

# History of the International Society for Animal Hygiene from 1967 until 2012 as recorded by an eyewitness

by Pál Rafai, Honorary Member of the Society

Pay homage to the past and preserve it for the future,  
(Mihály Vörösmarty)

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Mihály Vörösmarty, the outstanding Hungarian poet of the reform age wrote also in the early years of the 1840s: “Without historical memories the nation stands for its mere shadow”. These two quotations recall our responsibilities in collecting, processing and critically evaluating of our past for the benefit and betterment of the descendants who follow us. This was my best intention when I hastily took my inkpot and quill to sketch up the history of

a noble society, the History of the International Society for Animal Hygiene.

May we start: “Once upon the time ..?” We might, but the “upon the time” was not so long ago. Everything started some 40 years ago, when our noble predecessors decided to found a new society for the prevention of animal diseases and production losses.

## Foundation and early years of the International Society for Animal Hygiene

At the opening ceremony of the 8<sup>th</sup> in-between Congress (Budapest, the 30<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> of October 1995) organised for commemorating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of foundation the **International Society for Animal Hygiene (ISAH)**, Professor Ferenc Kovács, reasoning the necessity of establishing an international organisation in the field of animal hygiene, said the followings: “From the second half of our century (understand: the 20<sup>th</sup> Century), the European animal breeding and husbandry has taken new directions and developed dynamically. Genetic potential of livestock and poultry grew immensely; concentration and specialisation of livestock farming took its start.” Parallel with these changes “Frequency and prevalence of multifactorial diseases have increased causing

endemic health disorders with considerable economic losses. Consequently, establishment and in countries where it had been existent, further development of a discipline that deals exclusively with prevention of diseases and health has become imperative. On this basis, institutes/departments of animal hygiene have been established in number of European establishments of veterinary higher education and, in some countries, within the organisation of veterinary health service.” “By mid-sixties the necessity for co-ordination of these institutions has become obvious.”

Professor Johann Kalich (Munich) and Professor Ferenc Kovács (Budapest) had the excellence to recognise the necessity of establishing

an international forum for spreading and implementing of research achievements obtained in schools of animal hygiene of European countries and providing opportunities to personal contacts among researchers and scientists working on the field of veterinary preventive medicine.

The organisation of ISAH started in 1967 by the unanimous declaration of Professors/Leaders of Departments for Animal Hygiene of Veterinary/Agricultural Schools in a number of Western and Eastern European countries to set foundation to an international society. After negotiations in Vienna, Brno and Belgrade, Professor Kovács wrote a letter to many colleagues in East and West on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 1970 and proposed the foundation of an International Society for Animal Hygiene (Strauch, 1994), and at the same time he invited them to attend the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the International Society of Agricultural Engineering that was to be held in Budapest in November 1970.

The invitation was accepted by 19 scientists from 9 countries who at the meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November 1970 at the Budapest University of Veterinary Science (Strauch, 1994) founded by unanimous will the International Society for Animal Hygiene. From this date, these personalities have been regarded as “**Founding Fathers**”. Professor Ingvar Ekesbo (Sweden) was unfortunately prevented from his personal attendance of the meeting. Due to his active involvement in the preparative work later, he was duly acknowledged as founder of the Society. Prof. V. Tomescu from Romania and Professor I. Poljakov from the Soviet Union also did not attend this first meeting, but acknowledging their efforts and merits they both were elected into the Extended Executive Board of the Society. **Table 1** discloses the names of the Founders.

At this meeting, the **first officers were elected** and decision was made for **drafting the Statute of the Society**.

Prof. Ferenc Kovács was elected President. His work was aided by three Vice-Presidents

(Prof. M. Cena /Wroclaw/; Prof. J. Ivoš /Zagreb/ and Prof. J. Kalich /Munich/), and by a Secretary (Doc. J. Hojovec /Brno/) and by a Press Officer (Prof. D. Strauch /Stuttgart/). The first Council (Executive Board, see later) was also elected and included the following personalities: Prof. H. Willinger, Austria; Prof. K. Petrov, Bulgaria; Prof. J. Rosocha, Czechoslovakia; Prof. Von der Aa, Germany-East; Prof. D. Strauch, Germany-West; Prof. I. Szép, Hungary; Prof. V. Tomescu, Romania; Prof. I. Poljakov, USSR; Prof. J. Puhač, Yugoslavia (Strauch, 1994).

**Table 1.** Founders of the Society

Austria	Prof. Dr. H. Willinger, Vienna
Bulgaria	Prof. Dr. K. Petrov, Sofia
	Prof. Dr. P. Stojanov, Sofia
Czechoslovakia	Doc. Dr. J. Hojovec, Brno
	Prof. Dr. J. Rosocha, Košice
Germany, East	Dr. R. Motz, Berlin-East
	Dr. P. Schmoldt, Eberswalde
Germany, West	Prof. Dr. J. Kalich, Munich
	Prof. Dr. D. Strauch, Stuttgart
Hungary	Prof. Dr. F. Kovács, Budapest
	Prof. Dr. I. Szép, Gödöllő
Poland	Prof. Dr. M. Cena, Wroclaw
	Prof. Dr. Z. Czajkowski, Warsaw
Romania	Prof. Dr. V. Tomescu, Timisoara
Sweden	Prof. Dr. I. Ekesbo, Skara
Yugoslavia	Prof. Dr. E. Čamo, Sarajevo
	Dr. N. Hrgovic, Belgrade
	Prof. Dr. J. Ivoš, Zagreb
	Prof. Dr. J. Puhač, Belgrade
	Prof. Dr. D. Varenika, Sarajevo
USSR	Prof. Dr. I. Poljakov, Moscow

The first draft of the Statute was prepared and duly discussed first at a meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of September 1971 in Herceg Novi (Yugoslavia) and in Budapest between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of April 1972. The last version of the

draft was circulated among institutes and university departments working in the field of animal hygiene and, after inclusion of amendments and notices sent in, the final version of the **Statute** was adopted by the first Congress (see: [Preliminary statutes of the ISAH](#)).

According to the Statute, the Society had four official languages (English, French, German and Russian) plus the language of the country where the Congress was held. The

name of the Society in English: International Society for Animal Hygiene; in French: Société Internationale pour l'Hygiène Animale; in German: Internationale Gesellschaft für Tierhygiene; in Russian: Mezdunarodnoje Obscesztvo po Zoogigijene. Although it was self-understanding at the time of setting the name of the society as a society for animal hygiene, later the name has been subject of returning polemics (see later).



**Ceremonial signature of the Foundation Chart**  
**Sitting: Prof. M. Cena; in the background: J. Kurdi, interpreter;**  
**standing in the front: Prof. F. Kovács**

The goals of the Society were disclosed in §2 of the first Statute. Among others, the Society aimed at promoting the spread of scientific information; assisting the formation of uniform understanding of animal hygiene as one branch of veterinary science; giving help to implementing new scientific achievements for the benefit of animal production and serving both economic production of foods of animal origin and improvement of quality of the products. This paragraph also stated that the Society is the representative organisation of veterinarians and other graduated experts working in the field of animal hygiene.

These goals were to achieve (§3) by three-annual congresses; working groups established for dealing with timely special tasks, publishing an international periodical and by nurturing ac-

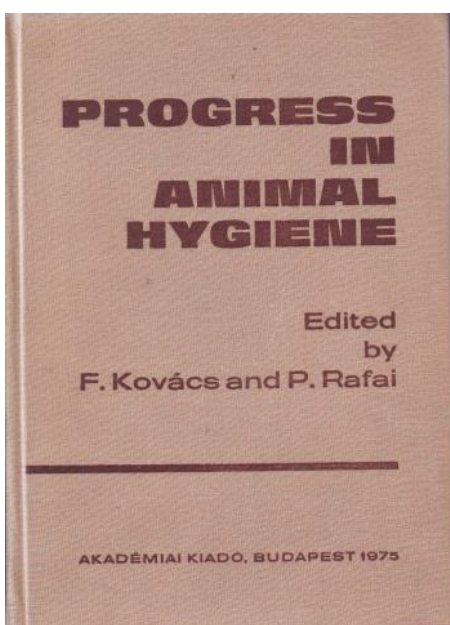
tive connections with related international organisations, research institutes and institutions of veterinary/agricultural high-schools and universities.

