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## Montana Veterinary Medical Association

# Newsletter

FALL/WINTER 2024

## President's Message

**Linda Kauffman, DVM | MVMA 2024-25 President**

Dear MVMA Members,



Greetings from the Bitterroot Valley! As I write, we've had our first hard frost of the season, and there's snow on the Bitterroots and Sapphire Range. Many of us in western Montana won't be sad to see an end to

the smoke. Though some have counted their blessings, this year was one of the worst "smoke seasons" we've seen in many years. I'm hopeful that by the time you read this, the 2024 fire season will be behind us!

While the smoke wasn't an issue in the southeastern U.S., many people there have suffered devastating losses due to other natural disasters, with no hope for quick recovery. There are inspiring stories of neighbors helping neighbors, and private entities stepping up with their own time and resources. I encourage you to support the charity of your choice, the AVMA Foundation, or even volunteer in person if possible to help those affected.

I was disappointed to miss the White Coat Ceremony at WSU due to illness. I had



*Personally, my involvement [in MVMA] has been a vital part of my career and has allowed me to form lasting relationships with colleagues across the state, the country, and even internationally.*

Linda Kauffman,  
DVM  
MVMA President



hoped to speak to the new graduates about maintaining the integrity and quality of our profession as they continue through veterinary school and into practice. There are several issues that concern me deeply about the future of veterinary medicine:

- 1. Proliferation of New Veterinary Schools:** A recent AVMA study notes that there are 13 proposed new veterinary schools in the U.S. While increased access to education might seem positive, I worry about the potential impact on educational quality and the profession overall.
- 2. Private Equity Takeovers:** The buyout of private veterinary practices by private equity (PE) organizations and large corporations like Mars Inc. is troubling. When veterinary clinics are treated primarily as business ventures, I fear the focus shifts away from patient care. This growing consolidation could lead to monopolies, as these companies now own many aspects of the industry—clinics, pet food brands, insurance, pharmaceuticals, and more.
- 3. Mid-Level Practitioners:** A controversial

President's Message continued on page 3

# MVMA ASSOCIATION NEWS

## Welcome New Members!

*The following individuals were approved as members at the Membership Meeting during the 2024 Summer Meeting in Great Falls.*

*Welcome to MVMA!*

### Full Members:

Dr. Douglas Bower, Conner  
Dr. Daniel Casaus, Victor  
Dr. Scott Jackson, Missoula  
Dr. Lindsey McKelvie, Missoula  
Dr. Thomas McKenna, Lowpoint, IL  
Dr. Jeanna Miedtke, Cascade  
Dr. Anthony Nauta, Lehi, UT  
Dr. Lauren Peruffo, Lolo  
Dr. Sadie Reddick, Bozeman  
Dr. Justin Roscoe, Dillon  
Dr. Emily Schafsteck, Plains  
Dr. Michael Van Schoyck, Bozeman

### Student Members:

**Colorado State**  
Samantha Hamilton  
Carine Riley

**Washington State**  
Jesse Bouffiou  
Marissa Breum  
Ally Bummer  
Annalee Mason

**Oklahoma State**  
Becky deMontigny

**Oregon State**  
Hannah Hutchison

**University of Minnesota**  
Mary Novak

## MVMA members gather in Great Falls for Summer Meeting

More than 140 MVMA members and guests gathered at the Heritage Inn in Great Falls for the 2024 Summer Meeting. Dr. Scott Damby, MVMA past president, planned the meeting that was packed with excellent speakers and 15 CE credits.

MVMA members also had the chance to attend a trade show featuring our valued allied partners, and were entertained by Dr. Bo Brock during the Friday evening banquet. The general membership business meeting included updates from AVMA leadership, the Montana Board of Veterinary Medicine, and MVMA staff.

Boehringer Ingelheim and AmerisourceBergen-MWI Animal Health generously sponsored a steak fry dinner at the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center Thursday evening of the meeting. Thanks to all of MVMA's sponsors and exhibitors, who helped make the gathering a success. See page 19 for a complete listing of our supporters, and if you have the opportunity, thank them for their support of MVMA.

## Dr. Linda Kauffman named MVMA president

During the Great Falls meeting in June, Linda Kauffman, DVM, of Stevensville assumed the MVMA presidency for the 2024-2025 term. Dr. Kauffman succeeds Scott Damby, DVM, of Lewistown, who will now serve as past president on the MVMA Executive Board.

Dr. Kauffman grew up on an Eastern Nebraska hog and cattle farm. It was caring for piglets and calves, as well as her involvement in 4-H, that motivated her to pursue a career in veterinary medicine. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska and graduated from Kansas State College of Veterinary Medicine in 1983. Because of Dr. Kauffman's interest in large animals, an internship in Large Animal Medicine and Surgery followed

at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada.

After completing her internship in Canada, Dr. Kauffman worked as a relief veterinarian in Montana and Nebraska, later joining a large and small animal practice in Coffeyville, Kan., for seven years. She returned to Montana in 1993 as a relief veterinarian, and started Burnt Fork Veterinary Clinic in Stevensville in 1999. In 2008, the practice moved into a new clinic and shifted from a large and small animal practice to primarily small animal. Today, Burnt Fork Veterinary Clinic services large and small animals and employs four full-time veterinarians and Dr. Kauffman has gone to part time.

## New Executive Board includes Dr. Laurie Gaugler, Hobson

In addition to Dr. Kauffman's appointment as president of MVMA, **Barr Gustafson, DVM**, Browning, will serve as president elect, **Julie Oghigian, DVM**, Bozeman, is now vice president, and **Alan Goldhahn, DVM**, enters the secretary/treasurer role. **Chelsey Petz, DVM**, Three Forks, continues as director, and **Laurie Gaugler, DVM**, Hobson, is the newly-elected director to serve on the Executive Committee.



Dr. Gaugler is a Central Montana native and fourth generation cattle rancher, growing up on a ranch in the foothills of the Snowy Mountains. She received her Bachelor's degree in Biology with Honors from Eastern Washington University in 2006 and her DVM from Colorado State University School of Veterinary Medicine in 2010. Upon graduation, she joined Lance Hughes DVM at Central Montana Veterinary Services in Hobson, and has been a full-time associate for

**Newly elected-Board member Laurie Gaugler, DVM**

the past 14 years. The majority of her career involves beef cow/calf herd work including ultrasounding, performing breeding soundness examinations on bulls, spaying heifers and AI. She also enjoys small animal medicine and soft tissue surgeries, as well as equine (especially reproduction) and sheep medicine and reproduction. As a veterinarian, she most enjoys the relationships with clients, working outdoors, and working with animals.

Dr. Gaugler and her husband Mark manage a seedstock/commercial Angus ranch near Judith Gap. They have two daughters who keep them running as well—Libby (8) and Lila (3). Other interests include serving as a Montana Range Days board member and contributing to Montana Wool Growers publications and speaking at meetings.

### Register now for the 2025 MVMA Winter Meeting

The 2025 MVMA Winter Meeting will be held January 23-25 at the GranTree Inn in Bozeman. Dr. Barr Gustafson, MVMA president-elect, has gathered a variety of nationally-recognized speakers from across the country to present 14 hours of continuing education on wide-ranging small and large animal topics. **See pages 7-13** in this newsletter for all of the meeting details and a registration form. And keep in mind, you can easily register online by going to the MVMA website at [mtvma.org](http://mtvma.org).

Please note, attendees are encouraged to make hotel room reservations as soon as possible. There are a limited number of rooms available at the reduced rate of \$109 per night plus taxes/fees. **Discounted**

rates will be honored until sold out or December 23. The online room block link is on the MVMA website, or call the hotel directly at (406) 587-5261 and refer to the MVMA room block.

### MVMA Committees to meet prior to Winter Meeting

At press time, the Fall Committee Meetings were underway Tuesdays in November and December via Zoom. All members are invited and encouraged to participate in MVMA's committee process, and should have received notice via email on topics and Zoom information. Contact the MVMA office with any questions.

Committee reports will be presented at the General Membership Meeting on Saturday, Jan. 25 at noon during the Winter Meeting in Bozeman.

## President's Message (Continued from p. 1)

proposal, now on the ballot in Colorado and being discussed nationally, is the introduction of mid-level practitioners. These veterinary professional associates would have less training than veterinarians (3 semesters of a Master's program) but, as proposed in Colorado, they could legally perform surgeries. This raises significant concerns about the quality and safety of care.

