

2025 AABP Recent Graduate Conference

February 14-15, 2025

Norman, Oklahoma

Be The Beginning

2025 AABP Recent Graduate Conference Encouraged Attendees to “Be the Beginning”

Attendees at this conference were inspired to “Be the Beginning” in their veterinary businesses.

AABP members who are recent veterinary graduates were inspired to “Be the Beginning” at the 2025 8th AABP Recent Graduate Conference held Feb. 14-15 in Norman, Okla. In-person attendance was limited to AABP members who graduated veterinary school eight or fewer years ago. This conference had the second highest attendance with 242 veterinarians plus 22 accompanying persons, and 60 attendees who attended preconference seminars. In addition, seven families registered for the childcare room which is the highest number since the conference has offered this family-friendly benefit. The conference also had its largest number of exhibitors in the trade show with 26 companies/associations exhibiting.

With a theme of “Be the Beginning” and offering 15.5 RACE-approved CE credits, in addition to general, beef and dairy, clinical skills, practice management, and mixed animal sessions, there were also three day-long, intensive preconference seminars on dystocias and fetotomies, beef nutrition and dairy diagnostics. “The theme was fostered with great speakers, starting with concepts related to developing ourselves to prepare and strive for our fullest potential,” explains AABP Emerging Leader and Program Chair Dr. Cody Sacquitne. “The program brought different perspectives to help recent graduates excel – regardless of their practice type. The useful information will help spark new ideas and initiatives for immediate use.”

The program committee, consisting of Sacquitne, Dr. Colleen Potter (dairy), Dr. Patrick Schmitz (beef) and Dr. Annika Johnson (beef), matched the demographic of attendees. Kicking off the program was a keynote by Dr. Michelle Schack on enhancing sustainability through animal and human well-being. Session topics included remote consultation, solo practice, extra-label drug use, diagnostic, biosecurity, interpretation, cattle handling and well-being, *Salmonella* Dublin, parlor evaluation, implant and vaccination strategies, repro topics, radiology, mixed animal sessions including small ruminants and backyard poultry and swine, and much more.

“The scientific and personal information from this meeting will help push the bovine veterinarians who attended to ‘Be the Beginning,’” Sacquitne adds. “This doesn’t go without emphasizing our finale, Dr. Jen Schleining, whose emotional closing showed us that failure is not the opposite of success, but it is indeed part of success.”



2025 AABP Recent Graduate Conference Program Committee, L-R: Dr. Colleen Potter (Dairy), Dr. Cody Sacquitne (Chair and AABP Emerging Leader), Dr. Patrick Schmitz (Beef), and Dr. Annika Johnson (Beef).

“This conference continues to grow with new content and continuing education for bovine and mixed animal veterinarians at the beginning stages of their career,” says AABP Executive Director Dr. Fred Gingrich. “Engaging recent graduates in rural practice, providing networking opportunities with mentors and peers, and ensuring the AABP is an inclusive and welcoming organization for all cattle veterinarians is an important to our mission. The ultimate goal is to improve retention of bovine veterinarians in rural practice, and this conference is a positive step in that direction.”

AABP President Dr. Dave Sjeklocha has attended several Recent Graduate conferences since its inception, sometimes as a speaker and sometimes as a member of the AABP Executive Committee. “It is so refreshing to see these veterinarians interacting and learning in their young careers,” he says. “These veterinarians truly look at CE as something they ‘get’ to do, as opposed to something they ‘have’ to do. I hope that attitude stays with them for the rest of their careers. Attending the Recent Graduate Conference is one of the best decisions a new veterinarian can make.”

The Recent Veterinary Graduate Conference was launched in 2018 as a result of the different needs of AABP members who are recent graduates, many of whom are unable to attend the AABP Annual Conference in the fall.

Registrants and AABP members can access the RACE-approved recorded presentations as a free member benefit through the Beef Cattle Institute website accessible at <https://aabp.org>.

#RG2025

Preconference Seminars Offered In-depth Instruction

Three well-attended preconference seminars helped attendees take home practical skills to put immediately into practice.