According to paragraph 5, the Society had active, honorary, external (sustaining) and special (non-ordinary) members. An interesting restriction was adopted by this section concerning the application for ordinary membership. The paragraph said: by written application all veterinarians might become ordinary member of the Society. At the same time, agricultural professionals other than veterinarians “are eligible as Ordinary Members of the Society up to 10% of the total membership”.

The highest corporation of the Society is the General Assembly of the ordinary and honorary members. The General Assembly has its

sessions at the congresses, but due to special circumstances, it may be organised independently. Decisions were made by simple majority of votes.

Ordinary members elect National Representatives in each member countries. National representatives are assembled into the Committee (§10) or (as it was referred later) into the Extended Executive Board. The procurator body, the Council (Executive Board as it was referred by the further issues of the Statute), conduct the matters of the Society between congresses. The Council included the president, the three vice-presidents, the secretary, the treasurer (accountant) and the press-officer (§12). According to the original plans, the Council was to meet on regular basis. Due to financial and other problems, this intention has never been implemented. Instead, in the first 10-20 years the Council met at the Congresses. Later the Executive Board had regular meetings the year before and during the actual congresses. Recently, most naturally, the Board has video/phone conferences. It is interesting that the [first Statute](#) did not include verbatim that the president of the Society should be elected automatically according to the place of the next congress. This unwritten law was changed in the third Statute.



In spite of its handicaps, this first Statute had duly served the interests of the Society. As the time passed, the significant changes in the animal agriculture and especially in the field of animal hygiene, herd health and food safety demanded the continuous supervision of the Statute. Discussions at the congresses, in-between meetings (see later) and informal talks among the servants of the Society finally led to the modification of the first Statute at the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress held in Leipzig (1991; see later). This (2<sup>nd</sup>) Statute was replaced by the third one at the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress (Warsaw, 2005), which was then modified into the operative Statute at the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress (Vienna, 2011). Modifications of importance will be discussed later.

The early history of the Society concluded with the **first Congress** that was held in Budapest at the Hungarian Academy of Science between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1973. In this first meeting, more than 500 participants came together of which approx. 200 arrived from abroad. Presentations and discussions clustered around nine themes with 126 oral contributions. The subjects involved the following areas: Disposal, treatment and utilisation of liquid manure; Disinfection in large-scale management systems; Hygienic problems of large-scale cattle, pig and poultry husbandry; Hygiene of feeding; Bioclimatology; Influence of stable hygiene on milk production and incidence of mastitis; Calf rearing, calf fattening and lamb fattening). The presentations were later published in a volume: *Progress in Animal Hygiene* (eds. Kovács F. and Rafai P., Budapest, 1975. pp. 1-501).

In his thought-provoking **introductory talk**, Professor Kovács summarised the role and tasks of animal hygiene. Firstly, he gave a revolutionary new definition of animal hygiene. He said: "Animal hygiene does not deal with sick animals; instead healthy animal populations form its objective in order to preserve health and integrity." In his concept, "health is not lack of the disease. Only those livestock and poultry populations are regarded healthy where individuals produce according to their genetically coded capacity."



**Introductory talk by Prof. F. Kovács.  
On his left: Prof. Johann Kalich, Prof. János Mészáros and Prof. Josip Ivoš**



**The first plenary session**

He demonstrated the mutual interactions between development of animal hygiene as science and practice of modern husbandry systems. He had foreseen that large-scale production had been and remained the engine of the agricultural progresses. Summarising the then available information he nailed down: genetic progress is accompanied by the parallel increase of housing, nutritional and other relevant requirements of domestic animals and poultry. Disregarding these connections sets basis for development of multifactorial diseases. He introduced the concept of “living environment” and demonstrated the necessity of its balance with the defence mechanisms of animals. Dealing with the connections be-

tween animal behaviour, housing and development of abnormal behaviour, he stated: “Behind every behavioural patterns stand physiological requirements or physiological dysfunctions”. As for sustainability of animal agriculture, he declared: “Animal hygiene defends animals against the harmful effects of man-made environment and at the same time safeguards the environment from the harmful effects and emissions from animal production units.” Later in his speech, he warned: “Spreading of intensive plant breeds and the according change of agro technology will certainly lead to higher incidence of mycosis and mycotoxicosis.” With regard to use of antibiotics as growth promoters, he prevised the connected harmful effects on the human consumer.

The foregoing thoughts circumscribed the boundaries of animal hygiene as science and discipline and determined the activity of the Society for long.

The first Congress was not only successful from scientific point of view, but set bridge between Eastern and Western part of Europe in an era where the symbol of the cold war, the wall in Berlin, was constructed only few years

before, where the allied troops of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation invaded Czechoslovakia, when scientists separated by the iron curtain could hardly establish connections. This gave imprescriptible significance to the foundation of the Society, which ever since its creation has been strengthening and by our time become a large international organisation that unifies the work of animal hygienists from 52 countries.



This pioneering work of Professor Ferenc Kovács was acknowledged at the XV<sup>th</sup> Congress (Vienna, 2011) by electing him Honorary President. The ornate certificate was presented by Prof. Jörg Hartung, the at present active President of the Society, to Professor Kovács on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 2011 at a ceremonial meeting at the Hungarian Academy of Science commemorating the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birthday.

The first Congress was acknowledged success by many participants and opened way to series of further congresses. On this occasion may I record the names (from Hungary) who were actively involved in the organisation with repeated thanks for their activities: Ballasch Alajos, Bokori József, Fodor László, Kelemen András, Kovács György, Orbán Róbert, Oswald

József, Papp Zoltán, Pethes György, Sallai Józsefné, Tamási Géza and Tóth László. The first Congress was helped by many from abroad. May I with grateful mention their names: Bonnadonna, T. (Italy), Camo, E. (Yugoslavia), Czajkowski, Z. (Poland), Devos, A. (Belgium), Ekesbo, I. (Sweden), Gligor, V. (Romania), Janowski, T. (Poland), Kallela, P. (Finland), Pavlov, P. (Bulgaria), Petrov, K. (Bulgaria), Puháč, I. (Yugoslavia), Rosocha, J. (Czechoslovakia), Sainsbury, D.W.B. (United Kingdom), Slagsvold, P. (Norway), Tomescu, V. (Romania) and Varenika, D. (Yugoslavia). Finally, the dear reader perhaps will be permissive quoting one sentence from the opening address of Professor Kovács: "... I gratefully remember the work of the Organizing Committee, especially that of Dr. Pál Rafai, the Secretary."

## The history of the International Society after the first Congress

The General Assembly of the first Congress elected a new presidency headed by Professor Dr. Josip Ivoš (Zagreb, Yugoslavia /Croatia/). His work was supported by three Deputy Presidents (Prof. F. Kovács, Hungary; Prof. J. Kalich, GFR and Prof. Dr. G.K. Volkov, Soviet Union), a Secretary (Prof. Dr. D. Varenika, Yugoslavia /Bosnia-Hercegovina/) and by the Press Officer (Prof. D. Strauch, GFR). The primary responsibility of the new president was to organise the 2<sup>nd</sup> congress of the Society. This **2<sup>nd</sup> Congress** was held in Zagreb between the 29<sup>th</sup> of September and 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1976. The Organising Committee of the Congress included: J. Ivoš, B. Kresnik, I. Majdak and J. Nemanič (Croatia); I. Puhač, N. Hrgovič, L. Bešlin, Z. Stojanovič and G. Muhaxhiri (Serbia); E. Čamo, D. Varenika, S. Frankovič, M. Stipac (Bosnia-Hercegovina); S. Valentičnič, A. Lukanc, E. Polanec, C. Doplihar (Slovenia); Ž. Madžirov, T. Angelovski, A. Džekov (Macedonia) and T. Tomasevič, D. Mandičm, D. Vickevič, J. Milošević (Crna Gora).