**4. Changes in Veterinary Education:** Many of the new veterinary schools are adopting an accelerated model where students spend just two continuous years in the classroom, followed by one year of externships. This contrasts with the traditional veterinary education model, which typically spans three years of on-campus learning, broken up by summer breaks, during which students may also gain hands-on experience through externships. The new model feels condensed, and I worry that reducing time in a clinical setting may impact graduates' preparedness. Are we sacrificing depth for speed, and will these new graduates feel fully confident and ready to practice with less time spent on clinical training?

Over the last 40 years in practice, I have learned veterinarians have earned a reputation for high ethical standards and trustworthiness. According to a recent Gallup poll, 65% of respondents rated veterinarians as "very high" or "high" in honesty and ethics—second only to nurses. To maintain this reputation, we must resist the pressures of "big vet med" and ensure that patient care, not

profitability, remains our top priority.

I've had the privilege of meeting many veterinary students and new graduates, both through externships at our clinic and at various professional events. These young people are eager and passionate about joining the profession. They ask thoughtful questions about mentorship and clinical training, and it's exciting to see their enthusiasm. Programs like the Power of 10, led by Dr. Katie Rein and Dr. Mark Albrecht, are excellent for fostering this next generation of veterinarians. In February, the group will even have the opportunity to spend a day in Helena during the legislative session.

Lastly, I always encourage students and veterinarians alike to get involved in organized veterinary medicine, whether through MVMA or AVMA. Personally, my involvement has been a vital part of my career and has allowed me to form lasting relationships with colleagues across the state, the country, and even internationally.

I hope you'll consider joining our Zoom committee meetings this November and December. These are quick, under an hour, and we truly value your input—especially heading into a legislative year, when your voice is needed on issues that affect our profession.

Looking forward to seeing you in Bozeman in January!

Sincerely,

Linda Kauffman, DVM | Stevensville, MT  
MVMA President 2024-2025



# IN MEMORIAM

## Casey Gruber, DVM



Casey James Gruber passed away on October 17, 2024. Born on April 29, 1981, in Billings to the loving parents of Lisa

and Jim Gruber, Casey grew up with his younger siblings Celie and Clay on a small ranch near Joliet. This is where he fostered a love for animals and the outdoors that would guide his life's journey.

Casey received his undergraduate degree from MSU-Bozeman and his veterinary medicine degree from Colorado State University. His first job as a veterinarian was at Pioneer Equine Hospital in California where he completed his internship. He then began working at Moore Equine Veterinary Services in Calgary, Alberta, where and met his future wife, Dominique.

The two were married in 2012, gave birth to their first child Jack in 2014 and settled in Red Lodge in 2015, where they purchased Red Lodge Vet Clinic. Their family grew with the births of their daughters Reed in 2016 and Kirby in 2018. Casey was a devoted father, loving husband, and dedicated veterinarian. He was also active in his community and volunteered in numerous community organizations.

Casey is survived by his wife Dominique, son Jack, daughters Reed and Kirby; father Jim, mother Lisa; sister Celie, and brother Clay, as well as his grandmother Lois, and numerous loving aunts, uncles, and cousins. His legacy will live on through all who knew and loved him as they carry his

spirit forward with every step.

A public celebration of life was held at Red Lodge Mountain on Saturday, October 26th. In lieu of flowers, the family asks for donations to be made to a mental health organization such as No More Empty Saddles ([nmemptysaddles.com](http://nmemptysaddles.com)) or Not One More Vet ([www.nomv.org](http://www.nomv.org)) honoring Casey's life and the importance of mental wellness.

## Eric Liska, DVM

Eric Charles Liska, father, husband, veterinarian and friend to many, died May 2, 2024, in East Helena, after a



long battle with cancer. He lived a productive and fulfilling life after the initial diagnosis 22 years ago. A celebration of life was held Sept. 1 at the Kleffner Ranch in East Helena.

Born in 1971 in Wayne, Neb., to Dr. Ken and Jan Liska, Eric was the second of 3 children. He graduated from the University of Nebraska, and after graduating from Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine in 1998, Eric sought to practice in the mountains. Through information from a friend, he learned of a veterinary practice in Helena. After working 2 years at the practice, he and his veterinarian brother Jason purchased Capital Large Animal Veterinary Service in 2000. In 2002, Eric had a seizure, and it was discovered he had a brain tumor. He was well taken care of in Great Falls and returned to practice in Helena.

In 2009, Eric decided upon a new

challenge, accepting a position as Brucellosis Program Veterinarian at the Montana Department of Livestock. In 2020, Eric endured another brain surgery, radiation and chemotherapy in Billings. With phenomenal and compassionate care at Billings Clinic, he continued to live and love life.

In 2022, Eric was hired by Merck Animal Health as a Cattle Technical Services Manager. He continued at Merck until he could no longer work.

Eric is survived by his loving wife Eleana, two daughters Stella and Grayce, parents Jan and Ken Liska, brother Jason and Dana Liska, sister Kim and Chris Loofe, and several wonderful aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Billings Clinic Foundation to benefit the Billings Clinic Cancer Center or the American Brain Tumor Association.

## Gerald "Tim" Slobojan, DVM

Dr. Gerald (Tim) Slobojan DVM, age 83, of Kalispell, passed away peacefully at home on April 1, 2024. He led an extraordinary life



devoted to his family, faith, and caring for animals in the Flathead Valley.

Born in Ambrose, N.D., Tim was raised on a farm in Mohall. He pursued his education at Carroll College and

*In Memoriam continued next page*

## In Memoriam continued

earned his DVM from Washington State University. After serving in the U.S. Army in Texas, he established roots and made the Flathead Valley his lifelong home.

Dr. Tim and his partner Dr. John Erfle established LaSalle Vet Clinic, where he spent the rest of his career until forced into early retirement due to Parkinson's disease.

Dr. Tim was honored as a long serving member of the Montana Veterinary Medical Association as well as former president. He was also involved in the Knights of Columbus, and spent many years as the veterinarian at the NW Montana Fairgrounds.

He is survived by his loving wife of 60 years, Diane; his children Teresa (John) Monaco, Dave Slobojan, Mike (Lisa) Slobojan, and Jerome Slobojan; grandchildren Meagan, Marcus, Michael (Sarah), Taylor (Ben), Mitchell, Connor (Layne), Courtney, and Gabriel; great-grandchildren Carson, Bentley, and Quinn; as well as his sisters Rita Bosworth, Rose (Jim) Donnelly, and PJ Slobojan and numerous cousins, nieces and nephews. Additionally, Tim leaves behind many lifelong friends and colleagues who had the privilege of knowing him.

A celebration of Tim's life and legacy was held at Risen Christ Church on April 8. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Legendary Lodge Catholic Summer Camp, P.O. Box 1729, Helena, MT 59624, or a charity of your choice.

## WIMU Student Spotlight: Townsend native Lainee Colombik 2024 recipient, \$2,000 MVMA Scholarship

*Townsend native Lainee Colombik, now in her final year of school at Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine, shares her experiences with the WIMU program and her thoughts on the future as a practicing veterinarian.*

### What led you to pursue veterinary medicine as a career?

I spent my childhood working on my grandparents' wheat farm along Montana's Hi-Line. In my 24 years, I have developed a deep appreciation for the land, what it produces, and the people who manage it. When I was 13, I started showing pigs and cattle through 4-H, which ignited my passion for animal agriculture. Veterinarians have a direct impact on the livelihood of ranchers and the longevity of their legacies through their work with production animals. I aim to contribute to maintaining agricultural values and advancing beef cattle production in Montana.

### Why did you select the WIMU program for your veterinary studies?

I was drawn to the WIMU program at Washington State University for several reasons. During the application process, I felt welcomed by the admissions staff, and once I joined the program, I was treated like family by the students, professors and others involved. The professors have been genuinely dedicated to my education and personal development. Additionally, the small class size during my first year ensured that I had personalized interactions with my professors. Finally, spending my first year in Montana allowed me to learn relevant information to Montana veterinary medicine. I am grateful for the experiences I have had in the WIMU program.

### What are your future goals after graduation?

After I graduate, my plan is to practice veterinary medicine in rural Montana. I am working on developing a diverse set of skills across a wide range of

species, with a particular interest in food

animal and equine medicine. I am especially excited about working with beef cattle and working ranch horses, and I want to be involved in the agriculture community wherever I practice. I also recognize the need for diverse practitioners in rural areas and, due to the current shortage of practitioners, I intend to train as a mixed animal doctor.

In addition to practicing, I aim to be an educator in the veterinary profession. I believe it's important to use my platform to educate people to be better animal owners, to teach youth about the importance and values of rearing livestock, and to inform the public about the necessity of animal agriculture for our future. My husband, Caden Colombik, is also a fourth year veterinary student in the WIMU program. Over the past several years, we have worked with multiple mixed and food animal veterinarians in rural Montana. Our experiences in the Montana veterinary community have reinforced our desire to work in an underserved area that is in desperate need of young veterinarians. We hope to pursue clinic ownership in the future.