This year's offerings included Dystocia and Fetotomies, Beef Nutrition and Dairy Diagnostics.

Dystocias and Fetotomies

The sold-out Bovine Dystocia and Fetotomy preconference seminar was a hands-on team effort presented by Drs. Meredyth Jones-Cook, Caitlin Wiley and Jen Roberts who discussed fundamentals including evaluation and local anesthesia.

"We gave the participants strategies for dealing with challenging dystocias in both beef and dairy cattle," Jones-Cook said, "and decision making regarding whether to go forward with manual delivery and when and how to decide when to go to fetotomy or C-section." Proper decision making and techniques protect the veterinarian physically and help ensure the welfare of the cow and calf.

This hands-on seminar included using cadaver calves and obstetric stands to practice calving techniques and use calving instruments such as chains and fetotomy tools.



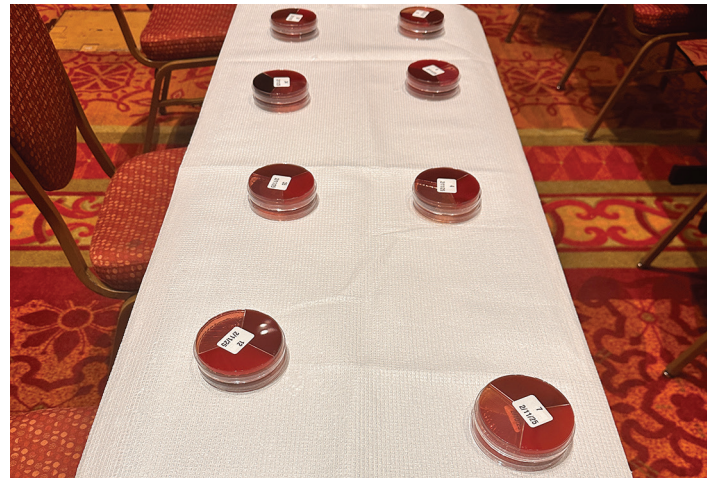
Dr. Caitlin Wiley assists a participant with a calving model.

Dairy Diagnostics

The Dairy Diagnostics preconference seminar was presented by Drs. Greg Goodell and Pat Gorden.

The seminar showed attendees how to expand diagnostic services in their practices. Attendees practiced reading agar plates for major pathogens and discussed how to set-up in clinic and on-farm mastitis lab.

Discussions included implementing quality control programs for these labs and decisions leading to treatment recommendations including utilization of antimicrobial sensitivity testing. The second half of the seminar focused on utilization of advanced diagnostics such as ELISA, PCR and other technologies in practice.



Attendees worked with culture plates in the seminar.

Welcome Reception Kicks off the Conference

Thank you, Boehringer Ingelheim for the fantastic welcome reception! Dr. Jen Roberts welcomed all attendees to the event.



Dr. Jen Roberts, Boehringer Ingelheim

Human and Animal Well-Being Focus of Keynote Address

Dr. Michelle Schack kicked off the conference with her keynote presentation “Enhancing sustainability through animal and human well-being”. She asked the attendees what sustainability meant to them using the Slido word cloud – the word that came up the most was “longevity”, followed by “future”, “balance” and “efficiency”.

Schack said the three pillars of the human element of sustainability includes compassion, collaboration and connection.

Focusing in on compassion, Schack said you should ask yourself if you have compassion in your personal life and practice, and especially when on farm:

- Can you see a problem from another perspective?
- Can you see what barriers others are facing?
- Do those people have the training and tools they need?

“It’s not just about compassion for animals,” she said, “it’s also compassion for the people caring for the animals. When we care about the humans, welfare improves.”

Schack asked attendees what they thought the biggest barrier to employee training is, and the overwhelming answer was that farmers don’t see training as the veterinarian’s role. Other barriers were time, language and they didn’t know how. “Compassion taught me to care about the environment, animals and the people who care for them,” Schack said.

