stay is both informative and enjoyable and that together we truly advance the practice of bovine veterinary medicine.

In North America, bovine veterinary medicine has indeed come a long way in the past 25 years. As we partake of the excellent continuing education opportunities available at this conference, we should be mindful of the dedicated leaders of AABP who have made all this possible. This type of unselfish commitment has developed AABP into the most outstanding source of continuing education for the practicing bovine veterinarian in North America. Twenty-five years ago, we saw a program emphasizing the treatment and prevention of disease in the individual animal and today the emphasis is on herd medicine, record analysis, cow comfort, proper ventilation, care of the environment, and quality assurance.

The strength of AABP has been our commitment to remain proactive and adjust to

changes in the cattle industry. It is not that the treatment and prevention of disease in the individual animal is any less significant today but rather that farms have become fewer and much larger, a much greater level of productive efficiency has been necessary for economic viability in both beef and dairy cattle enterprises. The bovine practitioner has learned how valuable it is to look at the forest as well as the trees.

I think it is useful to review our conference programs over the past 25 years to identify the sensitivity of this organization to respond to the need for a transition in continuing education priority. While we have always provided programs with emphasis on both the general aspects of bovine veterinary medicine and the specific needs of the dairy, cow/calf and feedlot sectors, it was not until 1972 with the introduction of the pre-convention seminar program that AABP became the leader in the training and promotion of herd health and production medicine.

The Quality Milk Seminar was introduced as the first seminar and now has the distinction of being the longest continuously running AABP seminar. We are deeply indebted to Dr. Jim Jarrett and his faculty over the years for providing the training and motivation which has influenced the growth of so many of our members and contributed so greatly to the quality of the milk supply in both the United States and Canada. 1977 saw the introduction of the Basic Nutrition Seminar in St. Louis and this program has also run continuously since that time.

The last fifteen years have seen a massive explosion in the area of Production Medicine Continuing Education. Our conference themes of 1979 and 1980 tell the story of this transition.

- 1979 - The Changing Profession Serving a Changing Agriculture
- 1980 - Total Herd Management - The Team Approach

While the TI-59 programmable calculators were introduced to the seminars in 1980, it was not until 1982 that we had a seminar with hands on use of microcomputers. Ladies and Gentlemen, this was 10 years ago and I want to draw attention to the 1982 program and the specifications of the computers used: "Twenty participants will work in pairs on CPM 64K, 8" Drive Microcomputers". Just 10 years

later we use 486 SX Notebook Computers which run at 25 MHz with 4 MB Ram Memory and 120 MB Hard Drives.

This year we have no less than six seminars which use computers, 2 days of software demonstration presentations, a computer software shareware library and a functional computer bulletin board system. Today our members utilize computer technology for herd monitoring, ration analysis, practice accounting and management, research analysis and decision analysis based on profitability.

In addition to the skills in diagnosis and treatment the successful bovine practitioner of today must be a consultant and communicator. No longer can we concentrate only on the treatment and prevention of disease, we must be knowledgeable on the issues of drug residues, animal welfare, and environmental protection.

The veterinary manpower area and particularly the supply of food animal veterinarians are often issues which have undergone intensive change over our first 25 years of existence. The late sixties and early seventies saw shortages of food animal practitioners and educational institutions responded by building new veterinary colleges and increasing the capacity of existing facilities. Through the early and mid-eighties many veterinarians expressed a concern over the possible over supply of food animal veterinarians, but they did not anticipate the universal shortage which was to become so evident during the early nineties.

AABP has given priority to gathering data, contacting deans of all North American Veterinary Schools and attempting to develop a strategy to encourage greater interest among veterinary students to pursue careers in bovine veterinary medicine. Some of the conclusions reached were that the number of veterinary students from farm backgrounds has decreased greatly and the perceived hard working lifestyle of the bovine practitioner was unattractive to many.

I believe we have all reached the realization that the veterinary student of today has a capability

equal or greater than ever for fulfilling the expectations of bovine veterinarians and their clients. The key difference is that we all must work harder at being the role models and providing the opportunity and motivation to encourage the bright young men and women in veterinary schools to become tomorrow's leaders in bovine veterinary medicine.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I think the importance of AABP to each one of us over the past 25 years can best be answered by asking ourselves where we would be without AABP. Therefore, we must pay tribute to those individuals responsible for the birth of our organization and with the vision of developing it into the stature it now enjoys. No one has contributed to the development and success of AABP more than Dr. Harold Amstutz who has served as the Chief Executive Officer since our organization's birth.

Harold, we cannot express enough gratitude for the enormous contribution you have made to the professional development of so many members. We are also indebted to many of these members throughout the years for giving so freely of their time, expertise and motivation to inspire the rest of us to be progressive, to be proactive, and to take that step beyond the comfort zone.

The first 25 years of AABP has provided us with many rich memories—from the honoring of outstanding individuals through awards presentations, the promotion of good research through the Research Assistantship Award, the opportunity for both Canadians and Americans to serve on the executive board, the enjoyment of beautiful convention sites, and the exchange of fellowship and professional dialogue with colleagues from around the world.

It is nice to savour the success we have accomplished over the last 25 years, however, no successful organization can survive by resting on the laurels of the past. The challenge we all face is to emulate the ideals of our past leaders and continue to strive for excellence and display the pride we have in being bovine practitioners.