### What is the best part about studying veterinary medicine? Biggest challenge?

My favorite part of veterinary medicine is that I get to do something different every single day. The diversity of the profession allows me to constantly be challenged and to always be learning.



# MVMA preparing for 2025 Montana Legislative Session

## Stuart Doggett, MVMA Executive Director



The date is set and the 2025 Montana Legislature will convene on Monday, January 6. Once again, both chambers will have Republican majorities.

### What's ahead for MVMA at the session?

As of early November, more than 800 bill draft requests had been made by lawmakers for the upcoming session. Last session, legislators made more than 4,000 bill draft requests. Typically, less than 50 percent of all bill requests are introduced as official bills and MVMA lobbyists and staff are already building a "MVMA Bill Tracking List" to identify bills we sense may affect our members. To date, we have only a handful of draft bill ideas on the list and traditionally we have monitored nearly 60 pieces of legislation each session. Once the bill contents are available, they are reviewed by MVMA lobbyists and shared with the MVMA board and Legislative Committee to help establish an official MVMA position: "monitor," "oppose," "support" or "offer amendments."

Starting in January of 2025, the MVMA office will be sharing weekly

electronic Legislative e-Bulletins to keep you aware of events at the State Capitol. On occasion, we will also be asking members to directly contact legislators supporting or opposing specific bills, and MVMA will provide instructions on the best ways to provide input to Legislators.

### How to get legislative information and testify in-person or by Zoom

MVMA encourages you to access the informative Montana State Legislature website at [leg.mt.gov](http://leg.mt.gov). Through this site, you can look up legislators in your area and find instructions on sending lawmakers e-mails or phone messages to express your position on a bill. You will still be able to call and leave a message for legislators during the session at (406) 444-4800.

As with the 2021 and 2023 Legislative Sessions, we understand MVMA members will have the option to testify on bills either in person or by Zoom. The policy has been that if you are testifying by Zoom you should note the following:

- You will be able to select from the

bills that are scheduled for hearings 3 days in advance.

- You must register by 5:00 p.m. the day before the hearing to testify by Zoom. You will be asked to fill out and submit a form with pertinent details, and you will receive email confirmation.
- Rules of decorum must be followed, and the Chair of the Committee before which you are testifying will call on you when it is your turn to speak. Follow the Zoom directions and raise your hand to let the Remote Committee Coordinator know when you want to speak.

MVMA members will receive more legislative news as the 2025 session gets closer, and we urge you to contact the MVMA office if you have questions or suggestions on specific legislative matters. MVMA is grateful to members for engaging in the legislative process to ensure the voice of the veterinary community is heard.

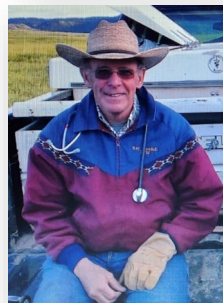
## 2024 Honor Roll recipients recognized

During the MVMA Summer Meeting, Dr. Scott Damby recognized the 2024 Honor Roll Recipients—three MVMA members who hold historic license numbers. Congratulations to this year's recipients!

**Harry Disney, DVM**  
License #609  
Libby, MT



**Ray Randall, DVM**  
License #610  
Bridger, MT



Not pictured:  
**Allen Han, DVM**  
License #618 | Inverness, MT

## ~Save the Date~

### Upcoming MVMA Meetings:

**2025 Winter Meeting**  
January 23-25  
GranTree Inn—Bozeman

**2025 Summer Meeting**  
June 26-28  
Fairmont Hot Springs

**2026 Winter Meeting**  
January 22-24  
GranTree Inn—Bozeman



Thank you, 2025 Winter Meeting Sponsors!



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Montana Veterinary Medical Association

# 2025 Winter Meeting

**JANUARY 23-25**

**BEST WESTERN PLUS GRANTREE INN**

**BOZEMAN, MT**

## ▪ Meeting Information ▪

14 Continuing Education Credits

**Register early for the best rates:**

**Pre-Registration—by January 6**

- MVMA Members—All session rate - \$375
- Non-MVMA Members—All session rate - \$505
- Technicians/Office Staff—All session rate - \$200
- Single-day rates also available. See registration form on page 13 for more details.

**After January 6 or On-Site Registration**

- MVMA Members—All session rate - \$415
- Non-MVMA Members—All session rate - \$545
- Technicians/Office Staff—All session rate - \$240
- Single-day rates also available.

**Free meeting registration for DVM Students and Life Members (no CE)**

- Pre-registration is required; meal tickets must be purchased separately.

**Ways to Register:**

- **Online:** Fast, easy and secure. Complete registration form and pay by credit card at [mtvma.org](http://mtvma.org).
- **Mail:** Complete the registration form on the back page of this brochure and mail with payment to: MVMA, PO Box 6322, Helena, MT 59604.

**Proceedings:** Proceedings will be available to all registrants online prior to the meeting, and can be downloaded and/or printed on your own.

**Printed proceedings will not be available at the meeting.**

**CE Certificates:** Once attendance is verified, CE certificates will be sent to attendees within two weeks of the meeting.

## ▪ Room Reservations ▪

A block of MVMA rooms has been reserved at the Best Western Plus GranTree Inn in Bozeman.

- \$109/night plus taxes.
- Discounted rates will be available through December 23 or until sold out.
- The online room block link is on the MVMA website ([mtvma.org](http://mtvma.org)), or call the hotel directly at 406-587-5261 and request the MVMA block.

**We encourage you to make lodging reservations early through the GranTree block to take advantage of special MVMA Winter Meeting pricing.**

Continued next page

## Thursday, January 23

2:00-5:00 pm MVMA Executive Board Meeting

5:30-7:00 pm Opening Social with MSU WIMU Students & 2024-25 Power of 10 Class

Sponsored by  **Boehringer Ingelheim**

## Friday, January 24

7:00 am Registration/Breakfast Buffet

8:00 am-Noon Large Animal Session – 4 CE

Isaac Jumper, DVM, PhD

Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine

### ***“Doc, we have a problem”: Investigating disease and decreased production in beef cow-calf herds***

Overview of applied epidemiologic principles such as diagnostic test performance and interpretation, critical thinking about causation, systems thinking, and methods of monitoring health and production outcomes. The discussion will focus on practical methods of monitoring, detecting, and investigating disease or decreased production in beef cattle populations.

### ***Is all data useful? Using data to improve health and production decision-making on cow-calf operations***

Discussion of how animal health and production data can be used to make evidence-based decisions on livestock operations. This discussion will focus on the establishment of data collection systems, useful methods of analysis, and application of record-keeping on beef cow-calf operations, however, the principles discussed are applicable to other food animal populations as well.

### ***Antimicrobial stewardship: Where we are, where we're headed, and what it means for beef production***

Discussion of practical antimicrobial stewardship on beef cattle operations, as well as recent regulation involving antimicrobial use in beef cattle. Recent regulations (i.e., Veterinary Feed Directive, etc.) will be discussed, as well as potential future directions for antimicrobial stewardship in beef cattle production.

### ***What have we learned? Updates to the current H5N1 outbreak in dairy cattle***

Discussion of what we know and what we don't know about the current H5N1 outbreak in dairy cattle. This talk will focus on current knowledge and resources available, as well as provide some background information on influenza viruses and methods of herd biosecurity and biocontainment.

8:00 am-Noon Small Animal Session – 4 CE

Laura Nafe, DVM, MS, DACVIM (SAIM)

University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine, Veterinary Medicine & Surgery

### ***Common Immune Mediated Conditions in Dogs: Part 1***

This lecture will discuss immune-mediated thrombocytopenia (ITP) and immune-mediated hemolytic anemia (IMHA). Discussion will focus on potential predisposing factors, diagnosis, acute management, and chronic management. Cases will be used to emphasize concepts.

### ***Common Immune Mediated Conditions in Dogs: Part 2***

This lecture will discuss immune-mediated polyarthritis (IMPA) and other less common immune-mediated conditions of dogs. Discussion of IMPA will focus on the types of IMPA, diagnosis, and other differential diagnoses. Cases will be used throughout to help emphasize concepts.

### ***Urinary Incontinence: Update on Diagnosis and Management***

Urinary incontinence is a common clinical sign in canine patients. This lecture will discuss the approach to urinary incontinence as it relates to important history questions, physical examination, and diagnostic testing. Discussion will also focus on treatment options in these patients.

### ***Challenging Urinary Cases***

This lecture will discuss various urinary cases in dogs and cats. Discussion will focus on differential diagnoses for various urinary clinical signs and presentations.

