



Centre for Veterinary Epidemiological Research  
Annual General Meeting  
AVC 280N, 8 March 2018, 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.

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Attendees:

Dr. John VanLeeuwen	Dr. Shawn McKenna
Dr. Jeff Davidson	Dr. Greg Keefe
Dr. Javier Sanchez	Dr. Larry Hammell
Dr. Dan Hurnik	Dr. Jaewoon Jeong
Dr. Thitiwan Patanasatienkul	Dr. Beibei Jia
Dr. Ian Gardner	Dr. Krishna Thakur
Dr. Omid Nekouei	Dr. Emilie Laurin
Meghan Van Gaal	Dr. Henrik Stryhn
Dr. Raphael Vanderstichel	Sheri Gregory
Jenny Yu (note-taker)	

- **Call to order**

Dr. John VanLeeuwen called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. and welcomed attendees.

- **Approval of agenda:**

Moved: E. Laurin; seconded: M. Van Gaal; approved.

- **Approval of previous AGM minutes** (January 7, 2015);

Moved: E. Laurin; seconded: I. Gardner; approved.

- **New Business**

1. Maintaining/enhancing faculty members in epidemiology

Some epi faculty members are on leave, others are planning to leave the department permanently within the next few years. A position in aquatic infectious disease epidemiology has been posted, applications have been reviewed and interviews will soon be held. G. Keefe clarified that the number of epi positions within the AVC budget has not declined, and suggested senior CVER members should discuss how to attract new Research Chairs and how to deal with the shortage caused by faculty leaves. J. Sanchez mentioned that he, together with J. Vanleeuwen and H. Stryhn, has put together a letter describing the focus of the core CVER group (AVC epi and biostats faculty) for the coming years, to support the planning of teaching and research. L. Hammell suggested that as the CVER group develops, it may be a good time to consider topics for teaching and research not currently provided by AVC; additionally, the core epi group should work closely with the clinical/farm service group to continue developing the applied epi program.

2. Maintaining/enhancing graduate students in epidemiology

Recent numbers of participants in the Epi I and Epi II courses have been higher compared with the past few years. Several prospective AVC graduate student projects were mentioned. J. Sanchez informed about regional funding (Latin America and South-East Asia) to support short-term visits by students to take courses or collaborate as part of programs at their home institutions. It was brought up that the current structure for the epi courses may not be optimal for all graduate students, both local and visiting. J. Sanchez mentioned plans to submit a course modification form to restructure the VHM 812 course in order to accommodate epi students with different needs/interests; this will be further discussed among the instructors of the graduate epi courses.

### 3. Plans for post-CERC era

CERC funding will cease by the end of March 2019, possibly extended by three months to June 2019. CERC has been a tremendous expansion for our aquatic epidemiology since 2010. There have been recent successes in some larger funding opportunities (e.g. OFI) and there are plans to seek further funding but the end of CERC funding will definitely challenge ongoing sustainability of aquatic epi research.

### 4. Epi on the Island in 2018 – update on plans

Two courses, running June 11 – 22, have been announced. The course information and detailed schedules have been posted on the course webpage: <http://cver.upei.ca/training/epi-on-the-island-2018/>. Local registration procedures will soon be communicated to the group.

### 5. ISVEE 2018 – who is going? Submitting abstracts?

ISVEE will be held in Thailand, 12 - 16 November 2018; the abstract submission deadline is: 28 March 2018. Several CVER faculty and post-docs plan to attend (J. Sanchez, J. VanLeeuwen, H. Stryhn, I. Dohoo, T. Patanasatienkul, O. Nekouei, K. Thakur). It was suggested to call a meeting to coordinate plans among the potential attendees; J. Sanchez volunteered to move these plans forward.

### 6. ISVEE 2021 – update

ISVEE 2021 will be held in Halifax, but AVC will host pre- and post-conference courses (plans are for 3-5 courses). J. Sanchez (Chair of the local organizing committee) reported tasks completed so far: we have provided updates to the International Management Committee; we have hired a conference organizing company; have preliminary names for the organizing and scientific committees and will finalize them by the summer; we have signed the contract with Halifax Convention Center and three hotels; and we have identified invited speakers. Next step is to set up a website and show it in ISVEE 2018 in Thailand. Work is also ongoing on finding sponsors for students from developing countries for the conference courses.

### 7. Governance

How CVER runs as a centre has been, up until now, is based on past practices and the discretion of the Director. The only formal document describing practices for CVER that seems to exist is the original application to establish CVER as a centre. It was suggested to compose a document with guidelines/rules for some fundamental functions of the centre, such as (but not limited to): Director and Steering Committee (roles, terms, election); Membership rules/categories; Meetings (e.g. the General Meeting) and activities. Such a document would be drafted by a subcommittee, including the CVER Director and open to anyone interested, and subsequently will be brought forward at the next CVER General Meeting.

## Updates on Centres, groups, and projects

### a) CERC – I. Gardner

Research in aquatic epidemiology will continue beyond the CERC horizon in other projects, the most important being the collaboration with the OFI (Ocean Frontier Institute) at Dalhousie University. A project on halibut production in PEI is finishing up. CERC West Coast collaborations include the Strategic Salmon Health Initiative (SSHI) project with DFO, and other projects with industry in BC include creating a sea lice data management program, water quality, and BKD.

CERC continues to support postdoc career development with financial support through competitive awards such as the Seed Grants, Early Career Development and Short Term Research Placement awards, with over \$100,000 in support awarded in 2017.

