What Are the Economics of the Profession?

Last year, those of you who are members of the American Veterinary Medical Association may have received an employment survey from the AVMA. If so, we thank you for participating in this valuable, ongoing information-gathering process. The survey was designed to measure unemployment andunderemployment within the veterinary profession and the factors affecting both.

The AVMA has decided to make this an annual survey to better measure the changes that may occur year-to-year in unemployment and underemployment among veterinarians. To reduce survey fatigue, the AVMA selected a widely distributed group, based on graduation year, to survey and to get the most accurate and representative description of the profession with respect to employment.

After reviewing the survey, we informed the AVMA that the survey was skewed toward larger groups and not as relevant as it could be to IVMA members. To address this issue, the AVMA asked us to partner with them and help produce survey questions that will gauge unemployment and underemployment in our particular segment of the profession. This narrowing of focus will provide valuable information and a much more robust sampling of our particular group of veterinarians, specific to Indiana.

Additionally, we are the only veterinary medical association in the country who has the opportunity to collaborate with AVMA to obtain this state-specific data. There will be two more surveys this year as well; one related to compensation and one relative to capacity.

This is a very valuable opportunity for all of us, and we hope you would enthusiastically and accurately complete the survey you will be receiving soon via email within the next 2 weeks from the AVMA. The survey will be distributed by a third party to ensure anonymity, and the AVMA assures us that your email addresses will not be used for any other purpose and will be deleted from their database once the survey process is complete.

Ultimately, the information gathered through the survey will better inform us of your employment picture and the economic conditions you are experiencing. This information, compared alongside the national statistics gathered by the AVMA, will provide a much more robust pool of information and data.

For the IVMA, there are three important reasons why these surveys are critical:
1. This information will provide statewide benchmarks for the profession in Indiana.
2. Survey data will assist the IVMA in shaping the organization’s programs and strategies.
3. Data will be useful in our governmental relations efforts.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation and look forward to providing you with relevant, informative data that can begin to shed light on current employment issues facing our profession. This will IVMA to continue to enhance your professional experiences as a veterinarian in Indiana.
President’s Message

As a new veterinarian, I used to arrive at my practice every morning with a certain sense of focus, thinking I knew what the routine would be and roughly aware of all that would face me. Like most of you, that sense is long gone, with my arrival now marked by a valiant charge toward my desk, receptionists and technicians waving charts before me, at least one utility or bit of software failing, and an exam room ominously filled with something unexpected. I fed my kids and got them to the school bus, but the transition from “Daddy” to “Dr. Risser!!!” is always a shock to the system. My focus lasted about ten seconds. Add the internet, where I routinely have several windows open in my browser at any given time (yesterday I accidentally closed it with a record eleven windows open...it took me about half an hour to rebuild my browsing empire!), and I am officially “all-over-the-place.” Really, I’m not that unique...many of us are like that. Veterinarians are supreme multi-taskers who need others in our lives to keep things in focus and bring us back when we stray.

With that in mind, and as I look at the year ahead where I have the honor of serving the Indiana Veterinary Medical Association as president, I hope to maintain some focus in my role as our association faces many challenges on a variety of fronts. Continued on Page 5

IVMA Board of Directors

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IVMA Officer Installation, February 7, 2015
IVMA Annual Meeting Engages Attendees and Delivers Quality Content

The recently completed IVMA annual meeting had registrants attending quality continuing education and fun events during the 4 day meeting. Continuing education sessions featured behavior medicine, how to improve your practice bottom line, the latest in equine medicine, various small animal medicine topics, and accreditation modules, just to name a few.

