



**WORLD ASSOCIATION
for the
HISTORY of ANIMAL HEALTH**

CONSTITUTION

2024

WORLD ASSOCIATION

for the

HISTORY OF ANIMAL HEALTH

also known as:

Welt-Gesellschaft für Geschichte der Tiergesundheit

Association Mondiale de l'Histoire de la Santé Animale

Asociación Mundial de Historia de la Sanidad Animal

CONSTITUTION

INTRODUCTION

In 1964, the first Symposium on the History of Veterinary Medicine was held in Hanover, Germany. The symposium was organized by the Institute (Fachgebiet) for the History of Veterinary Medicine of the Hanover Veterinary College. Five years later these symposia became international through the participation of scholars from other countries. On that occasion the 'World Association for the History of Veterinary Medicine' (WAHVM) was founded. As more national societies for veterinary history joined WAHVM, the Association restructured to support closer international cooperation in research and education and a more academic programme. In 1993 the WAHVM was transformed into a federation of national societies concerned with the promotion and study of animal healing and veterinary history. In recent decades the field of veterinary history itself has changed. An increasing number of non-veterinarians now study the history of animal healing and veterinary medicine, bringing new approaches and methodologies to the field. The Internet and electronic mail facilitate the international exchange of information on publications, historical databases, manuscripts, archival sources, congresses, museums and other activities. This all continues to uphold the general goal of the WAHVM formulated in 1969: providing a forum for encouraging, promoting, and coordinating research and education in the history of veterinary medicine.

For a number of years a general feeling prevailed that 'Veterinary Medicine' covered too narrow a field of historic interest. Consequently the association renamed itself in 2024 into 'World Association for the History of Animal Health' or WAHAH.

ARTICLE 1 – NAME AND SEAT

The name of the Association shall be "World Association for the History of Animal Health" (WAHAH), hereafter called "Association".

ARTICLE 2 – VALUES

The Association is based on the principles of equality and mutual respect between all members. It supports academic freedom, opposes prejudice and welcomes diversity.

ARTICLE 3 - OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Association are: to bring together people with interest in the history of animal health and veterinary medicine, to encourage early career scholars to undertake research in these fields, to promote and coordinate research and education, and to exchange and disseminate information on the history of animal health and veterinary medicine throughout the world by providing a common forum for National Societies for the History of Veterinary Medicine, other similar national and international organizations and individual persons interested in these fields.

The Association tries to reach these objectives by:

- 3.1. supporting the establishment and activities of National Societies for the History of Veterinary Medicine;
- 3.2. encouraging the exchange and dissemination of information of interest between National Societies, individual members and other interested organizations;
- 3.3. establishing and maintaining relations with other organizations whose interests are related to the objectives of the Association;
- 3.4. promoting the organization of online meetings, international meetings, symposia and/or congresses and the selection of the theme(s) for these sessions;
- 3.5. facilitating communication between the National Societies, individual members and other interested organizations - for example, through the provision of social media platforms;
- 3.6. promoting and coordinating international research and study, research cooperation and research standards in the field of animal health, veterinary history and related topics;
- 3.7. encouraging teaching and learning on the history of animal health and veterinary medicine among veterinary professionals, historians and wider audiences;
- 3.8. studying the historical role of veterinary professionals and veterinary institutions, and exploring how animal health and veterinary medicine has shaped and has been shaped by society, culture, politics and economics;

- 3.9. providing a forum for the sharing and preservation of individual life stories and experiences in the fields of animal health and veterinary medicine (for example, by creating oral histories);
- 3.10. serving as a resource for persons and organizations seeking information about veterinary history and the history of animal health and disease;
- 3.11. promoting the preservation, cataloguing and security of veterinary and related archives and historical collections.

ARTICLE 4 - MEMBERSHIP

The membership shall be open to:

4.1.