“You need to see things from the farmer’s perspective and see the struggles the employees have, and what they need to succeed.” One way to do that, she said, is to collaborate with others to enhance your value.” This can include collaboration with the farm’s milk quality lab, industry reps, nutritionists and even the local slaughterhouse. “This can grow your business,” she said. “We have a shared commitment to making the industry better.”

Managing Clients in Solo Practice

As a solo practitioner, it is vital to set the expectations for clients at all levels. Solo practitioner Dr. Sarah Blackwell said, “The solo practitioner is one person, and many clients expect them to ‘do it all’. To clients, this means being available 24/7, always responding quickly, never missing a day, and prioritizing their animals.”

Unmanaged client expectations can make a solo practitioner forget the reasons they started their practice. Blackwell said it’s important to establish and enforce boundaries with clients. “To build the clientele that appreciates the solo practitioner’s expectations, established boundaries prior to the first appointment and clearly communicated animal husbandry needs are vital. Hours of operation, prices or estimates, services offered, and patient after care should be discussed prior to their appointment.” Enforcement can be difficult, but clear consequences, such as additional fees (i.e. late fees) or loss of services, are important.

Blackwell said it all comes down to communication whether in-person or remote.

“The Golden Rule still applies,” she said. “Treat others the way you’d like to be treated. Managing client interactions and their animal’s care should align with how you’d expect to be treated at a veterinary clinic.”

“Overherd” at Recent Grad

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“Cattle remember the interactions they have with humans being either positive or negative; every interaction can be positive, regardless of the action.”

Dr. Tom Noffsinger

Backyard Poultry Medicine for Cattle Veterinarians

The Recent Graduate Conference had something for everyone, including information on other species attendees may encounter in practice.

Dr. Valerie Marcano talked about backyard poultry flocks and flock examinations. “Subjective information varies significantly between backyard flocks, and it is possible to miss factors that can impact the overall health of the bird and the flock. The subjective should include information regarding morbidity and mortality, as well as current medication, vaccines and supplements. It is common for management practices to lead to stress.”

Marcano suggested using FLAWLESS as a reminder of areas to evaluate during exams:

- F – food
- L – litter/flooring
- A – air
- W – water
- L – lights
- E – environment
- S – sanitation, staff
- S – security, space

“The physical examination or objective portion of the visit should include evaluation of parameters observed in any other species including weight, capillary refill time, temperature, pulse and respiratory rate. All systems should be evaluated, including integumentary, orthopedic, cardiovascular, musculoskeletal and urogenital.”

The assessment should include considerations of species variations, such as the lack of lymph nodes in chickens and turkeys. “Poultry are subject to a variety of diseases, including infectious nutritional and genetic diseases. The variable plan may include anything from quarantine, treatment and diagnostic sampling to euthanasia.”



Dr. Valerie Marcano



Dr. Drew Magstadt

What Can Diagnostic Tests Tell You?

“Do your test results mean what you think they mean?” diagnostician Dr. Drew Magstadt asked attendees. He said in certain situations, diagnostic testing can play an integral role in beef and dairy operations through accurate diagnosis of disease and reduction of disease transmission risk. “The quality and applicability of diagnostic results are dependent on the submission of proper samples and appropriate interpretation of what test results mean, along with an understanding of what test results do not mean, within the overall context of the situation,” he said.

While there are a lot of diagnostic capabilities available, there are limitations to tests and interpretation mistakes, Magstadt said. “No single diagnostic test is perfect; all tests and testing methods have limitations that can and should impact how we interpret results.” Magstadt gave an overview of the limitations of some current tests:

- Molecular testing is incredibly sensitive, yet this presents potential issues when it comes to the detection of endemic/commensal pathogens or recent modified live viral vaccination use.
- Bacterial culture requires live organisms and can be severely impacted by post mortem overgrowth or recent treatment; similar issues often arise with isolation of commensal bacteria.
- Serologic evaluation of antibody is highly dependent on the stage of disease and previous vaccination history.
- Toxicology/analytical chemistry testing can be hard to interpret due to improper sample preservation or delays in collection/preservation; these types of tests are often best performed using specific sample types that may be overlooked during a routine necropsy (such as ocular fluid, bile, urine or rumen content).

