This is a summary of many activities going on at AVMA on our behalf. Thank you for being members of the AVMA or we could not have such an amazing staff in 12 Divisions working on professional issues that affect us personally every day in our workplaces.

If you have any questions about any issue, I will do my best to find the right people and the right answers for you.

1. **Veterinary Leadership Conference** in January 2014 – 538 veterinary professionals attended and is open to all members. This is an absolutely tremendous meeting, especially for those looking for more involvement with AVMA or learning about issues that affect our profession, like Economics.


   - The AVMA Veterinary Economics Division was created in August 2011 and set to work on its first major project—the U.S. Veterinary Workforce Study. The intent was to conduct an economic analysis of the current and future supply of, and demand for, veterinarians and veterinary services in the United States.
   - Released April 23, 2013, the workforce report said approximately 12.5 percent of veterinary services in the United States went unused in 2012, that is, the demand for veterinary services in 2012 was sufficient to fully employ just 78,950 of the 90,200 veterinarians currently working in clinical and nonclinical settings, resulting in an excess capacity of services equal to the labor of 11,250 full-time veterinarians.
   - Study results further projected that the nation’s veterinary services capacity is likely to be under-utilized by 11 to 14 percent through 2025.
   - Three major factors that have caused excess capacity in the veterinary profession in the past five years:
1. A 7.5 percent reduction in gross domestic product since 2008 which resulted in a 7.5 percent reduction in your business. That means every consumer is less willing to spend money for services because of less income, so there’s less demand.

2. In the past 10 to 15 years, prices for veterinary services have been increasing, even above trend, or faster than the per capita increase for all other services, including human health care services. Dr. Dicks said now, veterinarians have saturated demand at those prices. And because prices are above trend, there’s a gap between the quantity of services veterinarians are willing to provide at a certain price and the quantity of those services demanded by consumers at that price.

3. While the number of U.S. veterinary students fluctuates over time, that figure has been increasing above trend since the 2005-2006 academic year. Just in the past five years, the total number of veterinary students has gone up by about 4.4 percent. And a recent Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges survey indicated enrollment among U.S. veterinary schools is expected to increase by 6 to 8 percent, or 150 to 200 students, over the next three years.

- “What do we do, and which do we work on first? Everyone said less new veterinarians, but I wondered why new veterinarians didn’t say we needed less old veterinarians,” Dr. Dicks said as a humorous observation.

- Three data research studies by the AVMA Veterinary Economics Division will commence in 2014. They are as follows:
  1. An elasticity study will determine the effects of the price of veterinary services and customer disposable income on the demand for veterinary services.
  2. An employment study will look at how many veterinarians have been unemployed or underemployed and for how long in addition to whether their status is temporary or permanent and why.
  3. A capacity study will determine the difference in characteristics between veterinary practices operating at excess capacity and those operating at full capacity.
Other 2014 economic-related tactics involve the AVMA Early Career Development Committee’s **Personal Financial Planning Packet**, a budgeting tool for recent graduates to manage personal finance and debt. It is scheduled for launch early this year.

   a. 46 VMAs, 21-22 CVMs and a total of 110 member organizations
   b. 3 year campaign
      i. 2011 - Define consistent guidelines
      ii. 2012 - Communicate guidelines to DVMs and give DVMs the tools to apply the guidelines
      iii. 2013 - Direct to consumer campaign targeting women, 32-49 years old making $75,000/yr annual household income. They represent 40-50 million pets.
         1) Over 50% of the pets considered “active” by the practices had not been in for a visit of any kind in over 18 months. It is these pet owners, who already have a relationship with you, that are the target of our advertising campaign.
         2) The simple goal of the campaign is to get these pet owners to schedule an annual checkup with you.
      iv. 2015 – What next to solidify preventive care vs. emergency and sick care

4. **Smithsonian Exhibit** on **Animal Connections**
   [http://www.sites.si.edu/animalconnections/](http://www.sites.si.edu/animalconnections/)
   a. "Animal Connections: Our Journey Together" is a traveling exhibit on an 18-wheel truck that introduces visitors of all ages to the complex bond between humans and animals. Presented by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service to mark the 150th anniversary of the American Veterinary Medical Association, the project is made possible through the generous support of Zoetis and is meant to inspire the next generation of veterinarians.

   a. Farm Bill passed
      i. FARAD (Food Animal Residue Avoidance Database) for $2.5 million
      ii. NAHLEN (National Animal Health Laboratory Network) for $15 million
b. Veterinary Medicine Mobility Act
   i. Sponsored by Senators Jerry Moran (R-Kansas) and Angus King (I-Maine), S. 1171 would amend the Controlled Substances Act to permit veterinarians to carry controlled substances outside of their primary places of registration and across state lines to treat their patients. This means that licensed and registered veterinarians who treat patients on the farm, in the wild, at a client’s home or in other mobile settings will be allowed to bring and use controlled substances to provide pain management, anesthesia or euthanasia.
   ii. With the bill passed by unanimous consent in the Senate, we now look to the U.S. House to take up this important legislation.

c. Fairness to Pet Owners Act (aka “Unfairness to Veterinarians Act”)
   i. On February 10, Rep. Jim Matheson (D-UT-4th) reintroduced the so-called “Fairness to Pet Owners Act” (H.R. 4023). Like its predecessor in the previous Congress, H.R. 1406, the legislation would require a veterinarian to provide a client with a written prescription for domesticated household animals, whether or not requested by the client. The veterinarian would be prohibited from charging for the prescription or asking a client to sign a liability waiver related to writing the prescription. AVMA has prioritized this act again for ACTIVE PURSUIT of DEFEAT

   i. The bill seeks to eliminate the abusive act of soring horses by improving the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s enforcement capabilities and strengthening penalties against violators, among other provisions. Soring horses has been illegal for more than 40 years, but it’s still happening. This bill would take important steps to penalize those who choose to sore their horses, and hopefully will finally bring an end to this barbaric practice.
6. **Strategic Management Plan** –
   a. A 3-year strategic operating plan for the AVMA budget process
      i. Survey of 16,000 members by age and discipline to identify major lines of business to focus upon as prioritized by AVMA members. **Please fill it out!!**
   b. Marketing and Branding of the AVMA
      i. What does the AVMA do for me?
      ii. What goods and services are available and most valuable to members
      iii. What are the benefits that are for the “greater good”?
   c. Digital Strategy to communicate more directly and effectively with members

**Thank you for being AVMA members! It is so important!!**