Noon -1:00 pm Lunch Buffet

Presentation: Montana Apprenticeship Program

1:00-5:00 pm Large Animal Session – 4 CE

Joseph Lozier, DVM, MS, DACVS-LA

The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine

### ***Complications with Bovine C-sections***

Sometimes what seems like the best next step when managing dystocia can turn into a headache. This session will begin with a quick review of cesarean section in cattle and focus on some common complications as well as what to do when we encounter them and how to avoid them altogether.

### ***Vaginal Prolapse Treatment***

Vaginal prolapses can range from a minor nuisance to a life-threatening issue. This session will focus on how to manage the varying degrees of vaginal prolapse we encounter in cattle.

### ***Orthopedic Injuries***

Orthopedic injuries are fairly common in ruminants and can be life-threatening. However, many ruminants manage to heal when placed in the right circumstances. This session will cover some ways to manage fractures in ruminants as well as some other common orthopedic injuries.

### ***Bloat/Vagal Indigestion***

Bloat, tympany, abdominal distention, vagal indigestion. All are terms commonly utilized- sometimes for the same presentation. This session will tackle the varying forms of abdominal distention in cattle, their causes, and treatment options.

Special thanks to Dr. Barr Gustafson, MVMA president-elect and chair of the 2025 MVMA Winter Meeting. We sincerely appreciate all the time and expertise he has dedicated to planning this meeting!



# AGENDA



## 1:00-5:00 pm Small Animal Session – 4 CE

**Douglas Stramel, DVM, CVPP, CVMA**

Advanced Care Veterinary Services – Carrollton, TX

### ***Chronic Pain Management***

Dr. Stramel will discuss pharmacological treatment options for chronic pain beyond non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents.

### ***Non-pharmacologic Treatments for Pain Management***

Dr. Stramel will discuss treatment options such as acupuncture, shockwave, pulsed electromagnetic therapy, ozone therapy, rehab and other modalities that can be used to treat painful pets.

### ***Local Blocks***

Multiple local blocks that the everyday practitioner can use will be discussed and presented in video format.

### ***Joint Injections***

Multiple joint injections that the everyday practitioner can use will be discussed and presented in video format.

## 5:30 pm Hosted Social Hour (Dinner on your own)

## Saturday, January 25

### 7:00 am Registration/Breakfast Buffet

## 8:00 am-Noon Large Animal Session – 4 CE

**Dr. Katja Duesterdieck-Zellmer, VMD, MS, PhD, DACVS, DACSMR-Equine, CERP**

Oregon State University Carlson College of Veterinary Med.

### ***Pain in the neck – Examination of the neck and back in Sport Horses***

This session will cover indications for performing a manual neck and back exam, as well as neck and back functional anatomy, specifics of the manual exam, and how to interpret findings.

### ***Beyond injections – Medical management of neck and back issues in Sport Horses***

Dr. Zellmer will discuss her treatment approach to cases with neck or back pain that have no abnormal imaging findings, including medications and physical rehabilitation approaches.

### ***Nature knows best – Update on medical treatment approaches for musculoskeletal injuries in Sport Horses***

In this session, orthobiologics and other newer management strategies for horses with osteoarthritis or tendinitis/desmitis issues will be discussed.

## 8:00 am-Noon Small Animal Session – 4 CE

**Michael Tillson, DVM, MS, DACVS**

Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine

### ***This isn't the spay and neuter I learned in vet school!***

A discussion of the changes in neutering procedures over the last

20(+) years, including when, who and how. Also, the role that minimally invasive surgeries can play (or may be playing) in practice.

### ***Brief review of gastrointestinal surgery***

A quick trip through the GI tract, looking at surgical tips and tricks; discussion of suturing techniques, use of surgical staples for intestinal surgery and foreign body removal.

### ***Making a diaphragmatic hernia less scary***

This session will cover anatomy, as well as anesthesia and surgical techniques for managing a patient with an acute diaphragmatic hernia.

### ***A surgeon's approach to pain and inflammation***

Managing patient needs during and after surgery; a multi-modal, yet hopefully practical, approach to surgical pain; brief review of NSAIDs, opioids, alpha-2 agonists and local anesthetics in everyday surgical practice.

## Noon-1:30 pm Membership Meeting/Lunch

## 2:00-4:00 pm Joint Large/Small Animal Session - 2 CE

Montana Department of Livestock  
Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

**Tahnee Szymanski, DVM—State Veterinarian**  
**Brad De Groot, DVM—Brucellosis Program Veterinarian**  
***Brucellosis***

Review of current brucellosis regulations within Montana; how these regulations are used for case management in Montana.

**Heidi Hildahl, DVM, PhD—Veterinarian Supervisor**  
***Animal Disease Traceability***

Review of the new ADT regulations; current technology to assist with animal disease traceability; available support from MDOL; and how Montana is managing tag allocation.

**Dr. Szymanski**  
**Brenee Peterson, DVM—Program Veterinarian**  
***Foot and Mouth Disease***

Overview of the Stop Movement Order that will be used in case of a detection of Foot and Mouth Disease in the United States; Discussion on some of the unique challenges that Montana will face in accomplishing this task.

**Erika Schwarz-Collins, DVM, MPH, PhD, DACVM**  
Clinical Veterinary Microbiologist - MT Veterinary Diagnostic Lab

**Dr. Szymanski**  
***Johne's Disease***

Case management and diagnostic testing for Johne's Disease and the evolution of the Montana Johne's Control Program.

**Dr. Schwarz-Collins**  
***Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Lab Update***

Update on the new building/move-in timeframe, new test offerings, OneHealth fellow project results (HPAI and tick-borne), and others.

## **Brad De Groot, DVM | Brucellosis Program Veterinarian | Montana Department of Livestock**

Dr. De Groot and his family first came to Montana from Nebraska in 2008. At that time, he established an independent livestock practice based in Dillon with the help of Beaverhead County native Dr. Bill Hawkins. Dr. De Groot then served as the Assistant State Veterinarian in Wyoming, overseeing the Trichomoniasis and Johne's disease control programs, as well as Wyoming Brucellosis Designated Surveillance Area (DSA) compensation. He also participated in Brucellosis risk assessment training for veterinarians serving clients who operate in the DSA, and oversaw combined USDA and Wyoming Livestock Board disease incident responses such as Vesicular Stomatitis. Dr. De Groot divides his time between his home base in Dillon, the Animal Health Bureau office in Helena, and field infectious disease control activity around the State of Montana. Dr. De Groot and his wife Krista have two grown daughters. Brad and Krista enjoy carpentry and hiking trails around Dillon when they are not busy at work.



## **Katja Duesterdieck-Zellmer, VMD, MS, PhD, DACVS, DACVSMR (Equine), CERP | Associate Professor, Large Animal Surgery | Oregon State University Carlson College of Veterinary Medicine**



Dr. Zellmer was born, grew up and attended veterinary school in northern Germany. She graduated from the University of Veterinary Medicine Hanover, Germany, in 1996. She then spent one year as a visiting research scholar at Michigan State University in the Equine Performance

Laboratory investigating electrolyte supplementation for endurance horses. She completed an Internship in Large Animal Medicine and Surgery at the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine in Blacksburg, and performed her Residency there in Large Animal Surgery.

Dr. Zellmer was board certified by the American College of Veterinary Surgeons in 2003, and after that worked as Large Animal Emergency Clinician at Colorado State University, where she performed the work for her PhD in the Equine Orthopaedic Research Lab investigating gene expression patterns of chondrocytes from joints with osteoarthritis. She has been with Oregon State University since 2006, first as Assistant and now as Associate Professor in Large Animal Surgery. In 2017, she became a Certified Equine Rehabilitation Practitioner through the University of Tennessee and passed the board certifying examination of

the American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation (Equine).

Dr. Zellmer's research interests are focused on the pathophysiology and treatment of musculoskeletal diseases in the horse, including rehabilitation methods for equine athletes. She is also interested in mental health of veterinary students and professionals and has been organizing resilience trainings for faculty, staff and house officers at the Carlson College of Veterinary Medicine.

## **Heidi Hildahl, DVM, PhD | Veterinarian Supervisor Montana Department of Livestock**

Dr. Heidi Hildahl began her position with MDOL in July of 2024, focused on animal disease traceability (ADT), veterinary accreditation, Johne's, and reportable disease tracking. Dr. Hildahl has dual doctorate degrees in molecular biology and veterinary science from the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and Oklahoma State University Center for Veterinary Health Sciences, respectively.