“Understanding the limitations of diagnostic testing is an important part of result interpretation and can help establish a proper degree of confidence,” Magstadt noted.

“Overherd” at Recent Grad

“It’s not just about compassion for animals. It’s also compassion for the people caring for the animals. When we care about the humans, welfare improves.”

Dr. Michelle Schack in her keynote presentation on human and animal well-being.

Communicating Policies to Clients

Structuring emergency and after-hours care can be an issue for many practices, and communicating policies to clients can be a challenge. Dr. Michelle Buckley said there are tactics that practitioners can implement to motivate clients to detect and communicate earlier about potential after-hours cases emphasis on routine preventive care and herd management plans that can help to significantly decrease the number of late-night calls that practitioners receive.

When informing clients of policy changes, she said to publicize, publicize, publicize! “Nobody should have the excuse of ‘I didn’t know that was a thing now,’” she said. “Between social media, practice newsletters and in-clinic signage and staff updates, clients should be getting the message that these changes are in the best interest of their animals and themselves while also being good for their veterinarians.” Emphasizing the positive financial and welfare implications of early interventions should be motivation enough for most clients.

“In my experience, I never got a complaint about my after-hours/emergency policy from an established client,” she explained. “Establishing this policy and sticking to it helped me to feel respected, appreciated and well-compensated by my clientele. My regularly scheduled call load did not suffer and I worked at least one 12+ hour day per week.”



Dr. Michelle Buckley

Vaxxinoa Sponsors Friday Lunch

Thank you, Vaxxinoa, for being a long-time support of our Friday lunch for Recent Grad attendees! Dr. Halley Fobes welcomed attendees.



Dr. Halley Fobes

Jones-Cook Gives Tips on Small Ruminants

Dr. Meredyth Jones-Cook gave tips when working for small farms with small ruminants:

- First, make farm visits whenever possible. Most health problems stem from husbandry shortfalls, and it is impossible to get a really good idea of how animals are managed when they are being brought into your clinic.
- Charge by the hour. Not only will you be investigating how the animals are managed, but you will likely spend considerable time educating the client in proper care. A flat exam or farm visit fee will often be inadequate.
- Small landholders are strongly drawn to internet information. A “stay off the internet” approach will not work. A better and more effective strategy she has found is to provide them with sites, publications or books where she has found accurate information. Take every opportunity to teach and provide handouts and written protocols so that they have something to reference when you’re not around or available.
- Given that most small farms do not have a typical production calendar to guide vaccination and parasite monitoring timing, Jones-Cook has found that the small animal vaccine reminder approach is very helpful in keeping these herd health tasks on track.



Dr. Meredyth Jones-Cook

Freezing/thawing Semen and Nutrition Impacts on Reproduction

Dr. Pat Comyn spoke in the Beef session on freezing and thawing semen and how nutrition can factor in reproduction. He said of factors contributing to a successful artificial insemination event, the following points all factor in:

1. Nutrition
2. Management (executing protocols and adequate facilities)
3. Semen or embryo quality
4. Capability of practitioner or technician

“Of these points, nutrition has the largest impact on reproductive success,” he said. “A veterinary practitioner needs to understand and be able to communicate to a producer the importance of digestible NDF and protein and where this sits to microbial production of amino acids, volatile fatty acids, vitamins, etc.”

He added that it must be said that trace mineral and vitamin deficiency will certainly lead to poor reproductive outcomes as well. “There is an opportunity for a practitioner to gather samples via liver biopsy and serum sampling for trace mineral and vitamin adequacy,” Comyn noted. “This information can form a backbone for nutritional consultation.”



Dr. Pat Comyn

“Overherd” at Recent Grad

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Individuals who realize that time stretches to make room for things that matter and invest in mindfully choosing those activities that are meaningful, will rarely feel short on time.”

Dr. Eric Rooker in the Practice Management session.

“Overheard” at Recent Grad

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“The single most important testing method available to practicing veterinarians is their own power of observation, and performing necropsies.”

Dr. Drew Magstadt on diagnostics

Carry All of That Great Information!

