



ISWAVLD 2023

International Symposium of the World
Association of Veterinary Laboratory
Diagnosticians

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Lyon

*Towards
the veterinary
diagnostics
of the
future*

Main topic :

The World Organisation for Animal Health, veterinary laboratories, and our place in the One Health landscape

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The COVID-19 pandemic underlined the importance of the One Health concept in understanding and confronting global health risks. This approach is critical for the control of priority zoonotic diseases such as rabies, avian influenza or viral haemorrhagic fevers and cross-cutting issues, such as antimicrobial resistance, food safety, climate change and weak health care infrastructure, need to be addressed from a multisectoral and multidisciplinary perspective. Managing these major global health risks is not possible alone. It requires the full cooperation of the animal, human, plant and environmental health sectors. The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, founded as OIE) brings its expertise in animal health and welfare to the much needed multisectoral partnerships. Throughout the Organisation's work, we promote the One Health approach, recognising the interdependence of animal, human and environmental health.

Over the course of history, disease diagnosis provided by health laboratories has emerged as a pillar of pandemic preparedness. Thanks to their experience in dealing with large-scale epidemics in animal populations, providing expertise on disease origin and evolution, as well as processing human samples, veterinary laboratories play a critical role during pandemics. By contributing to disease surveillance, detection and control, laboratories support health systems and help reduce risks posed to animal, human, and environmental health.

For use by Veterinary Services and technical experts, WOA develops and distributes specific technical information and recommendations on a variety of topics related to animal health through its Network of Reference Centres. The expertise network constitutes the core of WOA scientific expertise and excellence. WOA has a global network of more than 265 Reference Laboratories covering 108 diseases or topics in 38 countries, and 68 Collaborating Centres covering 45 specialties in 31 countries. The contribution of these institutes to the work of WOA ensures that the standards, guidelines and recommendations developed by the Specialist Commissions and published by the WOA are scientifically sound and up-to-date.

However, veterinary laboratories worldwide struggle to meet critical requirements and sustain achievements over time. A lack of sustainability represents a threat to national, regional and global security given the functions that laboratories serve as biobanks for dangerous pathogens. In light of this challenge, it is important to promote innovative solutions, leverage investments, and consider new opportunities that can lead to more sustainable laboratory services while promoting biosafety and biosecurity. A sustainable laboratory network is a system of laboratories that together continuously deliver specialised services in a manner which: Is efficient, timely, accurate, consistent, secure, and safe; Is in line with international standards and best practices; Is provided at an acceptable cost; Responds to clients' needs across sectors (public and/or private); and Benefits One Health goals and the overall One Health system.

To help Members overcome challenges and provide high-quality test results, laboratory systems need performance data to inform their advocacy efforts for appropriate investments. Evidence-based policies and decision-making have never been more urgent. Future investments should aim for long-term and strategic improvements and focus on sustainable performance, quality, safety, security and competency to address the shortcomings of health systems.