4.1.1. National Societies for the History of Veterinary Medicine. Each country can only be represented by one organization. The Boards of the member-Societies undertake to disseminate to their individual members information on matters of general interest concerning the Association. Members of a member-Society are automatically registered members of the Association;

4.1.2. Individuals who are not members of a National Society, whose National Society is not a member of the Association, or who are from a country with no National Society;

4.2. Honorary members, in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the promotion of the history of animal health and veterinary medicine and/or service to the Association;

4.3. Affiliated members such as veterinary schools, scientific institutions, professional or commercial organizations, libraries, museums and boards of scientific journals.

4.5. Application for membership shall be sent to the secretariat of the Association in writing (generally by email), which should include:

- for a National Society: name and mailing address of the Society as well as a list of names and addresses of its Board members and the number of its full members;
- for individual members: name and address, professional role;
- for associate and affiliated members: name, address and objectives of their organizations.
- The Board reserves the right to reject an application that conflicts with the Association's stated values or is otherwise problematic. If an application is rejected the Board shall provide a brief explanation of its decision. This explanation shall initially be given privately to the applicant, but may be shared with the membership at the AGM if appropriate.
- Membership becomes effective after receipt of the annual subscription.

- Personal data will be treated in accordance with the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). It will only be used for the purpose for which it has been collected, i.e. to facilitate communication between members of the Association in relation to the advancement of veterinary history and its associated activities. A description of the data held by the Society will be made available to members on request.

4.6. Membership shall expire:

- * in case of dissolution of a member-Society, associate or affiliated member-organization; in case of death of an individual member;
- * by declaration of withdrawal in writing to the secretariat of the Association, at least three months before the ending of the Association's financial year (i.e. by the end of September each year);
- * by not abiding by the Constitution of the Association;
- * by exclusion decided at a meeting of the General Assembly, with a two thirds majority of the Board and Body of Representatives present. Non-members of the Association may be excluded from this part of the meeting at the discretion of the Board. A vote of termination may only be taken after the member under discussion has had the opportunity to defend their case;

Re-admission of a member may be considered by the General Assembly, provided that the member has met all their outstanding obligations to the Association.

4.7. Subscription:

- * Each member shall pay an annual subscription, the rate of which shall be determined by the General Assembly, based on the recommendation of the Board. The subscription shall be paid before the 1st April of the current financial year, which runs from 1st January to the following 31st December;
- * The subscription of a National Society shall be based on the number of full members of that Society; therefore, each Society shall submit annually to the Treasurer of the Association, the number of full members on the 1st January of the current financial year, together with the payment of its subscription;
- * If in arrears with payment of subscription, a member loses their voting rights at the General Assembly meeting or may be suspended by the Board for a given period;
- * Membership will lapse after non-payment of fees for a period of two years;

- * Exemption of payment may be permitted to members at the discretion of the General Assembly.

ARTICLE 5 – ORGANS

The organs of the Association are:

- the Body of Representatives;
- the Board.

Each of these organs may decide to set up subcommittees when considered necessary.

ARTICLE 6 - THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

6.1. The General Assembly of members is the main meeting-point for the Association, where legislation and major decisions are ratified. Representatives of member national societies, individual members who are not members of a national society and representatives of affiliated institutions and organisations are entitled to attend the General Assembly meeting.

Non-members of the Association shall be permitted to attend the meeting as observers, except in exceptional circumstances.

The General Assembly shall normally meet at least every two years, at the same time and place as a World Veterinary History Congress.

Each member society elects or appoints a national representative, who serves on the Body of Representatives (see Article 7). Matters regarding WAHVM should be discussed within the national societies before the General Assembly. The Body of Representatives is the only messenger voice of the national society with voting rights. Members of the Body of Representatives may attend the General Assembly online, provided that the technology is available at the venue. Members who attend the General Assembly online shall be entitled to vote on an equal basis to those who attend physically.

Each General Assembly meeting shall be preceded by an online meeting of the Body of Representatives, well in advance of the Congress, under the guidance of the Board.

