



President
John de Jong

Synergies between physicians and veterinarians

The past month has been quite a journey for the WVA, filled with meetings with colleagues and other healthcare professionals to advance our profession.

My journey in October began in Berlin, Germany, for the World Health Summit (WHS). There, I had the privilege of meeting the WHO Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, and the President of the WHS, Dr. Axel R. Pries.

The [WHS featured](#) many outstanding speakers, but its focus leaned heavily toward human medicine. Topics ranged from women's health and healthcare delivery to the One Health approach. A significant fundraising event, which included the Gates Foundation, featured a speech by Bill Gates himself. Although there were a few veterinarians in attendance, their representation was minimal.

I had the opportunity to address the audience and raised the question of why more veterinarians weren't present to discuss One Health. A representative of the soon-to-open WHO Academy responded by acknowledging that veterinary medicine has long been ahead in the One Health domain. While I appreciated the acknowledgment, I politely pointed out that the lack of veterinarians at a World Health Summit demonstrated a "Talk the Talk but not Walk the Walk" approach that we've encountered for years. I emphasized that One Health has been a known concept for two decades and that any discussion of world health must include animal and environmental health. Following this, we engaged in meaningful discussions about future collaborations, and I'll keep you updated on potential opportunities stemming from WHS.

Next, I travelled to Helsinki, Finland, to meet with the [World Medical Association \(WMA\) at their General Assembly](#). Their association shares many similarities with ours, including a comparable number of member nations. Like us, they are currently developing a strategic plan for the next five years.

I forged valuable connections with their outgoing and incoming presidents, their Council Chair, and their Secretary General. We discussed updating our nearly 20-year-old Memorandum of Understanding, aiming to align it more closely with the One Health initiative. While our organizations already collaborate annually on Rabies Day press releases, I stressed the importance of joint efforts on the numerous zoonotic diseases that affect both humans and animals. They expressed a strong willingness to move forward together.

I was invited to address their Council, where many physicians expressed interest in collaborating with veterinary organizations in their respective countries. I also extended an invitation for them to attend WVAC 2025 in Washington, D.C.

After a brief one-day return home, I travelled to Daejeon, South Korea, for the [FAVA meeting](#), which was well attended and marked by warm hospitality. Alongside an extensive program of continuing education opportunities, the Council meeting provided me with a platform to speak about the WVA and our ongoing growth.

During the event, the presidency transitioned from our President-Elect, Dr. Kurauchi, to Dr. Hur of South Korea. A new Board was elected, and Abu Dhabi was selected as the host for FAVA 2028. I also addressed the General Assembly, alongside dignitaries such as the Ambassador of Japan and the Mayor of Daejeon, who acknowledged the critical role veterinarians play in improving global health.

I participated in a morning session on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and served on a panel brilliantly moderated by Dr. Ganokon Ukrasemsin, WVA Past Councilor. FAVA's commitment to addressing AMR has been steadfast, and they will continue their dedicated efforts on this front.

At all three events, I underscored the value of the WVA, highlighting the work of our four working groups, our position statements and policies, and our overarching vision and mission. I emphasized the many roles' veterinarians play and challenged my colleagues to be "loud and proud" advocates for our profession. Most importantly, I stressed the need for increased collaboration between associations and the critical importance of the One Health concept.

I invited attendees to join us at WVAC 2025 in Washington, D.C., where we can continue to advance these essential conversations.

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