This was the first occasion when the logo of the Society appeared and was put on the front page of the Proceedings (Zbornik Referata/Collected Reports) of the Congress. The emblem delineates Asclepius and his 2<sup>nd</sup> daughter from Epione, Hygieia, the goddess of health and prevention. The logo to our best knowledge was designed by Prof. Hilliger, Hannover, GFR. This logo was retained until the 9<sup>th</sup> Congress, when it was replaced by the one which was redrawn on the occasion of the in-between symposium held in Budapest (October 1995) on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation.

Professor Ivoš and his crew made an excellent organisation. The conference was clustered around five themes: The influence of modern husbandry systems on the production; Feed hygiene and feeding technologies; Modern methods of disinfection, disinsection and deratisation; Animal protection; Animal production and environmental protection). These subjects were discussed on basis of 131 oral presentations. The congress made it clear: animal welfare is an integral part of animal hygiene. The related contributions inspired further research in the field of animal welfare and set foundation for further discussions of welfare related issues in the coming congresses. Another important development of the congress related to the discussions of the influence of animal agriculture on the natural environment. This, later, has become an important discussion theme at many forums (including the meetings of FAO, WHO, OIE and EAAP) with the recurrent name of “sustainability”.



**Prof. Dr. Josip Ivoš**

This second congress made the Society “transatlantic” by the presence and active participation of Prof. Stanley L. Diesch from the USA, the later President of the Society. At the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress Prof. Hermann Willinger was elected president and asked to organise the 3<sup>rd</sup> congress in 1980 in Vienna (one year later than the due time in order to avoid the coincidence with the World Veterinary Congress that was held in Moscow in 1979).

The **3<sup>rd</sup> Congress** was preceded by the meeting of the Board in Bratislava (Czechoslovakia) on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of February 1980 (Strauch, 1994) and made the finishing touches on the forthcoming Congress. This was held between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of September 1980 in Vienna. The introductory talks were given by the President, prof. H. Willinger (Aufgaben der Tierhygiene heute und morgen). His presentation was followed by those of professors J. Kalich, GFR (Tierhaltung and Umweltschutz); F. Kovács, Hungary (Einfluss von Umweltbelastungen auf die Gesundheit und Leistung der Tiere); G.K. Volkov, USSR (Development of zoono-hygienic science and its influence on animal production in USRR; S.L. Diesch, USA (Surveillance and reporting of environmental health effects on food animals and production).

Three sessions dealt with the environmental hazards to animal health (cattle; pig and poultry). Other sessions included: animal husbandry and protection of the environment; air hygiene of closed confinements; effects of environmental factors on the mammary gland; disinfectants and methods of disinfection; microbiology, mycology and toxicology of feeds; free communications. This congress was the first that addressed by many valuable contributions the emerging importance of management related diseases and also proved the necessity of conducting research in the field of air hygiene with special reference to human and animal health, emissions from animal premises and opportunities of reduction of the harmful effects. Altogether 112 presentations were heard and discussed.



**Prof. Dr. Hermann Willinger**

The third congress in Vienna was also very successful (Strauch, 1994). Professor Willinger made an excellent job. His far too early death was an irreparable loss to the Society. Those who have the privilege of knowing him have preserved his dear memory, and the members of the Society duly paid homage to his deeds at the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress (Vienna, 2011).



**Prof. Jan Rosocha**

The General Assembly in Vienna was held on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 1980. Professor J. Rosocha (Kosiče, Czechoslovakia) was elected as a new President and asked to organise the **4<sup>th</sup> congress** in Slovakia.

This Congress was held in Strbske Pleso (High Tatras, Czechoslovakia) from the 20<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> of September 1982. Five invited talks were presented: J. Rosocha: Position and importance of Animal Hygiene; G.K. Volkov: The role and importance of animal hygiene in the building of modern animal farms; J. Kalich: The objectives of animal hygiene in veterinary training with special consideration to modern animal husbandry; F. Kovács: Environmental hygienic aspects of food quality; J. Hojovec: Applications of animal hygiene in the practice of a veterinary surgeon. As for the main topics, the Congress followed the structure of the preceding meetings (4 sessions: Hygienic problems of cattle, pig, sheep and poultry production, 1-1 session: Disposal, treatment and utilisation of liquid manure; Disinfection, disinsection and rat control; General problems of animal hygiene, environment, building and ethology). In these



sessions, 143 contributions were presented and discussed. The Congress at the High Tatras was the first that recognised the importance of applied ethology of farm animals and devoted a session to related research. This subject returned at the 6<sup>th</sup> Congress with greater emphasis.



**Prof. Hans G. Hilliger**

Hans Georg Hilliger (Hannover, Germany-West) was elected as a President of the Society and asked to organise the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress. This **5<sup>th</sup> Congress** was held in the Congress-Centrum of Hannover between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of September 1985. By the mid-eighties increasing number of evidence proved that the biggest loss in animal farming was due to the (some-time considerable) gap between the genetic capacity of livestock and poultry and the actual production realised in field condition. Therefore, overviewing of those factors that decrease the production efficiency of farm animals became timely and the Congress in Hannover addressed the problem very successfully. The text of the 133 oral presentations was published in two volumes of the Proceedings (840 pages).

At the introductory plenary session Prof. I. Ekesbo from Sweden (Farm animal health and modern stable environment – problems and possibilities), Prof. G. Mehlhorn from Germany-East (Mikroflora im Stall – Ein wichtiger tierhygienischer Faktor) and Doc. J. Hojovec

from Czechoslovakia (Die Abprodukte aus der Tierhaltung – Ein Tierhygienisches Aufgabenfeld) held thought-provoking lectures. Other themes of the Congress embraced the followings: effects of microclimate and microbiological load on health and production of farm animals; hygiene of feed and water; disinfection and pest control; emissions from animal premises; treatment, handling and disposal of liquid and solid manure; irradiations and noise effects in animal production systems.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 1985, the General Assembly elected Prof. I. Ekesbo (Skara, Sweden) the 6<sup>th</sup> President of the Society. The newly elected Executive Board included H.G. Hilliger, Vice-President (Germany-West), F. Kovács (Hungary), J. Rosocha (Czechoslovakia), D. Strauch, Press-officer (Germany-West), G.K. Volkov (USSR), H. Willinger (Austria).

The next (**6<sup>th</sup> Congress**) was held in Skara at the Department of Animal Hygiene of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of June 1988. The President's organising work was efficiently assisted by the staff of the Department, particularly: Mrs. Inger Sjöberg, Mrs. Gudrun Norrman, Mrs. Eva-Lisa Persson, Mr. Olle Alvner, Mr. Sven-Erik Lundström and Mr. Kenneth Staaf.



**Prof. Ingvar Ekesbo**

This Congress was a milestone in the row of congresses, because that was the first one that dealt with multifactorial diseases and summa-

rised the then available knowledge of pathogenesis, prevention and control of such health disorders. In his excellent opening speech, Prof. Ekesbo nailed down: the disease panorama of farm animals has been changing and characterised by two main elements. "One is a diminishing of the purely infectious diseases which is a result of the successful veterinary research, organisation and practice. The second is an increase of diseases caused foremost by new factors in the animal environment, and/or management, in combinations with microorganisms or not".

Consequently, the congress concentrated on the management related/production/multifactorial diseases by disclosing research results that dealt with the interactions between facultative pathogenic microorganisms and health of farm animals; the stress and diseases; microclimate and health, and behavioural needs of farm animals and diseases/etho-anomalies. A 2<sup>nd</sup> important element of this Congress related to the introduction of herd-health programmes into themes of discussions.

The themes of the sessions included: Health and implications by environmental factors – epidemiological aspects (34 papers); Herd health programmes for cattle, pigs, poultry with emphasis on registration, evaluation and utilization of herd health data (20 presentations); Microclimate and animal health (45 papers); Stress in farm animals (12 papers); Animal wastes –microbiological aspects (14 papers); Health implications by environmental factors –ethological aspects (21 papers). These subjects were completed with 9, 16 and 10 communications on feed and water hygiene; disinfection and rodent control and free papers, respectively. The papers were published in two volumes. The number of participants was over 200.