The President of the Association shall preside over the General Assembly meeting; in case of their absence, this task will be carried out by the Vice/Incoming President. In the absence of the Vice/Incoming President, the Secretary will replace the President.

In their absence, the duties of the Secretary and Treasurer may be carried out by any other board member present or by another member, with the agreement of those present.

6.2. The General Assembly meeting shall receive and approve reports of the Board, among these the annual report(s) of the Association.

The General Assembly must adopt the agenda of the meeting which has been prepared and distributed at least one month in advance by the Board and which should also include any proposals made by members.

6.3. The minutes of the previous meeting of the General Assembly shall be discussed for adoption and subsequently be signed by the President and Secretary.

6.4. The General Assembly meeting shall receive and has to approve the financial reports of the previous year(s), the accounts and the budget submitted by the Board. For this purpose, the Association appoints in advance two auditors to review the accounts of the financial year(s), preceding the General Assembly meeting. Each auditor shall be in office for two consecutive meetings; one of them shall be newly elected at each meeting. The auditors shall report the results of the auditing to the General Assembly and shall propose the exoneration of the Treasurer, there being no objections.

6.5. The General Assembly shall discuss the plans of the Association for the coming year(s), as prepared by the Board.

6.6. The General Assembly shall determine the subscription of the various classes of membership for the following financial year(s).

6.7. The General Assembly shall elect the officers of the Board of the Association and the individual members of the Body of Representatives.

6.8. The General Assembly may elect an individual person to become an honorary member of the Association, either at the proposal of the Board or at the substantiated proposal of a member of the Association. A proposal from a member shall be addressed to the secretariat at least two months prior to the next General Assembly meeting. Election as an honorary member requires a two thirds majority of the authorized voting rights present.

6.9. The General Assembly meeting shall agree the time and place of the next General Assembly meeting(s).

6.10. In the interval between two General Assembly meetings, the Board is authorised to conduct all business of the Association.

6.11. A General Assembly meeting is normally held in conjunction with an International Congress or other international conference. The main theme(s) of the congress / meeting shall be selected in advance, preferably during a previous General Assembly meeting. Congress themes may be suggested by the host country organisers but should always include a 'free paper' stream to encourage broad participation from all. The organization and administration of the congress / meeting is the responsibility of the National Society or National Veterinary Organization of the host-country, in consent with the Board, and in accordance with its guidelines.

6.12. The General Assembly meeting shall deal with any other business listed on the agenda.

6.13. An extraordinary online meeting of the General Assembly shall be held upon request of the Board, or when at least one third of the member-Societies with a minimum of three submits a motion by email to the secretariat, stating the topic(s) of deliberation.

6.14. The representative of each National Society, or their nominated substitute, shall, within the framework of the General Assembly / International Congress, present a report on their activities in the preceding period.

ARTICLE 7 – THE BODY OF REPRESENTATIVES

7.1. The Body of Representatives shall consist of:

7.1.1. One representative nominated by each subscribing National Society;

7.1.2. Individual members of the Association, proposed by the Board and elected by the General Assembly.

Institutions such as museums and libraries are not eligible to nominate a representative for the Body of Representatives, although they can be institutional members of WAHVM.

Representatives will serve for a term of four years. Re-election for further terms is permissible, with the agreement of the Representative, the National Society (where relevant) and the Board.

A newly appointed member of the Body of Representatives shall take office immediately after their nomination or appointment .

7.2. Members of the Body of Representatives act as the interface between WAHVM and their own countries. Their role is a) to inform the secretary of WAHVM about national activities in the history of veterinary medicine and animal health, both within member societies and independently, and b) to relay information from the WAHVM board to the local members whom they represent.

7.3 In addition, any member of the Association has the right to propose a person as an individual member of the Body of Representatives. Such a proposal shall be addressed to the secretariat of the Association, at least two months prior to the next General Assembly meeting.