Thanks, Elanco Animal Health, for sponsoring the great bags! Bag front and back modeled here by speaker Dr. Anne (Budzinski) Satkowiak (left) and Recent Grad Program Committee (beef) member Dr. Annika Johnson.



L-R: Dr. Anne (Budzinski) Satkowiak and Dr. Annika Johnson.

Milking Equipment Analysis

Development of milking equipment analysis to expand your practice can initially be daunting. However, individuals need to realize that no matter how large or complex the milking system is, “...the basic components of all systems are just multiples of the basic units,” said Dr. Pat Gorden.

Additionally, it must be remembered that milking equipment is only one contributor to overall milk quality on a dairy. “So, evaluating milking equipment without assessing milk harvest technician activity, the cows and their environment, and overall farm management, will often fail to lead to improvements in milk quality.”

Managing Remote Consultation in Practice

Practice owner Dr. Alexandru Pop discussed remote consultation and charging for it in the Practice Management session. “Effectively presenting consultation fees requires a shift in communication,” Pop said. “Instead of stating, ‘I have to charge for this service,’ veterinarians should highlight the benefits to the client: ‘For \$X.XX, you’ll receive a personalized assessment ensuring the best decision for your animals.’ Framing remote consultations as an advantage rather than a compromise can further enhance clients’ perceived value of the service.”

Pop said rather than positioning remote consults as secondary to in-person visits, veterinarians can emphasize the efficiency and cost savings they offer. “For instance, rather than saying, ‘Since I can’t be there, we can do a remote consult,’ a more effective approach would be, ‘The quickest way to address this issue is to schedule a consultation where we analyze records and images together,’” he said.

Consultations held remotely can also increase your availability, resulting in faster interventions and more favorable case outcomes and well as lowering costs for clients, as early intervention frequently costs much less than delaying treatment.

As with any service shift, veterinarians should anticipate and address client objections. Focusing the conversation on highlighting the value brought to the client rather than defending the justification of the service will lead to much more favorable outcomes and increased customer satisfaction. Pop said a common client concern may be that they have never had to pay for this before. “Acknowledging the historical precedent of informal consultations while explaining the increasing demand for veterinary time can help ease resistance.” He says another objection is, “But it only takes a few minutes!” “This perception undervalues the years of training, experience and liability associated with professional veterinary advice,” he explains. Reinforcing that even brief recommendations can have a significant impact on herd health, and be the fastest way to implement therapy, can help convey the value of the service.”



Dr. Alexandru Pop



Virbac table top exhibit at the AABP Recent Graduate Conference tradeshow.

Conference Trade Show Offered Valuable Information

The AABP Recent Graduate Conference once again held a successful tradeshow that offered table top exhibits from 26 companies and organizations. Breaks and social hours were held in the trade show area for maximum exposure of attendees to exhibitors. Attendees were able to spend time and learn about the exhibitors' products. We thank all of our exhibitors!

Dairy Ventilation Assessment

Ventilation is the provision of fresh air into a building, which displaces warm, humid and contaminated air from the barn. Courtney Halbach, MBA, said, "Improper ventilation puts cows and calves at risk for poor respiratory health during the winter and heat stress during the summer. Therefore, it is important to exhaust dust, moisture, heat and noxious gases from the barn at adequate ventilation rates year-round."

Halbach said providing appropriate ventilation rates year-round and monitoring air speeds in the animal microenvironment are important for maintaining the health and productivity of the herd.

"Visual assessments of the barn and cows can determine if the ventilation and heat abatement assessments are working properly, and tools such as foggers and anemometers can be used to demonstrate and quantify air flow in the barn," she explained. "Once measurements are taken, adjustments to the number of fans, fan location, angle, and spacing, and modifications to inlet location or baffle placement, can be made to improve the ventilation system."

"Overherd" at Recent Grad

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By raising the standard for how clients respect our time and services, we are also raising the standard of care for our patients.”