Friday night featured our veterinary students’ success with the “Engaging the Future” reception. Over $7000 in scholarships were awarded to the following PVM students who wrote an essay on the topic “What messages and methods should organized veterinary medicine utilize to reach out to pet/animal agriculture producers to increase the demand for veterinary services?”. The recipients were:

Gary Hoover – 4th year student from South Bend, IN
Melissa Sim – 3rd year student from Singapore
Megan Brunn – 2nd year student from Columbus, IN
Chelsea Scheidler – 4th year student from Greensburg, IN
Twila Canion – 1st year student from Highland Park, MI
David Zimmer – 4th year student from Angola, IN
Kyle Shipman – 4th year student from Guilford, IN

More networking included the packed exhibit hall which featured over 55 vendors and hundreds of attendees enjoyed the Family Game Night, sponsored by Elanco Companion Animal Health.

At the IVMA Membership Luncheon, sponsored by Butler Schein, IVMA President Dr. John Feutz presented the following deserving recognitions:

IVMA Volunteer of the Year: Dr. Julie Davis, Modoc
IVMA President’s Award: Dr. Jim Feutz, Princeton
IVMA Lifetime Achievement Award: Dr. Jim Scott, Carmel

The dates for the 132nd IVMA Annual meeting are February 4-7, 2016, at the Indianapolis Marriott East.
IVMA “One Welfare” Initiative

Wouldn’t it be cool to have a tiger?

By Dr. Brice Finney, Animal Welfare Committee

These articles are written and provided as an education resource by members of the IVMA Animal Welfare Committee. The collective body of articles can be found at www.invma.org.

There are many people who answer, “Yes” to this question and far too many who go beyond the realm of rhetoric to making it a reality. In the April 2014 issue of National Geographic Magazine, an article titled, “Wild Obsession” by Lauren Slater makes mention that the estimated number of captive tigers in the United States is at least 5000, the majority of which are privately owned. Most of us can see that private ownership of a wild by nature giant land carnivore / predator is very problematic, especially with concerns about individual / public safety and health, logistics, the welfare of the animal, etc. However, there are those who (for various reason beyond the scope of this article) tend to downplay the reality of cohabitating with a tiger, such as the need to supply the approximate 11,000 pounds of meat this adult tiger will consume in a year (average 30 lbs. / day).

Aside from the dangers to the people involved, and in proximity to privately owned large predators, it is a very real animal welfare issue for those tigers and lions. As a former USDA-APHIS-Animal Care Veterinary Medical Officer, I inspected most of the USDA Licensees in Indiana for compliance with the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), and have seen the conditions many of these animals are forced to endure. The AWA is a set regulations and standards that are required when one is engaged in certain activities having to do with regulated species of animals. These activities and species include, but are not limited to, the exhibiting and breeding of Panthera spp. It must be remembered that the standards in the AWA are minimum standards. They are a floor to not fall below; they are not high standards. Most of the licensees I inspected struggled to meet the minimum standard, and the tigers were kept in facilities and conditions that barely at best met the minimum federal standard. Thus the animals exist precariously on a fine line between minimally accepted animal welfare conditions and poor unacceptable animal welfare conditions. It is only in professional zoological parks and rare sanctuaries that the internal facility standards are set well above the standards of the AWA and provide conditions where tigers can LIVE.

To answer any inquiry regarding whether or not one should own a tiger, it is prudent to ask two questions. The first question seems obvious, “Can I own a tiger?” In this day, age and country, the answer to this question is almost invariably, “yes.” It is all too easy to buy a tiger on the internet or at an auction. The sources and markets for wild and exotic animals (such as tigers), raise a multitude of animal welfare concerns that should be commented upon in a future One Welfare article from the IVMA Animal Welfare Committee. In addition, as stated in the National Geographic article Wild Obsession cited in the first paragraph above, to privately own an exotic animal in the State of Indiana requires a license or permit, and in a few other states there are no restrictions at all. Therefore, it is legal to privately own a tiger. The specific logistics of owning a tiger, such as the need for a double barrier enclosure with shift cage and the approximately thirty pounds of meat per day the tiger will consume, we will conveniently ignore for now - so “yes,” you can own a tiger.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6
Fortunately, our Board of Directors has developed a strategic plan to deal with those challenges, focused on four key areas and with specific actions to achieve them. At our annual meeting in February, I had a few minutes to share thoughts for the year ahead. Since I need some (or a lot of) structure to actually get things done, I have summarized my own take on these strategic goals with the verbs: “Lead, Educate, Advocate, and Protect” (which my cluttered brain can remember as the acronym “LEAP”).