### b) CAHS – L. Hammell

Although not a formal UPEI centre, the AVC-CAHS brand is important for attracting contract project funding. CAHS has 1.6 full-time equivalent employees: one full-time programmer for fish-iTrends, funded by industry contracts; the other 0.6 for the technical manager to maintain the technical component. CFI funds, expiring in March 2019, still maintain the technical component to keep CFI equipment research-ready. There are various contracts still active for CAHS, including sea lice data management with three provincial associations, small contracts with provincial governments for diagnostic test evaluations, a report on wild fish vs. farm interactions, and so on. There is interaction with Halibut PEI that will be completed soon. We are looking for some potential new initiatives in SE Asia through a partner in a previous project (IDH Sustainable Trade) and interactions with our counterpart at the Norwegian Veterinary Institute for work on tilapia in Africa. Regionally, the salmon aquaculture industry is going through some major shifts in company ownership and some international companies will be increasing their presence, particularly in NL, so this may alter the opportunities for increasing on-farm health interactions.

### c) CRVE-Net – L. Hammell

The last CRVE-Net activity was a conference call initiated by CFIA with all vet schools sometime last year. CFIA was going to reconfigure how they would allocate funds for new activities within CRVE-Net. Some veterinary colleges may be receiving some funding but this has been project by project and not through a network approach. This may change in the future. It was suggested to try to arrange a meeting of key AVC faculty involved with CRVE-Net and the CFIA representative from Ottawa at the next AVC Advisory Council meeting in the spring.

### d) MQM – G. Keefe

Cluster program applications have been put in and are almost certain to get funded. One of the applications is one of 8 under the umbrella of the Canadian Bovine Mastitis Research Network. Standalone cluster projects include projects of calf management, including calf health and genomics which are \$100K to \$200K projects. Drs. Javier Sanchez, J McClure and Luke Heider are leading an application for a \$1.2 million national project on antimicrobial resistance which has been put forward for funding by Dairy Farms of Canada to AAFC. Another project where MQM is a partner with the other universities is on infectious disease surveillance lead out of Saskatoon; S. McKenna is the AVC person. After cluster projects are initiated, the next level is federally funded projects and the calls are just coming out. Our applications are to continue working on Johne's disease, BLV, and BVD. Finally after that round, there will be provincially

funded programs.

e) Shellfish Research Group (SRG) – J. Davidson

It is an exciting year in 2017 for shellfish research. The Bideford Shellfish Hatchery provided a venue to conduct research into domestication not available in past years. Triploid mussels and oysters were spawned in collaborative projects with private industry, University of Quebec at Rimouski, DFO, PEI Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Lennox Island Development Corp. and industry organizations (PEIAA and PEISA). Largely because of consolidation in the mussel industry, the objective of research tends to have a longer time frame. Other projects involve establishing zoning for shellfish transfer from Nova Scotia and a proposal to Global Affairs Canada to improve Burmese small stakeholders' participation in aquaculture and agriculture in collaboration with Kasetsart University.

f) Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre – presented by L. Hammell on behalf of Alice Crook, augmented after the meeting

The SJDAWC promotes animal welfare through research, service, and education. The SJDAWC awards approximately \$150,000 per year through an annual competition for research and service projects. The Centre supports graduate students through project funding as well as through a separate competition - the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Graduate Scholarship, which provides a full stipend and tuition for a MSc or PhD student. Peter Kimeli, working with John VanLeeuwen, received the 2016 Scholarship. Unfortunately there were fewer than expected applications for this prestigious award this year. The Centre welcomes suggestions as to how to identify/increase the pool of potential supervisors at AVC (a necessary pre-condition for application). The Centre also funded a veterinary summer student research award in 2017 and one is for 2018.

The SJDAWC is a Platinum Sponsor for the International Society for Applied Ethology (ISAE) Congress, to be held at UPEI July 30 - August 3, 2018; last held in Canada in 1996 at the University of Guelph. We are expecting many registrants from other animal welfare centres in Canada (U of Guelph, UBC, WCVM), as well as international registrants ([isae2018.com/](http://isae2018.com/)). Further details on all SJDAWC activities (including graduate students, publications and presentations) can be found in the SJDAWC 2016 Annual Report. (The 2017 Annual Report will soon be available.)

g) Kenya Smallholder Dairy Research Group – J. Vanleeuwen

The Kenyan Smallholder Dairy Research Groups continues to expand. The Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarship funding received in 2015 is nearing the end of the 4 year project with funding for research projects and for 6 Kenyan grad students to complete UPEI degrees, and 14 undergraduate students to go to Kenya to complete training of farmers and assist graduate students with research projects. The group has just received another 4 year project from this same funding program, for another 3 graduate students and another 13 undergraduate students. Additional funding has been obtained for cow and calf comfort research from the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre. Vets without Borders projects are still underway as well, for training and research purposes in Kenya.

**CVER Steering Committee Elections:**

J. Vanleeuwen brought forward H. Stryhn as the new CVER Director/Chair. The plan is for J. Sanchez to take over before ISVEE in 2021. In view of the proposed review of CVER governance, it was agreed to

not change the composition of the Steering Committee; however, new members were appointed for the areas currently represented in the committee.

G. Keefe nominated S. McKenna to the CVER Steering Committee for Dairy Science to replace himself; seconded by I. Gardner; approved.

I. Gardner nominated J. Davidson to the CVER Steering Committee in Aquatics; seconded by J. Sanchez; approved.

G. Keefe nominated J. Sanchez to the CVER Steering Committee in Epidemiology, seconded by J. Vanleeuwen; approved.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:09 p.m.