Dr. Michelle Buckley

Dealing with Adult Horn Issues

Conditions involving the horns of adult cattle requiring veterinary attention are not infrequent. Horns are desirable in certain breeds of cattle (i.e. Longhorns and some foundation genetics) and for cattle engaged in certain disciplines (i.e. rodeo bulls). "Broken horns, skull fractures at the base of the horn, sinusitis with or without a history of surgical dehorning, and trauma are just some of the reasons horned cattle present to veterinarians," said presenter Dr. Jennifer Schleining.

Head trauma of cattle involving the horns can occur in many different locations for many different reasons. "Horns can be fractured as the result of a fight between animals, getting the head and/or horns stuck in the fence or gate, as the result of an accident in the hydraulic chute, or from predator attacks," she added. "Depending on the location of the fracture, the horn could simply be trimmed back past the fracture line, or, in more severe cases, the horn surgically removed."

If the horn is transected past the fracture line and the sinus is opened (but was distant from, and unaffected by, the trauma) capping the end of the horn with polymethylmethacrylate or an epoxy is warranted. Historically, the treatment for horn fractures at the base of the horn has been surgical removal. "If the fracture is open or if there is substantial soft tissue injury or infection at the site, removal of the horn and aggressive wound management should be implemented to support second intention healing," Schleining explained.

Job Board Overflows with 85 Opportunities

Need a job? There were 85 job postings submitted by AABP members on the double-sided job boards. Most of these are also on the AABP website at <https://aabp.org> under the Classifieds tab, or go directly to <http://aabp.org/jobs/jobs/default.asp> where you can sort by job type, location, etc. If you sent in a job board notice for Recent Grad, make sure you have your job posted on the website as well! Posting jobs on the AABP classifieds page on the website is a free member benefit!



Financial Health Audit

Now is the time to do a financial health audit whether you are a solo practitioner or work in a practice or other veterinary business. Dr. Anne (Budzinski) Satkowiak talked to attendees about doing an ever-important financial health audit.

Satkowiak talked about goal setting as part of this audit. “The first thing about assessing our current financial picture and how we can set ourselves up for a comfortable future is sitting down and thinking about our goals—short term and long term,” she said.

“Once we figure out what our goals are we can start to uncover how our money and time are going to aid us reaching those goals. We will need to look at our income and expenses and how they can be tweaked to work toward our goals.”



Dr. Anne (Budzinski) Satkowiak

“Backyard Pig Stuff”

Got some pigs in your practice area and not sure how to deal with them? Dr. Jordan Gebhardt presented “Backyard pig stuff cow vets need to know”. He gave some information on mycotoxins. Mycotoxins are an area of importance where a baseline level of understanding is helpful, he said. “Some key things to remember is that aflatoxin is important because of the potentially carcinogenic nature of the toxin which the Food and Drug Administration takes seriously, and there are FDA Action Levels for aflatoxin, meaning it is illegal for feed manufacturers to sell feed that has levels above that threshold,” he explained.

Fumonisin, deoxynivalenol and zearalenone are also mycotoxins to be aware of. “Fumonisin can cause fatal pulmonary edema when fed at high enough levels, and we experienced this first hand in north central Kansas around 2020. Deoxynivalenol is well known to reduce feed intake and even cause vomiting, which gives rise to the common name for the toxin of vomitoxin.” Gebhardt added that zearalenone causes estrogenic-like effects, so if pigs are having issues related to abnormal reproductive function, investigating for presence of zearalenone would be warranted.

Thank You, Merck Animal Health, for Sponsoring the Saturday Lunch!

Thank you, Merck Animal Health, for once again sponsoring the Saturday lunch.

AABP President and Merck’s Dr. Dave Sjeklocha greeted attendees and discussed Merck’s initiatives.



AABP President and Merck’s Dr. Dave Sjeklocha

Recent Grad Offered a Family Friendly Experience

Did you know that AABP conferences are family-friendly? The conference had seven families registered to use our fun childcare room that included drinks and snacks for the littles (and their caregivers!) toys and games for all ages, kid-size chairs, a TV and a place where mom/dad/grandparent/caregiver could relax in a friendly environment. In addition to the childcare room, AABP offered a free accompanying person registration for a caregiver.