As our board meets this month in a session to address our goals and brainstorm ways to accomplish them, you can take great comfort that a talented group of your representatives will energetically engage the task.

IVMA has already shown the importance of our association to “Lead” over the past months. The Executive Committee attended the AVMA Leadership Conference in a typically-frigid Chicago January to learn new ways to lead the association for maximum effectiveness, how to be responsive and nimble, and how to advance new leaders. It’s my hope that we can find and grow leaders in all areas of veterinary medicine in Indiana, across generations, geography, and career paths, so that we place the best people in the right positions as issues and needs arise. Our nationally-regarded “Power of Ten” program has been a terrific catalyst for young leaders, many of whom currently serve in leadership already and the newest group of whom was recognized at our annual meeting.

The Annual Meeting, by the way, was a terrific four days, with a consensus that it had some of the best speakers in the country offering outstanding continuing education. I learned enough to become insufferable to my staff. It is a testament to the time and diligence of the Continuing Education and Annual Meeting teams (who looked as exhausted as might be expected at the end of the meeting), as well as Lisa Perius and the executive staff, and all those who volunteered as moderators, that all went so well. The exhibit hall was an active scene, with a wide variety of vendors helping keep the costs of the meeting manageably low for our members. Since they’re not the type of people to rest on their laurels, expect to see these teams work toward making our next annual meeting even better, and continuing to develop online continuing education as a perk of membership. IVMA continues to see its role to “Educate” as one in which it is uniquely qualified.

The Indiana Legislature is in session, if you hadn’t noticed, and IVMA is actively working to “Advocate” for you. Helping to advance good legislation—and block bad—often occurs below the radar of most of our busy members. Drs. Julie Davis and Brian Biggers testified to a Senate committee on SB 508, the “equine therapy” bill, with great medical consistency and passion, and represented us well. I could go on for a while here about the work of others on a host of issues…but won’t. This is one of the major reasons that we must come together as more than the sum of our individual members. Things move fast in the legislative arena, and we need the strength of the IVMA to be truly effective.

Finally, IVMA plays a major role to “Protect” our practices and our profession. Central Indiana veterinarians were treated to a series of Indianapolis Star articles before Christmas that challenged our ethics and questioned our scientific acumen. IVMA responded immediately, and will continue to monitor the press for threats to the superb reputation so many have worked so hard to build for our profession. We still seek to find constructive ways to deal with the challenges some not-for-profit groups have posed to private practices. And we are exploring ways to help all of our members find balance between personal and professional life. Veterinarians are an idealistic, perfectionistic, autonomous bunch of folks and we often need to be reminded to look after ourselves if we want to continue working—and living—well.

The great news is that IVMA has some remarkable people involved in all these efforts, and I appreciate the work that they—and my predecessors in the role of President—have accomplished to make my job so much easier. Please call or e-mail me with your thoughts, or (better yet) with a desire to plug in to a group working on one of these issues. We have a strong and vibrant association that can do even better work with your participation, and I’d love to hear from you.

Just don’t call me before about 10:00AM. I am a lost and unfocused soul before then.

Dr. Jerry Risser, IVMA President
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317/336-8900
This brings us to the second question, which should be asked - but often is not. Since a tiger is a sentient being, it is imperative ethically necessary to ask, “Should I own a tiger?” Of course this question is bit trickier because it is ethical in nature and requires values and principles to be considered. Many values and principles place a higher priority on ideas, concepts and actions that are larger than satisfying childish notions and selfish desires. The following excerpt from Sigurd Olson’s book The Singing Wilderness eloquently indicates the need to use mature thinking to incorporate the second question into the decision process of owning wild animals.

