The 2006 Meeting of Veterinary Editors

was held in conjunction with the 31th WSAVA Congress in Prague on October 10, 2006.

Welcome and introductions
Eva Baranyiova opened the day on behalf of the organizing committee (Eva Baranyiová, Karin de Lange, Mirko Treu and Karin Hefmanská), and chaired its morning and afternoon sessions. All participants briefly introduced themselves and their journals.

The keynote presentation by Liz Wager analyzed in detail the ethical issues in science publishing, beginning with a dictionary definition what ethic is. She identified the players – authors, reviewers, editors, and also who could get hurt by unethical conduct: other researchers/authors but above all the patients. She introduced the ethical themes – promoting research integrity, transparency, editorial standards and processes but also ownership of ideas and expression. However, even requiring appropriate approvals does not guarantee research integrity as shown in several articles and studies she mentioned. Not even the peer review process is a reliable tool. Liz further mentioned importance of transparency in the process (e.g. who did the work, who funded it, individual contributions, competing interests, ICMJE authorship criteria). Another important topic of her talk was responsible publication: how much of the work was previously published, have all the outcomes been reported. Some findings may be over-published (results that favour a specific product) whereas other results may be under-published (i.e. those that produced non-significant or negative results) - such publication bias may distort the literature. In her presentation Liz demonstrated how selective reporting from studies sponsored by pharmaceutical industry may affect new drug applications, and thus how even meta-analyses can give rise to misleading conclusions, and, importantly, that this type of scientific misconduct is difficult to detect in the peer review process. Proposals to reduce publication bias were presented. Liz further took us to the area of ownership of ideas and expression, mentioning plagiarism, and how we could proceed in combating it; she pointed out the responsibilities of reviewers and editors. However, misconduct is not a „privilege“of authors – she presented cases of reviewer and editor misconduct, too. And finally, Liz pointed out where we could turn for help: COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics, www.publicationethics.org.uk).

This presentation evoked a lively discussion: authorship should be made clear at submission, otherwise abuse may occur – authors get added or dropped. It is important to educate our authors. They must know the legal responsibilities; even with written statements to this effect there is no full protection of either authors or editors guaranteed.

Martin Alder presented a very interesting success story of Strengthening the links between human and animal health – an exercise in journal collaboration.

In November 2005, The Veterinary Record and the British Medical Journal collaborated on a joint issue on human and animal health (VR, November 26, 2005, vol 157, pp 669-716; BMJ, November 26, 2005, vol 331, pp 1213-1280). The aim was to explore areas of overlap between the veterinary and medical professions and how they could work together for mutual benefit. For the joint issue, the two journals published different, but complementary articles, on this common theme. Links were established between the two journals’ websites, where the articles are available on free access. This was an interesting exercise in publishing terms and could be said to represent a form of veterinary/medical cooperation in itself. It also generated quite a lot of interest. This talk will discuss how the idea arose and what we hoped to achieve.
It will also consider how we set about it, what was what was learned and whether the exercise was felt to be worthwhile.

**Martin Sedláček**, Profi Press, Prague, then briefly presented the scope and mission of agricultural and veterinary journals published in Czech for the practitioners both in large and small animal practice.

The afternoon session was opened by **Stephen Wymbs** of Blackwell Publishing, who analyzed the Society, the Editor and the Publisher – building a mutually beneficial partnership. He looked at these three parties from different angles, stressed the exchange of information, how to build a publication that is of interest and practical value. A financially stable publication should sustain a long-term future. They all contribute to the partnership: editors by providing e.g. expert knowledge, contacts, credibility, editorial vision, the society by providing a network of authors, subscribers, credibility and marketing network. The publisher brings the final version of journal, industry knowledge, infrastructure, economics risk management etc. They all share a common goal – a successful journal.

**Eva Baranyiová** (European Association of Science Editors, Council member 2006-2009) reported on EASE 9th General Assembly and Conference of this active organization of editors held in Kraków, June 15-18, 2006. There were more than 200 participants. The theme was „The Culture of Science Editing“. In introducing the first plenary session it was stressed that EASE has a unique historical opportunity to build a broadly based and inclusive science community that can help to advance both science and science communication at this time of growing European Union. The first plenary session was oriented to Culture clashes in time and space – aspects of electronic archiving, e-archival responsibility, role of the legal deposit libraries etc. Problems with getting information: its ease in transfer from west to east but difficulties, and („perhaps sometimes even lack of interest, E.B.“) in information flow in the other direction, problems with getting journals into Science Citation Index etc. were discussed. A lively and rather fiery session was that on Cultural consequences of impact factors with a presentation of James Testa of ISI Thomson. He mentioned the important four parts of ISI journal selection process: timeliness, editorial conventions, English-language bibliographical information and peer review. A new tool of similar kind, Index Copernicus was mentioned, with open index for European journals. Further sessions included Cultural consequences of electronic publication – with journals striving for open access and new technologies. Open access attracts more readers, generates more citations and results in higher IF for open-access journals. Another session was dealing with Cultural differences in text editing and writing. Speakers analyzed situation of some small journals with poor manuscripts; their ways how to teach authors to improve their products. Now editorial processes across Europe are becoming much the same and visibility of middle- and eastern European journals is improving. Another topics were The culture of science translation, communicating science to society, The language and culture of science publication, Authorship and evaluation. Each participant of this conference could learn and take home important knowledge and stimuli for work.

EASE, an organization joining science editors of 50 countries worldwide and covering all areas of science from astrophysics to veterinary medicine, was briefly introduced. Eva recommended to participants of the meeting to visit the website **www.ease.org.uk** – and become members. EASE strives to uphold the highest standards in science publishing, helps to sharpen the editing, writing and thinking skills, to broaden the outlook through encounters
with people of different backgrounds. Apart from triannual cycles of major conferences, EASE publishes the journal European Science Editing, an editor’s Handbook covering everything from on-screen editing to office managements, peer review etc.

Denise Elliot then presented the newest publication of Royal Canin: in great detail she analyzed all chapters of „The Veterinary Encyclopedia of Canine Nutrition“, how the idea and scope of the book developed, how the authors were recruited. It was a lively, interesting presentation of a success story, a book that will prove useful for many canine practitioners.

In her last brief contribution Eva Baranyiova pointed out the problems of terminology used in science. She provided an example of the word trimester being heavily abused in human but also veterinary medicine (who else should know better that a sow is pregnant for one trimester and a ewe a few weeks longer?) and provided examples from top science journals with incorrect use of this term, meaning a third of pregnancy in animals. Other examples: „postweaned rabbits“ – once weaned why do authors say postweaned? (found in J. Anim. Sci, 1995) . “estrual – Holstein cows“ J. Anim Sci 1990).

Karin de Lange added another such term: clinical disease symptoms... and recommended to contact Professor Marian Horzinek to obtain some more. We all agreed that we should be alert and try to eradicate such incorrect use of words – it is the mission of editors to keep the language of science precise. A list-serve would be a good forum to keep us all alert and share and get rid of these “pearls“ of terminology.

The final discussion analyzed the position and possible formalization of EAVE and the general agreement was that the association should remain a flexible, loose group of editors knowing of each other and providing advice and help when necessary without any formal status or registered organization with financial requirements. All editors are fully enganged in their work and would hardly find extra time to operate an organization. A list-serv would be an excellent and workable system.

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