Jointly to our Congress an International Congress on Applied Ethology in Farm animals was organised. The first day of this congress was organised in co-operation with ISAH. This joint meeting set foundation for establishing closer co-operation with sister organisations in

the future.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of June, the Extended Executive Board elected President Prof. Dr. G. Mehlhorn (Leipzig, Germany-East) and asked to organise the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress. His work was assisted by the Board that included I. Ekesbo, Vice-President (Sweden), D. Strauch, Press Officer (Germany-East), S.L. Diesch (USA), F. Kovács (Hungary), J. Rosocha (Czechoslovakia) and H. Saloniemi (Finland). Between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Congresses, the Executive and Extended Executive Board had two meetings. The first (unofficial) meeting was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 1990 in Stuttgart-Hohenheim. Discussions mainly centred on the financial preparation of the next congress. Only few members of the EB were present. The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting was called and organised by the President on the 19<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 1990 in Eberswalde/near Berlin. The goal of this meeting was to prepare the scientific agenda of the coming Congress and overview, amend, up-date the first Statute and finalise a draft for discussions and possible endorsement at the next General Assembly.



**Prof. Günter Mehlhorn**

The **7<sup>th</sup> Congress** was held between the 20<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of August 1991 in a politically sensitive period of time. The tense atmosphere was palpable among the participants. Mind that one day before the opening ceremony on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August, Mikhail Gorbachev, the President of Soviet Union was arrested in the Crimea and

had three-day detention. At that time, nobody could estimate the effect of the hard liner apparatchiks' coup on the world. In the many months preceding the congress vast changes took place in the history of Germany which was milestone by such events as the "picnic" at the Austro-Hungarian border (May 1989); removal of the Berlin wall (from the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 1989 on); first free election in the Eastern part of Germany (March 1990); and the official unification of the former East and West Germany on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October 1990. Most naturally, reunification has caused immense changes in every sections of the German Society, and set foundation for spectacular developments. The changes positive for the community, however, sometimes had sorrowful consequences at personal level. One such example was that of the President of the Society. Prof. Dr. Günter Mehlhorn, devoted servant of animal hygiene, efficient head of the Department of Animal Hygiene of the Karl Marx-Universität Leipzig, recognised researcher felt progressively difficult in these months raising financial support for the Congress and he thought it was somehow connected to his personality. Feeling responsibility to the Congress and hoping he can lift the barriers from inflowing monetary

support, he wrote a letter to the Rector of the University one day before the start of the Congress. In this epistle, he informed the Rector that due to reasons beyond his means, he could not conduct the Congress and in spite of dissuasions from Professors Kovács and Kalich who interpreted the wish of many of us, Prof. Mehlhorn was firm in his resolution and was unwilling to change his decision. Prof. Ingvar Ekesbo took the lead and with the efficient assistance of the Congress Secretary, Doc. Dr. Hoy, conducted the conference successfully.

In spite of these unforeseen and grievous developments, the Congress turned out big success. More than 300 participants from 24 countries had lively discussions in eight separate sessions and two satellite symposiums. Many of the sessions continued discussing the interactions between housing and multifactorial diseases and we also focused on the pollutant effects of animal husbandry systems. The satellite symposiums were devoted to the timely questions of feed hygiene ("Feed quality from veterinary point of view") and animal behaviour as clinical signs of diseases. The 295 contributions were published in the three volumes of the Proceedings.

## The 2<sup>nd</sup> Statute of the Society

This Statute was accepted by the General Assembly held at the Leipzig Congress on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 1991 and was duly signed by Prof. G. Mehlhorn and Prof. Dr. I. Ekesbo. Although the Statute has retained the basic outline of the first Statute, many innovations were inscribed. A few of them are quoted below:

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> § (Purpose and responsibilities of the Society) refined the objects and attempted defining the term "animal hygiene" (The field of animal hygiene includes the interactions between abiotic and biotic factors of environment and domestic animals, especially food animals, with the aim to prevent diseases and promote animal health and to ensure species-specific health and welfare needs of all such animals.);
- Recognising the incapacity of the Society to publish an official journal as it was set in the first Statute, §3 of the present constitution (Means to achieve the purpose) was converted into: "By publishing in refereed journals";
- Members of the Society by §5 of this Statute were classified into the category of ordinary, honorary and supporting members leaving out the classes of sustaining and non-ordinary members;
- As for the organisation this Statute said (§7) that the major organisation of the Society comprises the General Assembly, Extended Executive Board and Executive Board. These latter two categories sub-

stitute the former Committee and Council;

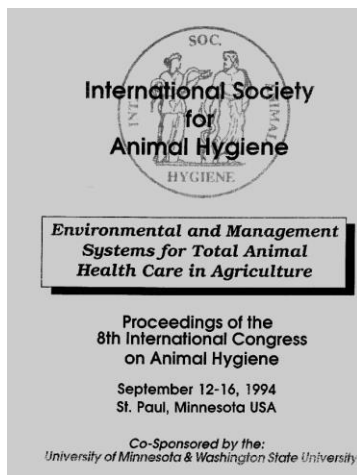
- Paragraph 12 reacted to the substantial changes in the past years and nailed down: the Executive Board consist of the President (who has the liability of organising the coming congress); 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President (the preceding president); 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President (president-nominee, viz. the person who might organise the congress after the coming congress); 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-President (who by definition “should be a long time and experienced member of the Executive Board and as such should act as press and public relation officer”); Secretary; Treasurer; one or two Members at large.

Due to Prof. F. Kovács’s and Prof. J. Rosocha’s withdrawal from active participation in the work of the Executive Board, the General Assembly elected a new Board according to the principle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Statute. The board was headed by Prof. Stanley L. Diesch (Minnesota, St. Paul, USA) as President of the Society. The members of the Board included 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Prof. Dr. Günter Mehlhorn (Leipzig, GFR); 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President Prof. Dr. Hannu Saloniemi (Helsinki, Finland); 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-President Prof. Dr. Dieter Strauch (Stuttgart-Hohenheim, GFR). Further elected personalities involved Dr. Francois Madec (Ploufragan, France), Secretary; Prof. Dr. Martin Tielen (Boxtel/Utrecht, The Netherlands), Treasurer; Members at large Prof. Dr. Ingvar Ekesbo (Skara, Sweden) and Prof. Dr. Pál Rafai (Budapest, Hungary).



**Prof. Stanley L. Diesch**

The big leap over the Atlantic from Leipzig to St. Paul, Minnesota (USA) was a historical event in the annals of our Society. That was the first Congress external to the continent of Europe and launched the globalisation of ISAH. In this historical event Prof. Dr. S.L. Diesch from College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Minnesota took pioneering lead. This jump was preceded by Prof. Diesch’s sabbatical in Europe (1973) where he conducted studies on environmental health effects of animal production and had the opportunity to work with Professors Ekesbo and Strauch. Parallel with this the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) recognised the importance of environmental issues (environmental effects on animal health and effects of animal production on the environment) and in 1972 appointed a “six person Environmentology Committee” who was largely “reactive to environmental health and economic problems that confronted the private practitioner”. Subsequently, owing to the work of this Committee and to activities of other Institutions (e.g. two AVMA councils) the incoming president of AVMA, Dr. Macomber, stated in 1992 “that it is time for veterinarians and their national associations to become more proactive in issues involving animals, production agriculture and the environment”. His expressed opinion was “that as individual veterinarians we are best equipped to address issues affecting the environment, animal health and production. The Executive Board appointed a nine-member ad hoc committee to address these concerns”. Parallel with this events USAHA, the US Animal Health Association has also reacted to environmental concerns and addressed a broad spectrum of environmental issues “through presented papers, committee reports and resolutions” from 1972 on. These new achievements gradually built in the veterinary education curricula and as result, such subject areas were offered like: Fundamentals of Ecology, Air Quality, Water Quality, Health Management Strategy, etc.



The above information clearly proves that while organisation of a congress outside Europe was an important development in the history of ISAH, on the other hand, however, a

congress that addressed the foregoing concerns might be considered significant contribution to implementing the concepts of veterinary preventive medicine in the New World.