“3. The Red Squirrel - There was a time when I wanted more than anything else in the world to catch a squirrel and have it for my own. I felt then as I did about many things: that if I could actually achieve personal possession, my enjoyment would somehow be complete. I wanted to feed one of the little creatures, care for it, and lavish my affection upon it. The idea that I would be depriving it of freedom never entered my thinking.”

So if the ethics of good stewardship of animals are factored in, then to do something that deprives a tiger from living by its natural design or allowing the animal to exist as fully as possible as the animal that it is, then the answer is, “No I should not own a tiger”.

When there is a conflict between the first question being, “Yes, I can own a tiger,” and the second question being, “No, I should not own a tiger,” then the second question will supersede the first by its ethical nature, and provide the conclusive answer: “No, I should not own a tiger.”

Unfortunately, it seems that when it comes to deciding whether or not to privately own a wild animal such as a tiger the second question is rarely asked and if asked, not answered. So tigers will be privately owned just because people can. Because the ethical concerns are imperative to the welfare of the animal and those concerns are unlikely to be considered then perhaps most states have it right by placing a ban or partial ban on privately owned large wild predators such as tigers. Our neighbors to the East in Ohio found out in a tragic way that their laws and regulations concerning the private ownership of wild predators needed revamped when nearly 50 tigers, lions and bears had to be shot by local law enforcement officers in 2011 after the owner released the animals from their enclosures before committing suicide. I believe Indiana should also put regulations in place that ensure the answer to the second question supersedes the first and prevents the private ownership of tigers, just because someone can.

All Excerpts From:

THE SINGING WILDERNESS
By SIGURD F. OLSON
Illustrated by Francis Lee Jaques

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Board of Animal Health Update—Avian Influenza: What You Should Know

By Bret Marsh, DVM

While the flu season for people is starting to wind down with warmer weather, the same may not be true for wild birds in North America. Since November, several cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (known as HPAI) have been identified in the Northwestern region of the United States and Southwestern Canada. In early March, a turkey farm in Minnesota tested positive, bringing the disease into the Mississippi flyway, in which Indiana is located.

Different from human strains of flu, the cases of HPAI have been found primarily in wild migratory waterfowl and backyard poultry. With backyard poultry ownership on the rise, Hoosier bird owners and veterinarians should be aware of steps to protect flocks.

Is Indiana at risk?
As of now, no cases have been reported in Indiana, but the situation could change with migrating birds starting to move then comingling in breeding sites before returning south this fall.

How is HPAI spreading?
HPAI originated in Asia, and then spread to Europe and North America last fall, during seasonal migration. HPAI is primarily being carried by wild waterfowl that have contact with backyard poultry and other birds as they migrate. Wild waterfowl carrying HPAI do not outwardly appear to be sick.

Is HPAI the same as the seasonal human flu?
No. The three different strains of HPAI found in the United States have only been found in birds. These three strains are not known to transmit from poultry to humans. The greatest threat is to Indiana wild and domestic bird populations.

Should backyard poultry owners be concerned?
All bird owners need to practice good biosecurity and prevent or minimize contact between their birds and wild birds. Report sick birds or unusual bird deaths to the United States Department of Agriculture’s Healthy Birds helpline at 1-866-536-7593.

Are poultry products safe to eat?
U.S. commercial poultry is produced and inspected to the highest standards in the world. HPAI does not present a significant risk to the safety of the domestic poultry and egg supply. Testing at processing plants ensures poultry products are safe to eat. Poultry, poultry products and wild hunted birds are safe to eat when properly handled and cooked to 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

What if someone is buying new birds?
Learn the health history of the new birds and isolate new additions from the rest of the flock for 30 days, observing the new birds for signs of illness. When buying chicks, look for a seller that is certified by the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP).

What is happening to protect Indiana from HPAI?
Surveillance in wild and domestic birds is underway nationally, including Indiana. Routine testing by the commercial poultry industry, as well as the Indiana State Board of Animal Health and USDA, ensure no infected poultry enters the food supply. The United States has a ban on trade with countries infected with a diagnosed HPAI. This ban includes live birds and eggs, as well as all poultry and poultry products.