Dr. Hildahl comes to MDOL with 7 years of experience as an Extension veterinarian and Beef Quality Assurance Coordinator, and 15 years of experience as a biomedical researcher. Her work as the Arkansas Extension veterinarian required her involvement in several regulatory committees including the Arkansas Animal Disease Traceability Committee and the Arkansas Feral Hog Eradication Task Force. She taught and coordinated several veterinary continuing education courses for the Arkansas Food Animal Medicine Workshop Series, which was funded by a USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture Veterinary Services Grant Program (NIFA VSGP) grant. She also served as the official veterinarian for the Arkansas State Fair for four years.

When not at work, Heidi enjoys camping, hiking, off-roading, and kayaking with her husband, two sons, and two dogs.

## **Isaac Jumper, DVM, PhD | Assistant Professor | Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine**



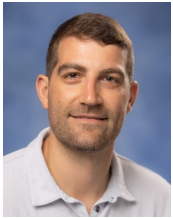
Dr. Jumper is an assistant professor at the Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine (MSU-CVM) Department of Pathobiology and Population Medicine. He is a 2018 graduate

# ■ ■ SPEAKERS ■ ■



of MSU-CVM, completed a residency in Population Medicine at MSU-CVM in June 2021, a Ph.D. in veterinary science with a concentration in population medicine in May 2023, became a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine (ACVPM) in July 2023, and became a diplomate of the ACVPM Epidemiology Specialty in July 2024. Dr. Jumper's research focuses on enhancing antimicrobial stewardship in food animal populations, while also improving animal health and production. Dr. Jumper works in the large animal ambulatory and population medicine services at MSU-CVM, providing primary care to beef cow-calf and stocker/backgrounders. He also works with veterinarians and livestock producers across Mississippi to investigate causes of disease and decreased production in beef cattle herds.

## **Joseph Lozier, DVM, MS, DACVS-LA | Associate Professor Farm Animal Medicine & Surgery, The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine**



Dr. Lozier received his DVM from The Ohio State University in 2014. He went on to complete an internship and residency in farm animal medicine and surgery at OSU. He received a MS degree along with the completion of his residency in 2018.

Dr. Lozier is a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons (Large Animal) and is an Associate Professor of Farm Animal Medicine and Surgery at the OSU College of Veterinary Medicine.

## **Laura A. Nafe, DVM, MS, DACVIM (SAIM) | Assistant Teaching Professor - Small Animal Internal Medicine | University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine, Veterinary Medicine & Surgery**

Dr. Nafe specializes in small animal internal medicine with interests in endourology, minimally invasive procedures, infectious disease, and immune-mediated disease. She has lectured regionally and nationally on various topics related to small animal internal medicine. She also has a passion for teaching and mentoring veterinary students and house officers.



Dr. Nafe received a Bachelor of Science degree from Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. She then obtained her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from the University of Missouri. Following graduation, she completed a small animal rotating internship at North Carolina State University before returning to University of Missouri for a residency in small animal

internal medicine. After her residency, Dr. Nafe served as faculty at the University of Wisconsin (2013-2014) and Oklahoma State University (2014-2020) before returning to the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine as an Assistant Teaching Professor in Veterinary Medicine and Surgery in the fall of 2020.

## **Brenee Peterson, DVM | Program Veterinarian Montana Department of Livestock**



Dr. Peterson joined the MDOL in the fall of 2024, and she is excited to transition into regulatory medicine, where she can work with the wonderful men and women of Montana to help protect the animal industry. She grew up on the family farm north of Havre, Montana, where her family raises Polled Hereford cattle and farms wheat. At a young age, she knew she wanted to be a part of agriculture and decided to pursue veterinary medicine.

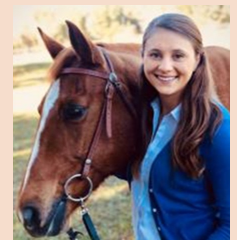
Dr. Peterson earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science from Montana State University, and attended veterinary school as part of the inaugural class of the WIMU program through Washington State University. She graduated from Washington State in 2018, and worked as an associate veterinarian in communities throughout the state. Throughout the years she enjoyed practicing mixed animal medicine and enjoyed performing soft tissue surgeries.

In her off time, Dr. Peterson enjoys hiking, camping, traveling and helping on the farm. She also enjoys going on adventures with her two mutts Tony and Turk. Along with playing fetch with her cat Tang.

## **Erika Schwarz-Collins, DVM, MPH, PhD, DACVM Clinical Veterinary Microbiologist**

### **Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory**

Dr. Schwarz-Collins serves as Microbiology Section Head at the Montana Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, providing diagnostic technical expertise, veterinary consultation, and overseeing daily operations and clinical testing in the Bacteriology, Virology, Molecular Diagnostics, and Serology sections.



Dr. Schwarz-Collins received her Bachelor of Science, Master of Public Health, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from the University of Florida.



She is also board certified by the American College of Veterinary Microbiologists. As a classically trained virologist, she has an extensive background working with a wide variety of human and animal pathogens. Her professional interests include infectious diseases at the human-domestic animal-wildlife interface, diagnostic techniques for high-consequence pathogens, translational medicine, and One Health.

**Douglas Stramel, DVM, CVPP, CVMA | Owner/Practitioner | Advanced Care Veterinary Services, Carrollton, TX**

Dr. Stramel received his Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine from Kansas State University in 1991. In 1994 he was accepted as an intern with the Dallas Veterinary Surgical Center. While at DVSC, he gained extensive knowledge in advanced surgical techniques. Dr. Stramel is a member of American Veterinary Medical Association, American Animal Hospital Association, International Veterinary Academy of Pain Medicine (IVAPM), International Association for the Study of Pain and the American Association of Rehabilitation Veterinarians. From 2010 to 2013, Dr. Stramel was Chair of 'Advisory Council on Pain Management' through IVAPM, which is dedicated to publishing pain management guidelines in the field of veterinary medicine. He was treasurer for IVAPM from 2013-2019, president-elect from 2019-2021 and president from 2021-2023. In the inaugural year of 2009, he received the credentials of Certified Veterinary Pain Practitioner and is the first and only veterinarian to receive this credentialing in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. By working with Zoetis and Elanco, he has provided continuing education presentations and wet labs on the topics of anesthesia and pain management to practitioners in north Texas and Oklahoma. He is also a national speaker presenting at conferences such as AAHA, NAVC and CVC. He has also spoken internationally for Fauna-Pharma in Finland. Dr. Stramel is certified in Regenerative Cell Therapy, using adult derived stem cells to treat a wide variety of conditions as well as being certified with PennHIP. He is certified in Western Medical Acupuncture through Colorado State University (now known as CuraCore) and has received training in Dry Needling Therapy for release of myofascial trigger points through Myopain Seminars. He has completed course work in canine rehabilitation through Northeastern



Seminars and is a published author in "Physical Rehabilitation for Veterinary Technicians and Nurses." He has participated in eight FDA clinical trials to help advance treatment in the field of pain management, including work on Galliprant, Solenisa and Librela.

Dr. Stramel runs and operates Advanced Care Veterinary Services in Carrollton, Texas, a specialty practice limited to pain management and rehabilitation, as well as pain management consultations to veterinarians in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. During his free time, he will most likely be found doing any activity outdoors with his wife and daughter.

**Tahnee Szymanski, DVM | State Veterinarian Montana Department of Livestock**

Dr. Szymanski assumed the role of state veterinarian in July 2023 after serving the department since 2008. A Montana native, she graduated from Oregon State University College of Veterinary Medicine in 2004. Prior to joining the Department of Livestock, Dr. Szymanski worked in a large animal ambulatory practice. Outside of work, she enjoys hiking, kayaking, snowshoeing, and camping with her daughter, Campbell.



**Michael Tillson, DVM, MS, DACVS | Arthur & Louise Oriole Professor | Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine**



Dr. Tillson earned the Bachelor of Science degree from North Carolina State University in 1983, and a second bachelor's degree in animal science from NC State, cum laude, in 1984. He completed a Masters of Science degree at the College of Veterinary Medicine-Kansas State University, and DVM from North

Carolina State University. Dr. Tillson was a clinical instructor in Small Animal Surgery at Washington State University and completed a residency in Small Animal Surgery at Kansas State University. He joined the Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine faculty in 1995 as an assistant professor and currently holds the Arthur and Louise Oriole Professorship.

Dr. Tillson's research interests include Cardiovascular Surgery/Cardiovascular modeling, Transplantation biology/ Renal transplantation/Mechanisms of immunologic tolerance, Instruction in general surgery and soft tissue surgery.

# REGISTRATION FORM



Montana Veterinary Medical Association  
 2025 Winter Meeting Registration  
 Best Western Plus GranTree Inn | Bozeman, MT | January 23-25

**Registration Available Online!** Save postage and time—pay with a credit card at [www.mtvma.org](http://www.mtvma.org).