Preparatory to the main Congress President Diesch summoned the EB at Hofheim near Frankfurt, Germany. Abstracts and matters of organisation stood in the focus of the meeting.

Of the about 200 papers submitted, 98 arrived from the former “East” countries. It was unfortunate, that due to lack of financial support, scientists from some of these countries could not attend the congress. Contributions from the **8<sup>th</sup> Congress** were collected into the Proceedings.



**Meeting of the EB on January 18-19, 1994 in Hofheim near Frankfurt  
Around the table sit P. Rafai, M. Tielen, H. Saloniemi, F. Madec, S.L. Diesch, R. Böhm**

In the very efficiently organised conference, two plenary sessions were devoted to “Animal Wellbeing” and “Animal Hygiene and Food Safety”. Further sessions included discussions on: “Animal Housing”; “Health and Productivity Research”; “Environmental Safety”; “Disinfection, Disinfestation” and provided opportunity for “Case Studies and Investigative Strategies”.

The importance of the Congress was acknowledged by the gesture of Arne H. Carlson, Governor of the State of Minnesota, by proclaiming the month of September 1994 ANIMAL HYGIENE MONTH.



The General Assembly elected a new EB that was headed by Prof. Dr. Hannu Saloniemi, Finland. The work of the President was assisted by three Vice-Presidents (1<sup>st</sup>: Prof. Stanley L.

Diesch, USA; 2<sup>nd</sup>: Prof. Dr. Martin Tielen, The Netherlands; 3<sup>rd</sup>: Prof. Dr. Reinhard Böhm, Germany). Further members of the EB included Dr. François. Madec, France (Secretary), Prof. Dr. Bo Algers, Sweden (Treasurer), Prof. Dr. Pál Rafai, Hungary (Member at Large).

At this point, the gentle reader may be indulgent for the chronicler to mentioning that the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of ISAH was commemorated by the 8<sup>th</sup> In-between Symposium (Budapest, the 30<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> of October 1995). For this occasion, the organiser of the Symposium redesigned the logo. The new emblem then had been used for years until the latest one was duly introduced (see later).

The **9<sup>th</sup> Congress** was organised in Helsinki, Finland between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of August 1997 and was characterised by the motto "Healthy Animals, Sound Production Environment, Satisfied Consumer". Accordingly, after the opening addresses by Prof. Hannu Saloniemi and Prof. Stanley L. Diesch, the interaction between animals and their environment, including management were discussed to find preventive methods against various bovine, swine and poultry problems. These topics were introduced by three keynote lectures (O. Østerås and K. Leslie, bovine; M.J.M Tielen, swine; L. Keeling, poultry). Due to the northern location of the Congress, cold housing and open housing of cattle and swine were a special focus for the discussion. Two keynote lecturers, five short papers and six posters were presented on these problems.



**Prof. Dr. Hannu Saloniemi**



**Prof. Dr. Martin J.M. Tielen**

Further to these themes, other sessions embraced the following topics: Animal behaviour as indicator of animal welfare in different housing and management systems; Economic evaluation of animal health and welfare; Animal wastes as a risk for animal and human health; Food hygiene and salmonella prevention; Free papers. The proceedings of the congress were published in two volumes and **first time in the history of our Society** beside the paperback edition the **electronic form on DVD** was also made available for the participants. Because the electronic edition is attached to this home page within the section of congresses, for further information may I advise the kind reader to visit this place of our website. The participants of this Congress arrived from 32 countries and from all continents except from Australia. At the General Assembly Country Representatives were registered from 43 countries, which clearly indicated massive increment of the Society. The EB had two meetings before the Congress. One was organised in Budapest, Hungary (28<sup>th</sup> of October 1995) in connection with the 8<sup>th</sup> "In-Between" Symposium and the other one in Helsinki, Finland on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of February 1997.

The General Assembly elected a new EB for the period between 1997 and 2000. Prof. Dr. Martin Tielen from The Netherlands was elected President; Prof. Dr. Hannu Saloniemi from Finland 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, Prof. Dr. Jorge Saltijeral from Mexico 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President, Prof.

Dr. Reinhard Böhm from Germany 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-President, Dr. François Madec from France Secretary, Prof. Dr. Bo Algers from Sweden Treasurer, Prof. Dr. Stanley L. Diesch from USA and Prof. Dr. Pál Rafai from Hungary Member at Large.

Our next Congress in Maastricht had been preceded by two meetings of the EB. In June 1998, the EB meeting was excellently organised and hosted by Dr. F. Madec in Ploufragan, Brittany. Long hours were spent discussing different items such as the present state of the Statute, names of country representatives, and editorial questions of the "[Newsletter](#)" and thought-provoking views were exchanged concerning definition of animal hygiene as science

and discipline. The other preparatory meeting of the EB was held in February 2000 in Boxtel (The Netherlands). An interesting debate developed again about the field covered by ISAH and the current common meaning of Animal Hygiene. The discussion was summarised by F. Madec in the [5<sup>th</sup> Issue of the Newsletter](#) (June 2000).

Prof. Dr. Martin J.M. Tielen organised the **10<sup>th</sup> Congress** in Maastricht (The Netherlands) between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2000. His excellent work was supported by many devoted Dutch scientists of animal hygiene including Dr. Rien Voets (Secretary), Dr. Frank van Eerdenburg, Dr. Paul van Gulick, Ing. W. de Giffel, Dr. Alex Kertsen and Dr. Dick Schumer.



**Prof. Tielen's Fund awardees at the Congress in Vienna, 2011.**  
**First row: left Prof. M. Tielen, right: Dr. P. van Gulick**

Recognising the importance of recruiting young scientists for the camp of preventive veterinary medicine, Prof. Tielen established in 2000 a Foundation ("Professor's Tielen Fund") that since its foundations has helped dozens of young scientists from developing countries to attend the congresses with a substantial financial support. This Fund is still existent (for further details please see the relevant domain of this website). This is the place of this piece of

work where the writer of these lines should mention the name of **Dr. Paul van Gulick** the "Behind the screen Friar" of the Society of Animal Hygienists. He is the silent, ever helping personality who has always stood unrecognised behind the stage lights, but acted whenever he had been requested. Without his assistance, the above Fund could not have been set up. Paul, thank you for your contribution to the Society!

The congress in Maastricht was success. Over 250 congress participants and 45 accompanying persons from more than 40 countries attended the event. Sessions clustered around 7 topics with keynote lectures followed by parallel sections. A total of 13 keynote lectures, 130 oral and 90 poster presentations were heard and discussed. Answering to the emerging demands for food quality and safety special attention was given to the integrated quality control systems. For the first time of the history of the ISAH, a special session was organised with regard to hygienic requests of companion animals.

The General Assembly renewed the EB of the Society. The President of the Society was replaced by the newly elected President, Prof. Dr. Jorge A. Saltijeral from Mexico. In the following three years Prof. Dr. Martin Tielen (The Netherlands), Prof. Dr. Andrzej Krynski (Poland) and Prof. Thomas Blaha (Germany) served the Society as Vice-Presidents. The rest of the EB remained unchanged, viz. Dr. F. Madec, Prof. Dr. Bo Algers, Prof. Dr. R. Böhm and Prof. Dr. P. Rafai were duly re-elected and reinforced in their respective positions.



**EB meeting in Acapulco, Mexico**  
**Standing from left: A. Krynski, P. Rafai, F. Madec, J. Saltijeral**  
**Sitting: B. Algers, R. Böhm, M. Tielen, T. Blaha**

Second time in its history the following congress was held again outside of Europe, which was preceded by the 1<sup>st</sup> International Symposium on Sustainable Livestock Production organized by Guerrero University at the convention centre of Acapulco on the Pacific coast of Mexico (21<sup>st</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2002). Besides giving lectures on different subjects of animal hygiene, members of the EB convened and discussed the topical issues of the Society. In this year (15<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2002), a second EB meeting was organized in Stuttgart-Hohenheim. Obviously, the meeting concentrated on the forthcoming congress. Beside other topics of smaller importance, this was the EB meeting

where a debate took place about the current structure of ISAH in connection to the low attendance and recognition of the Society in the scientific community as compared with other societies. Prof. Tielen produced a document, which described some of the reasons that might contribute to the low impact of ISAH. Among these, the term: animal hygiene itself, whereas it was obviously valuable in Central Europe at the time of foundation of ISAH, is not currently used worldwide in so broad acceptance (Madec, [Newsletter No 9](#), December 2002). The discussion recurred in the following meetings and congresses.