For more information on biosecurity for backyard poultry visit: http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov/
Where is the risk?
U.S. Flyway Zones

HPAI has been diagnosed in the Pacific and Mississippi Flyways
Migratory birds mingle in Canada before flying South

IVMA 132nd Annual Meeting
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As selected by the IVMA Animal Welfare Committee, the “One Welfare” awards were presented during the IVMA annual meeting on Friday afternoon, February 6, 2015. The IVMA and the Animal Welfare Committee are pleased and honored to have recognized the following deserving recipients:

“One Welfare” Animal of the Year Award - Bella

“One Welfare” Veterinary Service Award - Dr. Wendy Underwood, Greenfield

“One Welfare Agriculture Award - Mr. Scott Tucker, Co-President, Maple Leaf Farms
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In Memoriam

Dr. Marvin Shew, PU ‘64
Seelyville, IN
IVMA Member
Died February 14, 2015

Dr. Tom Kendall, PU ‘69
Sacramento, CA
IVMA Associate Member
Died March 4, 2015

Dr. Michael Rausch, PU ‘75
Winamac, IN
IVMA Member
Died January 17, 2015

Dr. Carl Christensen, MSU ‘59
Walkerton, IN
Died January 21, 2015

Dr. J. Edward Swonder, MSU ‘50
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IAHF Update.....Fundraising Projects and Events Keep Animal Health Foundation Busy

The Indiana Animal Health Foundation Board of Directors has been busy with fundraising efforts, their annual “Engaging the Future” reception, reviewing grant requests from the Service Animal Support (SAS) program, and coordinating a public behavior forum. The Board also coordinated another successful silent auction in the Exhibit Hall on Saturday, February 7, 2015, that raised nearly $3000 for the Foundation. Additionally, Foundation board members sold raffle tickets this year for a 50/50 drawing and an iPad, generously donated by IDEXX, as well as a flat screen TV were raffled off to raise money for the Foundation. The winner of the 50/50 drawing was Dr. Vida Gaizutis of Chesterton, IN. She won $595. The winner of the IDEXX iPad was Dr. Larry Reyman, Mooresville, IN. The winner of the television was Barbara Rimstidt, Madison, IN.

The IAHF completed a very successful Behavior Forum on Saturday, February 7th. The featured speaker was Dr. Jacqui Neilson on behavior topics. The event was generously sponsored by Elanco. The Foundation held its 5th annual “Engaging the Future” reception on Friday evening, February 6th. Four PVM students were selected to present on their veterinary travels from around the world. Each recipient received a $750 scholarship from the IAHF.

Next up for the Foundation? The IAHF Golf Outing, which will be held on a NEW day during the Purdue Fall Conference! The event will be held on Friday morning, September 11, 2015, at the Purdue golf course in West Lafayette, IN. Make plans to participate in this fun event.
The IVMA’s Power of 10 Leadership Development program completed its third year with another terrific group of “graduates” who participated in think-tank modules of personality assessment, compassion fatigue, communication strategies, and goal-setting. The program is moderated by Lisa Perius and Dr. Matt Cantrell, Zionsville. Participants included:

- Dr. Julie Molitoris, Indianapolis
- Dr. Sara Blasdel, Noblesville
- Dr. Lindsey Hedges-Gieseking, Lebanon
- Dr. Dianna Anagnos, Munster
- Dr. Natalie Olden-Stahl, Indianapolis
- Dr. Trisha Keffer, Oxford
- Dr. Katy Harris, Bloomfield

Participants were recognized at the IVMA Annual Meeting on Saturday, February 7, 2015. (see below)

Plans are in the works for year four of the Power of 10 program. Are you a graduate of veterinary school within the last 6 years and want to participate? Look for email info in the next month or so, or contact the IVMA today!
Classifieds

All classified ads can be found at www.invma.org under the Careers and Classifieds Tab at the top of the webpage.

IVMA ANNUAL MEETING WRAP UP