**Please Print**

Name *As it should appear on your name badge* \_\_\_\_\_ First CE meeting?  Yes  No

Clinic \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

2-Day Registration   Total of 14 CE Hours	Early Bird Registration By Jan. 6	After Jan. 6 & On-Site	Total (includes meals)
MVMA Member, VMA Member of Other State (not practicing in Montana), Life Member requesting CE	\$375	\$415	
Non VMA Member	\$505	\$545	
<input type="checkbox"/> Technician <input type="checkbox"/> Office Manager	\$200	\$240	
<input type="checkbox"/> Life Member <input type="checkbox"/> Student <b>No CE Awarded</b>	free	free	(any meals must be purchased below)

Single-Day Registration: Friday: 8 CE Hours Saturday: 6 CE Hours	Early Bird Registration By Jan. 6	After Jan. 6 & On-Site	Total (includes meals)
MVMA Member, VMA Member of Other State, Life Member requesting CE Check: <input type="checkbox"/> Friday <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	\$310	\$350	
Non VMA Member Check: <input type="checkbox"/> Friday <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	\$440	\$480	
<input type="checkbox"/> Technician <input type="checkbox"/> Office Manager Check: <input type="checkbox"/> Friday <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	\$170	\$210	
<input type="checkbox"/> Life Member <input type="checkbox"/> Student <b>No CE Awarded</b> Check: <input type="checkbox"/> Friday <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday	free	free	(any meals must be purchased below)

Guest/Life/Student Meals	Guest Name:	Meals – Life w/o CE, Students, Guests ONLY	
Both Days – all meals			\$145
One Day Check: <input type="checkbox"/> Friday <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday		Friday only	\$90
		Sat. only	\$70
Friday Evening Social Hour <b>ONLY</b>			\$20

Please note any dietary restrictions below: \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Amount \$** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Make checks payable to MVMA.

**Lodging:** A limited number of discounted rooms is available at the Best Western Plus GranTree Inn in Bozeman for \$109/night plus taxes/fees until sold out or Dec. 23. To reserve, call (406) 587-5261 and refer to the MVMA Room Block.

Send Registration Form with payment to: MVMA, PO Box 6322, Helena, MT 59604  
 Or register online at [mtvma.org](http://mtvma.org).

Questions? Call or email: [info@mtvma.org](mailto:info@mtvma.org) | (406) 447-4259



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**BRIEF SUMMARY:** Prior to use please consult the product insert, a summary of which follows: **CAUTION:** Federal law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian. **INDICATIONS:** Adequan® i.m. is recommended for the intramuscular treatment of non-infectious degenerative and/or traumatic joint dysfunction and associated lameness of the carpal and hock joints in horses. **CONTRAINDICATIONS:** There are no known contraindications to the use of intramuscular Polysulfated Glycosaminoglycan. **WARNINGS:** Do not use in horses intended for human consumption. Not for use in humans. Keep this and all medications out of the reach of children. **PRECAUTIONS:** The safe use of Adequan® i.m. in horses used for breeding purposes, during pregnancy, or in lactating mares has not been evaluated. For customer care, or to obtain product information, visit [www.adequan.com](http://www.adequan.com). To report an adverse event please contact American Regent, Inc. at 1-888-354-4857 or email [pv@americanregent.com](mailto:pv@americanregent.com).



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2. Burba DJ, Collier MA, DeBault LE, Hanson-Painton O, Thompson HC, Holder CL: In vivo kinetic study on uptake and distribution of intramuscular tritium-labeled polysulfated glycosaminoglycan in equine body fluid compartments and articular cartilage in an osteochondral defect model. J Equine Vet Sci 1993; 13: 696-703.



## WSU White Coat Ceremony includes 16 Montana WIMU students

Washington State University's College of Veterinary Medicine hosted its annual White Coat Ceremony—which included 12 Montana students and 4 non-residents from Montana's WIMU program—August 15 in Pullman. Unfortunately, MVMA President Dr. Linda Kauffman was unable to attend due to illness, but MSU WIMU faculty member Dr. Garrett Ryerson was on hand to welcome the Class of 2028.

Montana's WIMU program was expanded this year to include 16 total students, who begin their education on the Montana State campus and continue years 2 and 3 at Washington State. Year 4 includes experience in a wide network of clinical placements.



MSU WIMU students received their white coats at the August 15 ceremony.

### Congratulations, Montana WIMU Class of 2028!

Jacy Ayers  
Caroline Boozer  
Melena Bruskotter  
Olivia Fletes  
Mia Foster  
Caitlyn Franke  
Molly Garretson  
DeLaney Hinman  
Meriel Hoxworth  
Justin Marsh  
Shelby Martinell  
Mikayla McClintock  
McKenna Quirk  
Sarah Welborn  
Yue Yang  
Bozhao Zhang

### MVMA's Online Classifieds, Job Board offer members exclusive benefits

Reach a wide audience by advertising on MVMA's online Classified Ads page at [mtvma.org/classified](https://mtvma.org/classified). Here you can post on any of three pages: Relief Services, Practices For Sale and Miscellaneous For Sale. Posting is simple: send a detailed ad to the MVMA office at [bemter@montana.com](mailto:bemter@montana.com). All posts are free of charge to members, and can be placed for any length of time.

MVMA's Job Board is a great place to list open staff positions or resumes. Access the page through the MVMA website at [mtvma.org/classified](https://mtvma.org/classified). Listings are free to members, but you will need your MVMA member login information to create a post. You can also bump your post to the top of the board as a "featured" listing for an additional fee.

Contact Beth at the MVMA office with any questions or for a special discount code for staff ([bemter@montana.com](mailto:bemter@montana.com) or 406-447-4259).

# American veterinary Medical Association update

Sandy Willis, DVM, DACVIM | AVMA District XI Director

## AVMA Board of Directors

Hello Montana Veterinarians,

I hope this finds you enjoying the Fall. I am pleased to provide an AVMA update on a couple of key issues.

### Addressing staffing challenges

The pandemic unquestionably exacerbated staffing shortages and disrupted workflows. Hiring challenges are real, but some numbers being circulated regarding future workforce needs appear to substantially overestimate demand and underestimate supply. A number of colleges are adding to their class sizes, three new veterinary schools graduated or are graduating classes in 2023, 2024 and 2025, and there are 11 proposed veterinary schools in various stages of development. We know there are segments that require tailored solutions; for example, veterinarians in rural areas. The best way to address the issues we face is by helping practitioners increase the productivity and efficiency of their practices, fully leverage veterinary technicians, increase staff retention, and integrate technology.

If passed by voters this November, Colorado ballot measure Proposition 129 would create a "Veterinary Professional Associate" (VPA). This proposed position would put undertrained individuals into decision-making roles without the knowledge or skills. It would allow individuals to practice veterinary medicine, including diagnosing, prognosing, creating treatment plans, and performing surgery, after completing a mostly online Master's program. The AVMA supports an issues campaign called *Keep Our Pets Safe*, which working to defeat this dangerous ballot measure and make sure Colorado voters understand the tremendous risk a VPA would pose to animal safety and public health. A midlevel position cannot prescribe, as per FDA's Section 503(f) of the [Federal Food, Drug, and](#)

[Cosmetic Act](#) that states without a lawful written or oral order of a licensed veterinarian, it would be unlawful for anyone other than a licensed veterinarian to dispense prescription animal drugs.

Update: In addition to more veterinary-focused organizations coming out in opposition to the midlevel position, the AVMA has seen a strong media and on-line advocacy against Proposition 129 as we get closer to election day, explaining the nuances around this Proposition and why a Mid-Level Practitioner position as detailed in Proposition 129 is not a good idea for the pets in Colorado or elsewhere. For more information, go to [www.keepourpetsafe.com](http://www.keepourpetsafe.com).

The AVMA's Inaugural DEIW Summit, aimed at exploring the vital intersection of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Wellbeing, will be held November 7-9 in Atlanta, Georgia. The summit, which qualifies for 7.5 hours of CE, will offer a dynamic and interactive program, including breakout sessions and three visionary keynote speakers.

Registration is open, and capacity is limited for this first of its kind event in veterinary medicine. For additional information, please visit: [avma.org/events/deiw-summit](http://avma.org/events/deiw-summit).

### 2025 AVMA Veterinary Leadership Conference

The 2025 AVMA Veterinary Leadership Conference (VLC) will take place from January 9-11 at the Sheraton Grand Chicago Riverwalk.

The VLC includes AVMA governance meetings, continuing education sessions focused on leadership development, and networking opportunities designed to equip you with leadership skills that will benefit both you and the veterinary profession.