**Prof. D. Jorge Saltijeral**

The [11<sup>th</sup> Congress](#) (23<sup>rd</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> of February 2003) was organized first time in a Spanish speaking country at the facilities of the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (Mexico City, Mexico). The President of the Society led the work of the National Organizing Committee, which included Dr. Alejandro Córdova Izquierdo, Dr. Antonio Cervantes Núñez, M. en A. Teresita del N.J. Burgos González and Dr. Hedberto Ruiz Skewes. This time the number of participants was reduced to 147 ordinary and 18 accompanying persons due (with all probability) to the considerable travel costs.

Although with different titles, the three plenary sessions and many of the topical sessions concentrated on discussing an emerging menace: how can animal agriculture supply food to the fast increasing population of the Globe. The subjects of the plenary sessions (Animal hygiene for the sustainable production of wholesome food for all; Animal hygiene as key element of animal welfare; Animal hygiene as a contribution to environmental protection and public health) were introduced by invited keynote speakers (J. Hodges and J. Boyazoglu from behalf of the European Association for Animal Production; D. Fraser, Canada and H. Saloniemi, Finland). Of the 225 papers from 45 countries, the Organising Committee accepted 70 papers for oral and 100 contributions for poster presentation.

The proceedings of the Congress were published in two volumes (901 pages) that included the written version of 63 and 72 oral and poster presentations, resp. The CD version

of the Proceedings was also produced and [can be also obtained in this web site](#).

The organisation was excellent and apart from the scientific merits, the congress also helped the Spanish-speaking professionals to get acquainted with and understand the semantic background of the term: animal hygiene that had not been familiar to many from the international scientific community. Another achievement should be mentioned: during preparation of the Congress for the first time in the history of our Society a **web page was developed** and used by 3 500 visitors from 40 countries till the opening of the Congress.

The General Assembly elected the new EB for the next three years. Prof. Dr. Andrzej Krynski (Poland) was elected President. The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-President were Jorge Saltijeral (Mexico), Andres Aland (Estonia) and Reinhard Böhm (Germany), respectively. Further members were: Secretary: François Madec (France), Treasurer: Bo Algers (Sweden), Members at large: Thomas Blaha (Germany), Martin Tielen (The Netherlands) and Pál Rafai (Hungary).

After the Congress in Mexico City the discussion about the future of ISAH continued. The new Member at Large of the EB, Prof. Thomas Blaha, published his thoughts (Food for Thought on the future of ISAH; [Newsletter No 11](#), June 2004) in order to challenge the members of ISAH via the Extended Executive Board. He postulated: substantial changes are taking place in the animal agriculture, which should be addressed also by our Society. In his opinion ISAH should develop more towards animal health issues. **Animal health** in food animal populations as the major precondition for producing high quality and safe (=wholesome) food products of animal origin. **Biosecurity** as (part of **animal hygiene**) a tool of prevention to achieve and maintain a high animal health status for food animal herds and flocks. Because of the very high importance of animal health he proposed to change the Society's name from ISAHygiene to ISAHealth. His main argument was to eliminate by this change of name problems with the term in English speaking countries where animal hygiene is often simply

reduced to cleanness and disinfection. Another remarkable point of his piece of work addressed the structure by asking: should we

found a “real” society with a standing president, a permanently working office, and so on?



**EB meeting in Ploufragan, France, 2004.**

**From left: P. Rafai, J. Saltijeral, R. Böhm, A. Krynski, A. Aland, F. Madec, B. Algers and T. Blaha**

These thought-provoking ideas were e-mail discussed by many members of ISAH. Dr. Blaha summarised the resume at the meeting of the EB on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2004 in Ploufragan, Brittany following the [“In-between” Congress of the ISAH in St-Malo, France](#) (11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> of October 2004). The summary was published in the [12<sup>th</sup> issue of the Newsletter](#). Dr. Blaha outlined the “absence of unanimity” on changing the word Hygiene in the ISAH’s acronym to “Health”. He proposed at this stage to keep the name and complete the logo by adding a “tag line” or “subtitle” indicating in concise words the main scientific field, scope and vision of the Society. Although the subtitle was not worded at the meeting, the idea was unanimously accepted by the EB.

Another important outcome of the discussion referred to the recognition of the Society as unquestionable entity in the field of animal health, welfare and food safety. Because – argued Prof. Blaha – “many political decisions in the EU concerning hygienic questions are made without being supported by scientific results, the Society can improve its appearance (if relevant) by standards and recommenda-

tions set by ISAH according to the state of science and technique.” This requires working groups within the Society with the aim of addressing issues mentioned above. These groups should aid the work of decision makers at EU level by summarising and communicating to appropriate officials and publishing in recognised periodicals the state of art and techniques in questions of veterinary preventive medicine, sustainability, animal welfare and food safety.

As for the structure, the necessity to have standing president was unanimously agreed upon. A preliminary set up concerning the structure of the Society was adopted leaving some important points undecided. It was agreed that based on further discussions a new constitution should be made. For this purpose, two working groups were created:

- a) Mission statements: T. Blaha group leader, other members: B. Algers, R. Böhm, P. Rafai and F. Madec
- b) The constitution (statute): A. Aland group leader, other members: J. Hartung, T. Blaha and F. Madec.

On these bases and following by informal discussions among members of the Executive Board and by the discussions at the joint meeting of the EB and Extended Executive Board held on 4<sup>th</sup> of September 2005 a proposal was forwarded to the General Assembly at the [12<sup>th</sup> Congress](#) (held on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2005 in Warsaw) to reorganise the Society and adopt a [new Constitution](#). The new constitution that replaced the 1991 Statute was approved by the General Assembly. The basic law of the Society was converted from “Statute” (1991) into “Constitution”.



**Prof. Dr. Thomas Blaha**

Other major changes were summarised by Prof. Dr. T. Blaha in the Editorial of our [Newsletter No 13](#) (May 2006). These changes might be summarised as follows:

- Congresses will be organised in two years’ intervals and associated with a session of the General Assembly.
- Beside the General Assembly, a meeting of the Extended Executive Board (comprising the county representatives) will also be organised.
- The composition of the EB will be reduced to 5 members as follows (with the names in bracket that were duly elected at the General Assembly):
  - Standing president, with term in office of 4 years. One re-election for another 4-year period is possible (Article 7).

The President (Prof. Dr. Thomas Blaha, Germany) represents ISAH in all scientific and legal affairs;

- The 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President (Prof. Dr. Bo Algers, Sweden) is responsible for organising expert groups on special topics and leads the Scientific Board of ISAH;
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President (Prof. Dr. Andres Aland, Estonia) besides assisting in every respect of the Standing President’s work, undertakes the supervision and responsibility of the organisation of the coming congress;
- The Secretary General (Dr. François Madec, France) is responsible for leading the administrative affairs of ISAH;
- The Treasurer (Prof. Dr. Martin Tielen, The Netherlands) supervises the financial affairs of the Society.

The Constitution changed the logo (*Article 1*) saying: “The emblem and stamp (logo): a round form and graphic representation of the Goddess Hygeia and the God Asklepios framed by the words: “INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR ANIMAL HYGIENE” with a tag line (placed under the lower part of logo): "PROMOTING ANIMAL HEALTH & WELFARE, BIOSECURITY, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND THE SUSTAINABILITY OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY"

**Article 2**, described the mission of the Society. Accordingly, ISAH is an association of veterinarians and other professional scientists, practitioners and students working or studying in the field of animal hygiene, animal health and welfare, animal husbandry, safety of food of animal origin, environmental protection in relation to sustainable animal production and related areas within the scope of the following ISAH missions.