AABP Recent Graduate Conference childcare room

Practical Vaccination for Beef Cattle

The identification and adherence to underlying principles for the development of practical vaccination protocols for beef cattle operations can lead to clear, prudent and justified recommendations to producers. Dr. Dan Givens spoke on practical vaccination strategies for beef cattle.

He said the consideration of underlying principles for practical vaccination strategies should guide decision-making regarding how best to stimulate needed immunity. “Needed immunity is considered the immunity to pathogens that are likely to be encountered and likely to cause significant disease during the life of the animal. Protective immunity is considered an immune response that will prevent disease when the animal is exposed to a pathogen under field conditions. Underlying principles state foundational facts that should be considered to develop the best practical application of vaccines in beef operations.”

Givens discussed the basis for selection of vaccination protocols. He said they should be selected based on risk of disease introduction, vaccine protocol efficacy, vaccine protocol safety, cost of vaccine and vaccine administration, convenience, and the production benefit received by the producer. “If the risk of disease introduction – which differs in some cases from introduction or encountering a pathogen – is negligible, then vaccination for the particular pathogen may be a poor decision,” Givens said. “If the resulting reliability is high for protection from a likely and significant disease, then a particular highly efficacious vaccine protocol should be considered very favorably.”

He said, however, the risk of disease and resulting efficacy of the protocol must be weighed against the safety of the vaccine protocol in accordance with the principle of *primum non nocere*. “The benefits of effective vaccination, if and only if exposure to the specific pathogen of concern occurs, may include increased pregnancies, prevention of fetal infections, increased live births, an increase in the number of calves weaned, and an increased overall weight of calves weaned,” he explained.

Givens added that the natural costs and consequences of cattle handling and vaccine administration commonly include additional stress of cattle due to handling and vaccination, a transient loss in production (such as weight gain), and injuries to some animals due to handling.



Dr. Dan Givens

Is Your Time Worth Saving?

Dr. Eric Rooker spoke about how valuable your time is on many levels. “Time will stretch or shrink depending upon the practitioner’s ability to control it,” Rooker said. “Those who fail to control it will face a shortage of time and will always be ‘borrowing time’ to make up for their lack of time affluence. However, individuals who realize that time stretches to make room for things that matter and invest in mindfully choosing those activities that are meaningful, will rarely feel short on time. They will say ‘no’ to activities that are not efficient or fail to improve well-being.”

Rooker says it is important to remember that managing time is not a one-off event. It requires continual mindful monitoring, reflection and adjustment to assure that basic psychological need satisfaction remains high while basic psychological need thwarting is eliminated as often as possible. “The result of all of this work is a high performing, happy and flourishing veterinary professional.”



Dr. Eric Rooker

“Overherd” at Recent Grad

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As a solo practitioner, it is vital to set the expectations for clients at all levels. The solo practitioner is one person, and many clients expect them to ‘do it all’.”

Dr. Sarah Blackwell



Dr. Tom Noffsinger

Caregiver Impact on Cattle Health

Animal well-being is founded on positive interactions and building trusting relationships between caregivers and cattle. Cattle handling expert Dr. Tom Noffsinger discussed how cattle caregivers can have positive interactions with cattle.

“Every human intervention such as calving, processing, weaning, pasture rotation, transportation and address change is an opportunity to build cattle confidence, health, performance and wellbeing.”

Noffsinger said cattle that are exposed to positive human interaction present confidence in showing true health and well-being indicators. One of the requirements for successful treatment responses to BRD and lameness issues is early detection of cattle abnormalities. “Cattle that have distrust of handlers will hide early signs to avoid predator detection,” he explained. “Cattle that trust caregivers are willing to show signs of lameness or loss of respiratory efficiency very early in disease, allowing for early treatment, fast recovery and minimal loss of production.”

Cattle that have confidence in human presence are more willing to be guided through husbandry requirements such as processing, sorting and pen moves. Give the cattle time, and the cattle will yield time back with voluntary flow.