### AVMF UPDATE

As the charitable arm of the AVMA, the American Veterinary Medical Foundation (AVMF) is *your* Foundation. The AVMF's fundraising pillars are the AVMF REACH Program, Disaster Support, Education, and Scholarships and Research.

### DISASTER SUPPORT

The AVMF is closely watching the continued efforts around recovery following Hurricanes Helene and Milton. We provided a \$20,000 grant to disaster relief veterinary organizations for Helene. The AVMA also makes available through our Disaster Emergency Veterinary Medicine Care Reimbursement (Up to \$5,000) and our Individual Disaster Reimbursement AVMF REACH Program (Veterinary Charitable Care).

Use as many or few cases as you would like. Each member gets \$2,000 per calendar year. Grants are PER veterinarian, not per clinic.

Members can find more information about REACH grants at [avmf.org/programs/veterinary-charitable-care](http://avmf.org/programs/veterinary-charitable-care).

### Scholarships

*WE NEED YOUR HELP:* Scholarship season is upon us, and we need to double the number of scholarship nominations reviewers from 150 to 300! This is a gift of your time. The AVMF will once again select a Montana Veterinary Student for the Rex Anderson VLC Travel Aware Scholarship providing financial support to attend the VLC.

As always, I welcome your questions and feedback. I look forward to seeing you all at the Montana VMA meeting June 2025 at Fairmont Hot Springs Resort.



## Now that technicians are licensed, what do we call our staff members?

### Marcia Cantrell, LVT | Montana Board of Veterinary Medicine LVT Member



*Marcia Cantrell, LVT, has been credentialed for nearly 30 years. She is Inventory Manager at Intermountain Veterinary Hospital in Belgrade. She worked alongside Big Sky Veterinary Technician Association, MVMA and many others to pass legislation to License Veterinary Technicians in Montana in 2021. Marcia is the first LVT to serve on the Montana Board of Veterinary Medicine.*

Senate Bill 106 went into effect January 1, 2023, which established formalized licensing for Licensed Veterinary Technicians (LVTs). What does that mean? The intent is to legally multiply your work force by knowing when you hire an LVT you know they have a standard of education and experience behind their resume.

In Montana, LVTs must have completed a 2-year Veterinary Technician Program or have worked with a Montana licensed veterinarian for 4,500 hours AND have passed the very rigorous Veterinary Technician National Exam (VTNE). Once the individual has applied for and been issued their license by the Montana Board of Veterinary Medicine, veterinarians can utilize them to their full ability under different levels of supervision, thus multiplying a clinic's work force.

Now, what do we call our staff? There is much confusion on this subject, both because of the lack of a national standard, as well as due

to old habits. Montana Statute states:

*"37-18-701 (4) Subject to review by the board, a person who does not hold an active license as a veterinary technician may not state or imply orally, in writing, or in print that the person is a 'licensed veterinary technician' or use the initials 'LVT.'"*

We all need to do a better job of clarifying our staff positions, not only at the inter-office level, but also to educate our clients on the different levels of education in the veterinary world. If the person has gone through the time and effort to become licensed, they are called "Licensed Veterinary Technicians," "LVTs" or "Techs." If they have NOT become licensed, they should be called "assistants."

All members of a practice are vitally important team members entrusted by the public to give the best possible care to their pets and livestock.

### MT Board of Veterinary Medicine

<b>Dr. Katie Rein</b> DVM Member Chair	<b>Dr. Garrett Ryerson</b> DVM Member
<b>Dr. Jeanne Rankin</b> DVM member Vice Chair	<b>Marcia Cantrell</b> LVT Member
<b>Dr. Gregory Carlson</b> DVM member	<b>Joshua Donald</b> Public Member
<b>Dr. Tia Nelson</b> DVM Member	<b>Dan Ritter</b> Executive Officer I
	<b>Scott Magill</b> Executive Officer II

## Vet Tech training now available through Montana Registered Apprenticeship

### Grace Holman | Apprenticeship Specialist

Montana Registered Apprenticeship, which has been providing training programs for decades, is poised to begin working with veterinary clinics across the state to develop Veterinary Technician training programs. The Vet Tech apprenticeship program includes 4,500 hours of on-the-job practical learning coupled with 300 hours of coursework delivered remotely. Apprentices are full-time employees of the clinic, while receiving guidance and mentorship from journey-worker veterinary technicians or licensed veterinarians. Once completed, the apprentice will be able to sit for the VTNE certification test.

Apprenticeship programs belong to the employer, not the state, and are designed to meet the clinic's specific

workforce needs. Montana Registered Apprenticeship has an 80-year record of providing Montanans with an efficient and cost-effective training program that now serves close to 3,000 apprentices in more than 70 occupations across the state.

Grace Holman, apprenticeship specialist with the Montana Registered Apprenticeship program, will be sharing more information on the program at the MVMA Winter Meeting on Friday, January 24 during the noon luncheon.

For more information, find the office closest to you to speak with an Apprenticeship Representative at [apprenticeship.mt.gov/contact](http://apprenticeship.mt.gov/contact) or scan the QR code to the right.





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# Montana Department of Livestock: Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) Rule and tag distribution update

The United States Department of Agriculture's Animal Disease Traceability final rule went into effect on November 5.

*The primary change in the ADT rule is the requirement for official identification for cattle and bison to be both visually and electronically readable.* While the focus of this rule change has been on animals for interstate movement, it also applies to animals required to be officially identified as part of regulatory disease program work such as brucellosis and tuberculosis testing and calfhood vaccination of heifers. At this time, USDA will only recognize 840-RFID tags as official ID, but new technologies may be added by USDA in the future. Animals impacted by the rule change include sexually intact cattle and bison 18 months of age or older, all dairy cattle regardless of age, and cattle or bison of any age used for rodeo, exhibition, or recreational purposes. No new classes of animals will be impacted by this rule change. Steers and spayed heifers remain exempt from the rule unless they are involved in program disease work.

Animals with an existing form of official identification (metal bangs tag or silver NUES tag) on November 5 do not need an electronic tag applied; existing metal tags are valid for the lifetime of the animal. However, if a metal tag is lost after November 5, it will need to be replaced with an 840-RFID tag and the information from both the old (if available) and new tag must be recorded and kept for five years.

Montana's historical tag use far exceeds the allocation of no-cost RFID tags supplied by the USDA. The USDA bases a state's no-cost tag allocation on the cattle inventory as reported by the National Agricultural Statistics Service. Our allocation of no-cost tags for federal fiscal year FY25 is expected to be 193,000 tags.

We continue to work with USDA on solutions to minimize the financial impact to livestock producers. Montana has been successful in procuring 35,000 orange RFID tags from another state that had not used their entire FY24 allocation. Montana has also requested an additional 100,000 tags from USDA and has been approved for 60,000 orange RFID tags as part of this request.

The distribution of no-cost RFID tags will be prioritized to our brucellosis Designated Surveillance Area (DSA), related mandatory vaccination counties, and livestock markets. The remaining no-cost tags will be available to anyone for use in cattle for vaccination, other official program disease work, or interstate movement. We ask veterinarians to limit the use of tags in animals going directly to slaughter.

Requests for no-cost RFID tags can be submitted to USDA at (406) 437-9457 or [yvette.k.leidorf@usda.gov](mailto:yvette.k.leidorf@usda.gov). Montana is working to ensure that no-cost tags can be accessed by as many veterinarians as possible.

If you work with foreign-origin cattle, 900 series RFID tags with the official USDA seal will be available for application to Canadian and Mexican origin cattle that have lost their country-of-origin Identification, as these animals are not eligible to be tagged with 840 RFID tags. MDOL will have a supply of these tags available for distribution. Please call (406) 444-2976 to request Import tags.

USDA has expressed that the change towards requiring official ID to be electronic does not obligate them to provide all needed official identification at no cost to veterinarians and producers. USDA cited the scrapie program as an example where producers are required to officially identify animals and bear the expense of that ID. Therefore, we should expect that the availability of no cost RFID tags from will end at some point in the future.



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## MSU veterinary students benefit from scholarship from alumni Ed and Jodi Peretti

by Hannah Stiff | MSU Mountains and Minds Magazine | Reprinted with permission

Susanna Kielley is used to working full time during the summer and picking up odd jobs during the school year to help pay for veterinary school. The second-year Doctor of Veterinary Medicine student at Montana State University also previously worked as a resident adviser to help cover her room and board.

“These savings aided in paying for my undergraduate education,” said Kielley, who is from Hall, a town of about 50 in western Montana. “But I still required further financial aid in order to make my dream of becoming a veterinarian come true.”