- Improve and promote scientific knowledge of:
  - both the pathogens and on the epidemiology of infectious and non-infectious diseases including those that

pose a risk to human health, with particular attention being paid to measures of prevention;

- Measures which will optimise animal welfare;
  - Measures to minimize the potential adverse effects of animal production on the environment including those that pose a direct and/or indirect risk to human health.
- Promote the creation of interdisciplinary networks of scientists working in the field of animal hygiene and related areas.
  - Transfer “cutting-edge” knowledge and information on animal hygiene to veterinarians, animal scientists, agricultural engineers, animal producers, physicians and public health professionals as well as to decision makers in agribusiness and politics.

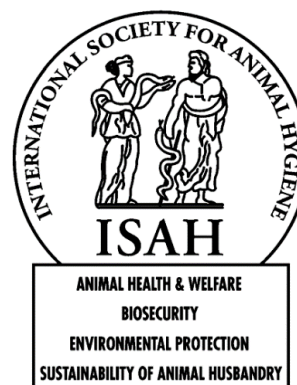
For further details, the reader is advised to visit the full text of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Statute linked to this historical overview.

Returning to overviewing the congresses, we may state that the [12<sup>th</sup> Congress](#) held in Warsaw from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2005 duly served the interests of the Society. The congress venue was the new campus of the Agricultural University, located south of Warsaw. Prof. Dr. Andrzej Krynski efficiently led the local Organising Committee. His work was aided by Dr. Robert Wrzesien (Vice-President) whose work has been appreciated not only by the officials of ISAH but also by many of the congress participants. Two hundred and fifty participants coming from 35 different countries were registered. The congress focused on “Animals and Environment”.



**Prof. Dr. Andrzej Krynski**

Eighteen plenary lectures, 60 papers at parallel sessions and 138 poster presentations addressed the main topic. For further details, I refer to the account given by F. Madec in the [13<sup>th</sup> issue of our Newsletter](#) and to the electronic version of the Proceedings ([link to the on-line version](#)).



The newly elected five members of the Executive Board met in Tartu on January 27, 2007 at the Estonian University of Life Sciences for discussing the preparation of the forthcoming congress. The meeting gave opportunity to discussing the question of re-designing the logo on basis of the Constitution accepted in Warsaw. Thomas Blaha and Bo Algiers took the responsibility for re-shaping the emblem of the Society. Their proposal was widely discussed. This new emblem appeared first on the front page of the Proceedings of the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress held on the 17<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> of June in Tartu, Estonia.

The [13<sup>th</sup> Congress](#) was prepared and excellently organised by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President, Prof. Dr. Andres Aland and his crew including:

Toomas Tiirats, co-chairman and 10 other devoted servants of animal hygiene.

Discussions at the congress clustered around “animal health, animal welfare and biosecurity”. The scientific programme followed the newly shaped scope of ISAH.



**Prof. Dr. Andres Aland**

Following subjects formed the backbone of the scientific programme: interaction between the environment and health and welfare of individual animal and herds; managing animal health in large dairy units; ensuring animal welfare during transportation and slaughter; economic implications considering animals' health; possibilities of precision livestock farming in maintaining good health and welfare of animals; measures for prevention the development and spread of diseases and pathogens in animals including those posing risk to human health (zoonoses); food safety relevant infections and contaminations such as residues in food derived from animals; influence of the animal production on the environment and public health. For further details, I refer to the pa-

perback and [electronic editions of the Proceedings](#).

At the General Assembly on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June 2007 the President of the Society, Thomas Blaha, reported: three working groups were established: one on animal wastes (with the lead of Prof. Dr. R. Böhm, Germany), another one on disinfection (headed by Dr. U. Truyen, Germany) and a third one on air hygiene (under the baton of Prof. Dr. J. Hartung, Germany). The Secretary of the Society raised three points. First, he addressed issues related to the country representatives (from 48 countries in 2007). Secondly, after our Warsaw meeting, here in Tartu he repeated the Society's deep feeling and gratitude to Dr. Jan Venglovsky, representative of Slovakia, for his setting up and maintaining the website of ISAH. Finally, François announced that the production of the paper editions of our [Newsletter](#), due mainly to financial reasons, stopped according to the decision by the General Assembly of our meeting in Warsaw. The news will appear on the website.

This is the place of this history where the writer must stop and appreciate the work of our friend François Madec, who since the Leipzig Congress in 1991 has made an excellent job in reporting and recording the main events of the Society's life. Apart from his minutes about sessions, formal and informal meetings we must thank him the establishment and production of the [Newsletters](#) that chronicled the saga of our Society between May 1997 and May 2006 with 13 excellent issues. Without his documentations, this retrospection could not have been written. Thank you, François.



**The lovely choir entertains the audience of the Opening Ceremony in Tartu in 2007**

Prof. Dr. Bo Algers the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President asked the EB to allow him resigning.

With regret, the EB consented to his request and expressed gratitude for the valuable work Bo has implemented since mid-eighties of the last century. He was replaced by Prof. Dr. Andres Aland with unanimous approval from behalf of the General Assembly. As organiser of the coming congress in Vechta, Germany Prof. Dr. Jörg Hartung from Hannover was duly elected 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President. T. Blaha (Standing President), F. Madec (Secretary) and M. Tielen (Treasurer) were reinforced in their position.

Prior to the next Congress, the EB held a meeting in Bakum, Germany on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2008. Besides discussing the businesses of the coming congress, the meeting gave good opportunity for making final amendments on the last version of the Constitution, overviewing hot topics for the expert groups, and discussing the financial situation and matters connected to the country representatives and the website. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 2008, a phone conference was organised among the members of the EB on topical issues. A third EB meeting was held in Bakum on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2009. The mem-

bers of the EB finalised the scientific programme of the coming Congress. The current version of the constitution was read again. A minor point was changed (in paragraph 7-4) and the final document was printed out and given to the participants. Because the frame of the new constitution was already approved in Warsaw, therefore only a formal approval will take place in Vechta.

The EB and the Extended Executive Board had a joint meeting in Vechta on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 2009. The major point of the agenda was the changes in the ISAH. Further to the earlier innovations (structural changes adopted by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Constitution) President T. Blaha urged to move on towards a second step and change the name of the Society. He explained the reasons for the suggested new name: "International Society for Sustainable Animal Husbandry", the acronym remaining the same. He reminded the participants that a new version of the constitution had been prepared and adopted by the EB during their meeting held in Bakum (Germany) on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2008. The draft of this new constitution had been circulated among the members of the Extended Executive Board and members of ISAH

on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2008 with an accompanying letter of explanation, asking for comments until the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2008 deadline. No one responded negatively to the proposal and therefore the new version of the Constitution approved by the EB on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2009. This “final” version was prepared for approval at the GA. At the meeting of the EB and EEB, lively debate took place after expose of the President. Some persons strongly opposed any change to the name. Due to both the strong opposition of some and to the neutrality of others, the president **decided to withdraw** the proposal of changing the name and he decided as a consequence to stay with the current name and logo.



**Prof. Dr. Jörg Hartung**

The President announced the retirement of F. Madec (Secretary) and M. Tielen (Treasurer) from the EB and he gave the floor to the proposed new members due to become either secretary, treasurer or member at large: Dr S. Gunnarsson from Sweden and Dr L. Könyves from Hungary. Dr T. Banhazi from Australia who was also proposed could not attend Vechta and sent his apology.

In his report at the General Assembly (on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 2009 in Vechta, Germany), the President described the activity of the Society in the past two years and mentioned that a new version of the constitution was prepared

with a suggested new name for the Society. Because members of the EEB, the President continued, were not in favour of this change the name and acronym of the International Society for Animal Hygiene (ISAH) will be retained with the same logo including its tag line, as adopted at the General Assembly held in Warsaw in 2005.

At the General Assembly, Prof. Dr. T. Blaha initiated his re-election as Standing President for a further 4 years of service. The vote was taken with a show of hands without any preceding debate, which was criticized during the session (see below). Prof. Dr. A. Aland was confirmed 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President. Because the 15<sup>th</sup> congress will be organized in Vienna, Prof. Dr. Josef Köfer, the Head of Organising Committee, was automatically elected 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President. S. Gunnarsson from Sweden, L. Könyves from Hungary and T. Banhazi from Australia were elected secretary, treasurer and “member at large”, respectively at the Executive Board.