Post Conference/CE

The conference offered 15.5 RACE-approved continuing education credits. Access your CE certificate by logging onto the AABP website at <https://aabp.org>. Hover your mouse over your name in the upper right-hand corner, select My CE Certificates and view/download/print certificate.

All AABP members can access the RACE-approved recorded presentations as a free member benefit through the Beef Cattle Institute (BCI) website accessible at <https://aabp.org>.

On-farm Biosecurity

Biosecurity is critical to keeping our farms, animals, people and food supply safe. “Understanding the portals of exit and entry and modes of transmission helps to determine appropriate prevention and control measures,” said Dr. Molly Lee.

“Biosecurity principles are commonly categorized into eleven areas: biosecurity manager and written plan, training, farm access, vehicles and equipment, personnel, animal movement, animal product movement, carcass disposal, manure management, rodents, wildlife and other animals, and feed and water,” Lee explained. “While all categories may include measures that are complex, it is also possible to distill practices into simple, practical recommendations.”

Lee suggested that a useful resource for practical implementation of biosecurity is the Biosecurity Your Way website (farmbiosecurity.cfsph.iastate.edu), which includes lessons, checklists, templates, tip sheets, videos, and more, available in English and Spanish. The Secure Milk Supply (securemilk.org) and Secure Beef Supply (<https://www.securebeef.org/>) websites are also great resources.



Dr. Molly Lee

Summer Dairy Institute Alumni Represent!

Alumni of the 2023 Cornell Summer Dairy Institute found a few minutes to get a fun group shot!



Alumni of the 2023 Cornell Summer Dairy Institute



Dr. Annika Johnson

Program Committee Practice Tips

It's a tradition at the conference that members of the program committee offer practice tips in the closing session.

Dr. Annika Johnson spoke on "Decision Fatigue". What is decision fatigue? "Mental exhaustion from making decisions," explained Johnson.

She gave some strategies to avoid decision fatigue:

- "Are you smartest in the morning? Make decisions then," she said.
- Minimize the number of decisions you need to make during the day by doing things like making lunch on Sunday, guided workshops, picking out clothes the day ahead and using GPS in your truck.
- Delegate! Let some decisions go to the technician, client or student.
- Collaborate by utilizing others and your clients to make decisions, which also creates producer buy-in.
- Trust your decisions. "Your training will kick in," she said, "you've most likely made the best decision with the information you had at the time."



Dr. Colleen Potter

Dr. Colleen Potter discussed generational issues. Examples are practices that have changed from older males to younger females and farms being between generations. "The older generation controls the purse strings and the younger generation is trying to

get in and make changes." Potter said the younger veterinarians tend to side with the younger generation, but, "we're not there to choose sides. We need to actively listen to both sides."

Potter suggested using conflict resolution. "Listen close to employees. Watch gossiping." She says to tap into outside sources like Extension on working with generational farms.

In practice, how do you present ideas to bosses? Potter says speak up for yourself because young veterinarians have great ideas. "Know your audience," she said. "There has to be grace on both sides." And know your stuff. If you are presenting a new idea, state why, what the cost will be, how to implement it and will it make money?

"Pick your battles," she said. "Celebrate the wins and live with the losses. Expecting change isn't always feasible." Potter said there is learning on both sides. "The young want knowledge and skills. The old want to stay up-to-date. Both can be better doctors. We don't want the 'old' guys gone - we want them to say, 'gosh, that's a good idea!'"

Heritage Vet Partners Sponsor Closing Reception

Thank you, Heritage Vet Partners, for the lovely closing reception! The excitement of the attendees and speakers was still evident even after these very busy and thought-provoking days! A lot of previous connections were renewed and many new friends, colleagues and contacts were made.



L-R: Dr. John Davidson, Dr. Melissa Detweiler and Eric Scott of Heritage Vet Partners.

Thank you to our Recent Graduate Conference Sponsors!



2026 AABP Annual Conference
September 11-13 • Omaha, Nebraska

AABP post-conference newsletter created by Geni Wren, AABP Director of Marketing and Communications



The American Association of Bovine Practitioners is an international association of veterinarians serving society as leaders in cattle health, welfare and productivity.