That’s where Ed and Jodi Peretti come in. The Perettis are both MSU graduates and donors to the university and Bobcat Athletics, and since 2019, they have been helping students like Kielley afford veterinary school by funding their namesake scholarship, administered through the MSU Alumni Foundation.

“I can’t thank the Peretti family enough for the support that they have shown me,” Kielley said. “I am currently working to pay back their generosity by earning my DVM and soaking in as much information as I can in order to better assist my clients and patients.”

Kielley is one of about a dozen MSU students who have received the Ed and Jodi Peretti Montana Veterinarian WIMU Scholarship since it was established about five years ago. So far, recipients have gone on to serve rural communities throughout the state, including Dayton, Lewistown, Moore and Miles City. Those vets are providing valuable services to animals ranging from small pets to large ranch animals, according to

Mark Quinn, director of the MSU component of the WIMU Regional Program in Veterinary Medicine. WIMU stands for Washington, Idaho, Montana and Utah; the program allows students to complete their first year of vet school at MSU in Bozeman before completing their final three years at Washington State University in Pullman.

“The Perettis’ scholarship is vital for helping Montana students graduate with their DVM degree with as little debt as possible, which also helps them potentially return to serve their home communities,” he said.

### The Perettis’ path back to Montana

Ed and Jodi Peretti both received their undergraduate degrees from MSU in 1982, with Ed’s degree in animal science and Jodi’s in microbiology.

Ed, who grew up in Great Falls, said he selected his career path at a young age.

“From the age of 7, when people would ask what I wanted to be when I grew up, I always answered ‘veterinarian,’” Ed said. “Our family always had a menagerie of animals, and I had a role in caring for all of them. The interactions I had with the animals, especially the sick ones, stimulated a desire to know more about how to better care for them.”

After graduation, Ed participated in the WICHE, or Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, Regional Veterinary Medicine Program. The program allowed Ed to pursue his vet degree at Washington State University while paying in-state tuition at MSU. He earned a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree in 1986.

At that point, Jodi, who grew up in Havre, and Ed knew they wanted to come back to Montana, preferably to Great Falls.

But there was no job for Ed there. In fact, he couldn’t

find an open position anywhere in the state except in Butte.

“It’s either Butte or Seattle,” Ed recalled. “At that point I said, ‘I’ll take it.’”

The couple made a pact that they would stay in Butte for six months while Ed learned from an established veterinarian. The six months came and went. By then, Ed and Jodi were expecting their first child, and Ed’s boss hinted that he might retire. By 1989, Ed had purchased the practice where he worked, and the Perettis kept laying down roots in Butte for their growing family.

And from an aging 1,200 square-foot clinic on Harrison Avenue to a new 10,000 square-foot facility, the Perettis continued growing their roots for the next 37 years while caring for Butte’s pets at the VCA Amherst Animal Hospital. Ed found professional purpose helping small animals through orthopedics, surgery, dermatology, theriogenology and endocrinology. He also served as president of the Montana Veterinary Medical Association for a year.



**Jodi and Dr. Ed Peretti. Dr. Peretti served as MVMA president in 2020-2021.**

*Continued next page*



“My passion as a vet was always simply to provide the best care possible for pets and their owners,” Ed said. “My clients and their pets deserve nothing less.”

Jodi, too, was integral to VCA Amherst Animal Hospital’s success. At first, she also worked a separate job as a medical lab manager.

“When Ed purchased the clinic, we could not afford to pay someone to do the bookkeeping,” Jodi recalled. “I was comfortable with that responsibility with help from our accountant, so I worked my lab job in the day and did the clinic books at night.”

After about four months, Jodi found it was too much to take care of three young children while also working 40 or more hours per week, plus three hours a night as the clinic bookkeeper. She decided to quit her lab management job to work full time at the vet hospital.

“I gained so many skills with my microbiology background that translated well to the veterinary practice, specifically equipment troubleshooting and developing procedures and protocols for the tasks that needed to be done,” she said.

### **Philanthropy and supporting Montana veterinary students**

This year, after nearly four decades in business, Ed announced his retirement.

“It is now time for me to begin the next chapter of my life,” Ed wrote in a message announcing his retirement. “I look forward to dedicating my time to my family and philanthropy.”

That family includes the couple’s three grown children—all MSU graduates—and their four

grandchildren. The philanthropy piece for Ed includes supporting the Butte Rotary Club and the East Ridge Foundation, while Jodi volunteers with Chi Omega Fraternity, both at MSU and at the national level. Jodi is also chair-elect of the MSU Alumni Engagement Advisory Board.

When it comes to funding the Ed and Jodi Peretti Montana Veterinary WIMU Scholarship, Ed said that he and Jodi “want to keep Montana kids coming back to Montana.”

“We like to support academics to give students opportunities to receive an education with as little debt as possible,” Jodi added.

So far, the Perettis have given more than \$10,000 in scholarships and are on track to donate more than \$5,000 in the 2024–2025 school year, according to Austin O’Neill, MSU Alumni Foundation development director. That giving grows each year, O’Neill added, thanks in part to another donor who is matching the scholarship money dollar for dollar.

“Our motivation for the scholarship was to reduce the financial burden of new veterinarians,” Ed said. “This will allow them to take jobs in Montana, where the average salary is lower than most other states.”

Quinn, the WIMU director, explained that rural veterinarians often spend lots of time on the road, driving from ranch to ranch. That unpaid drive time means vets serving rural communities often cannot be compensated as highly as vets in urban areas, who are able to move more quickly from patient to patient.

“Even though we have the state support, these students don’t end up having huge salaries like maybe an M.D. could achieve,” Quinn said.

Savannah Schneider, a second-year DVM student from Helena and Peretti scholarship recipient, said she feels grateful to know there are donors who care about her education and the welfare of animals in Montana.

“Every penny counts when it comes to getting through eight years of school,” Schneider said. “Luckily there are gracious donors out there, such as the Perettis, to help alleviate the financial burden of students. I definitely would not be where I am if it was not for the Perettis.”

Anna DeCan, also a second-year DVM student and Peretti scholarship recipient, agreed.

“I was delighted to find out I received the award as I knew it would give me great financial peace of mind as I moved forward into my second year of the program,” DeCan said. After graduation, she hopes to work in a mixed-animal practice in Montana.

For Ed and Jodi, having their names tied to MSU is another way to support the university that provided so much for their own family.

“I am proud to say that I am a Bobcat every single day,” Jodi said. “MSU is an educational institution that I am very proud to be part of. There is a strong sense of community among all MSU graduates. It is like we are one big family.”

*To learn more about how to support the WIMU program, including through the MVMA WIMU Endowed Scholarship Fund, visit the MSU Alumni Foundation website at [msuaf.org](https://msuaf.org).*

## MVMA Power of 10 gathers before Summer Meeting to gain knowledge on practice finance issues

The 13 young Montana veterinarians comprising the 2024 Power of 10 leadership group gathered before the Summer Meeting in June for a valuable workshop on practice finances.

Renowned practice management consultant Amy Grice, VMD, MBA, led the four-hour session at the Great Falls Heritage Inn. She covered topics critical to successful practice operations, including interpreting profit and loss statements, maximizing profit potential and learning about compensation trends.

The session was followed by a casual social hour to network and share ideas.

The 2024 Power of 10 Class—dubbed the “Power of 13” due to its size of 13 bright and energetic members—includes veterinarians who have graduated from veterinary school between 2016 and 2023 and are practicing in all parts of Montana. They are led by program chair Katie Rein, DVM, and co-chair Mark Albrecht, DVM.



The Power of 10 program is designed to provide networking opportunities, leadership development and communications strategies for veterinarians who have been in the field for less than 10 years. Participation is provided at no cost; they need only provide lodging and transportation.

The group has met via Zoom this fall, studying *The Four Disciplines of Execution* by Chris McChesney et al. The book explores strategies for successfully achieving your most important priorities in the midst of the whirlwind of daily life.

Next up, the Power of 10 group will gather in Helena in February 2025 to gain hands-on lobbying and advocacy experience during the Montana Legislative Session.

Stay tuned as MVMA begins the process of selecting candidates for the next Power of 10 Group. All MVMA member veterinarians who graduated within the past 8 years are encouraged to take part in this valuable program.

### ***Power of 10 Class of 2024-25***

*Dr. Makayla Balogh*  
*Dr. Alyssa Bennin, Three Forks*  
*Dr. Cody Boyce, Sidney*  
*Dr. Madison Comes, Lewistown*  
*Dr. Markee Dupea, Billings*  
*Dr. Lacey Fahrneier, Roberts*  
*Dr. Jessica French, Big Timber*  
*Dr. Emily Gosda, White Sulphur Springs*  
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