The [14<sup>th</sup> Congress](#) was organized in Vechta, Germany (from the 19<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> of July, 2009) to support the new Animal Health Strategy of the European Union accepted for the period between 2007 and 2013 with the title: “Prevention is better than cure”. Altogether 12 sessions were organized. At the plenary session introductory to the congress, a talk summarised the main points of “The New Community Animal Health Strategy”, another one dealt with “Sustainability – the challenge for the livestock and poultry industries”. The three lectures at the session organized jointly with the FAO overviewed the trends in the agricultural market, prevention of losses and food security and veterinary public health. Other themes included animal health; applied ethology; animal welfare; livestock precision farming; infectious diseases; human health and zoonoses; emissions; disinfection and waste management. A special session was organized for horses.

The two volumes of the proceedings were published both in hard and [electronic edition](#) with the following title: “Sustainable Animal Husbandry: Prevention is better than cure”.

During and directly after the General Assembly in Vechta critical remarks were expressed verbally (e.g. Prof. Böhm) and sent to the EB concerning formal mistakes in the election procedures. The objections included the too fast running of the voting procedure, no Election Committee was appointed and many from the audience had not received via e-mail the agenda and call for nominating candidates for the positions in the EB. Although these flaws were committed unintentionally the EB at its Budapest meeting (from 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> of October 2009) declared itself as **“interim Executive Board”** and with reference to §7.4 in Article 7 of the Constitution summoned an extraordinary General Assembly in order to repeat the election, this time using an electronic procedure. All members of the Society were asked via e-mails to nominate candidates’ alternative to members of the interim EB by using the enclosed “ISAH Nomination Form”. At the same time, an Election Committee (EC) was formed consisting of Prof. Dr. H. Saloniemi and Prof. Dr. P. Rafai.

Two names were suggested for the position of the President: Prof. Dr. Thomas Blaha and Prof. Dr. Jörg Hartung, both from Germany. No names were aroused for the other positions. A “Voting form for the electronic vote” was prepared and duly sent out to the members together with the CV-s of the nominees requesting an electronic cast before January 31, 2010, 17:00 GMT.



**Prof. Dr. Josef Köfer**

Altogether 55 duly legal votes were received from 22 countries. Of these votes, 26 were sent in for Prof. Dr. Thomas Blaha and 29 for Professor Dr. Jörg Hartung. Because no notices, observations or strictures have been sent to the EC by anyone from the EB and neither candidates have aroused a single word against the result, and further to this the Constitution of ISAH contains no regulations for electronic election, and finally because votes for personal matters have been decided by simple majority in the past the EC declared Prof. Dr. Jörg Hartung as duly elected President of ISAH. The members of the EB remained as they were elected in Vechta.

[15<sup>th</sup> International Congress](#) on animal Hygiene in Vienna, Austria (3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2011) ended with record attendance. More than 480 participants registered which is the highest attendance ever since the foundation of the Society in 1970. Main topics of the scientific programme were related to prevention of zoonotic infectious diseases in animal and man and new pathways towards sustainable animal farming on an economic basis for the sake of animal, man and environment.

The conference was excellently organised by Court Counsellor Prof. Dr. Josef Köfer and Dr. Hermann Schobesberger both from the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna and from the Austrian Agency Health and Food Safety in the facilities of the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna. In his opening speech Prof. Dr. Dr.h.c. Jörg Hartung, President of ISAH welcomed the participants from all over the world and called animal hygiene the indispensable third pillar of veterinary medicine, which links curing medicine and animal health care by preventing diseases and developing welfare. An impressive invited lecture delivered by Prof. Dr. Lothar Wieler from the Veterinary Faculty of the Free University of Berlin in remembrance of past Prof. Dr. Hermann Willinger, former President of ISAH in the 1980th, gave an insight in the development of science and molecular diagnostics in research on *Escherichia coli* (including EHEC) which had been started by Prof. Willinger more than three decades ago.



The worldwide importance of applied animal hygiene for interrupting disease transmission and spread of infectious agents as a tool for a successful animal production in developing countries was demonstrated in the joint OIE/FAO symposium by the talks of Dr. Josef Domenech (OIE) and Dr. Juan Lubroth, Chief Veterinary Officer (FAO). Former EU Commissioner for Agriculture Dr. Fanz Fischler spoke about new options for the agricultural sector in EU and Austria. Finally, Dr. M. Horn (University of Vienna) explained the many faces of the Chlamydia, which seem to become an emerging pathogen not only in veterinary medicine but also for humans.

The opening ceremony and the OIE/FAO symposium were followed by two intensive conference days with four parallel sessions devoted to the announced congress topics such as preventive veterinary medicine, infectious diseases, zoonoses, livestock precision farming, environmental hygiene and sustainable animal production. 240 posters completed the scientific programme and allowed intensive discussions. The scientific achievements of the Congress were published in three volumes of the Proceedings (almost 15 hundred pages) with paperback and [CD editions](#).

The General Assembly revised the [Constitution of ISAH](#). The minor innovations included

creating the position of honorary presidents (Article 6).

The revisions are indicated in *bold italics*. Accordingly, the General Assembly duly elected Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Ferenc Kovács, Hungary the first Honorary President of ISAH for his pioneering role in the foundation of ISAH and for his long lasting services to ISAH. Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Martin Tielen, The Netherlands and Dr. François Madec, France were promoted to Honorary Members of the Society. Honorary Member Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Ingvar Ekesbo was honoured as one of the founding fathers of ISAH for 40 years of dedicated and inspiring work for the Society. Dr. Jan Venglovsky received the Golden Pin and Dr. Hermann Schobesberger the Silver Pin of ISAH.

The chronicler must mention that due to his unexpected health problems that were unanimously regretted by the participants of the Congress, the Head of the Local Organising Committee, Prof. Josef Köfer was unfortunately prevented from active conduct of the events at the conference. While we all wished him quick recovery and sent him encouragements, we need to appreciate the excellent work of his deputy, Dr. Hermann Schobesberger, who backed by his charming wife, turned out excellent host and efficient organiser.

## Decoration donated by the Society to devoted servants

According to paragraph 5 of the first (preliminary) Statute “A person who has made extraordinary contribution to animal hygiene or to the Society is eligible for election as **Honorary Member** by the General Assembly, at the instigation (sic!, viz. suggestion) of the Council. In exceptional circumstances, the Council has full powers to grant Honorary Membership, under retrospective approval of the next General Assembly. The Statute approved in Leipzig in 1991 preserved the above regulation with minor changes in the wording. The constitutions approved in Warsaw and Vienna added to the original concept: The honorary member

gets a diploma signed by the President and is exempted from the membership fee.

In the past forty years of history of this Society, there have been many outstanding personalities who were to deserve this honour. In order to preserve the merit of this title, however, only limited number was selected and donated this decoration. Their names are included in Table 2 with links to their CV and other characteristic information.

A list of honorary members can be found here: <http://www.isah-soc.org/?Members/Honorary-members>

## Epilogue

Dear Reader,

The history as collected by one of the eyewitness is far from being complete. This is a way I have seen and remembered of the main events. This retrospection, however, would not have been written without the help and assistance of many devoted servants of our Society. I am especially indebted for the written materials that were made available by late Prof. Dr. Dieter Strauch (former Press Officer) and by Dr. François Madec (Secretary for many years). I would be liable to mention many more names: organisers of congresses, EB members, Presidents and other outstanding personalities like master of our website, persons who extended the coordination of our Society with

other related international organisations (OIE, FAO, EAAP etc.). The row of names is endless. Wherever it was possible in this “saga”, I tried to register the names that advanced the affairs and mission of our noble Society. Chronicling the coming 40 years remains for successors (“Recent developments”, see attached). We, who had served the International Society for Animal Hygiene with beliefs and enthusiasms, may wish them good success and resolution to implementing our core mission: prevention is better than cure.

Yours,  
Prof. Dr. Pál Rafai  
Honorary Member of the Society  
Budapest, spring 2012