7.4 The Body of Representatives shall meet at regular intervals but at least preceding a General Assembly meeting.

7.5. An extraordinary online meeting of the Body of Representatives shall be held upon

request of the Board, or when at least one-third of the members of the Body of Representatives with a minimum of three members submit a motion by email to the secretariat, stating the topic(s) of deliberation.

7.6. The President of the Association or their representative shall preside at all meetings of the Body of Representatives.

The Secretary of the Association or their representative serves as Secretary of the Body of Representatives.

ARTICLE 8 - THE BOARD

8.1. The Board shall consist of a maximum of eight members. The Board is the executive and administrative organ of the Association and shall consist of:

8.1.1. The President;

8.1.2. The Vice/Incoming President;

8.1.3. The Past President;

8.1.4. The Secretary;

8.1.5. The Treasurer;

8.1.6. One to two Board members,

8.1.7. One representative of the country hosting the next Congress / General Assembly meeting.

One of the Board members preferably serves as Incoming Secretary/Treasurer. The roles of Secretary and Treasurer may be split or undertaken by the same person, depending on circumstances.

8.2. Not more than three representatives of a National Society and/or nationality shall be appointed to the Board.

8.3. A representative of the National Society or National Veterinary Organization of the country in which the next General Assembly meeting / International Congress or meeting will be held, may be elected to the Board on a temporary basis. Their membership ends after the specific event has taken place.

8.4. The President, Vice/Incoming President, Secretary/Treasurer and Board members shall be elected by the Body of Representatives to serve for a term of four years. The former President will then normally serve as Past President for a four years term. Re-election for one more term in the same function is permissible.

Nominations for new Board members may be suggested by any individual or national society member of WAHVM with voting rights, at least two months prior to the meeting in

which the voting takes place. Candidates for election must be approved by the Board. Approval shall not unreasonably be withheld but can be refused at the discretion of the Board. Approved candidates will then be presented to the membership for election by the Board and the Body of Representatives.

8.5. If a Board member withdraws before their term is up, a by-election at the next General Assembly meeting shall fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term.

8.6. Immediately after an election has taken place, the Board in its new composition will take office. Retiring Board members shall be relieved of their duties. When the Secretary/Treasurer retires, they shall be relieved after completion of all their secretarial and financial responsibilities for the previous period, to the satisfaction of the Board.

8.7. The Board's responsibilities are:

- to conduct all business of the Association in the interval between two General Assembly meetings;
- to spend WAHVM's money in the most appropriate way to advance the aims of the Association. In the event of exceptional expenditure beyond the routine administration of the Association (for example, subsidising travel expenses for Board members who would otherwise be unable to attend a World Congress), all members of the Board must approve the expenditure; such approval may be obtained by email.
- to execute the decisions of the previous General Assembly meeting, while reporting the results to the next meeting;
- to prepare the General Assembly meetings. For in-person meetings held in conjunction with international congresses, members must be informed (by email or otherwise) about the date and place at least six months beforehand. For online meetings, members must be informed at least two months beforehand. In either case, the meeting agenda must be distributed at least one month in advance.
- to take any appropriate step and/or decision on matters concerning the Association, which arise in between two General Assembly meetings. The Board shall inform the members about these steps/decisions as soon as convenient;
- to prepare the agenda for the forthcoming meeting of the Body of Representatives for distribution at least one month in advance.

8.8. The President or their nominee shall represent the Association.

- 8.9. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Body of Representatives and the Board. The Vice/Incoming President shall replace the President in the event of the latter being unable to act.
- 8.10. The Secretary shall perform all secretarial duties, execute the decisions of the Body of Representatives and/or Board and prepare the annual reports of the Association.
- 8.11. The Secretary shall forward documents to the members in order to keep them informed about the activities of the Association, the Body of Representatives and/or the Board and conduct correspondence on all matters of concern to the Association.
- 8.12. The Treasurer shall act as cashier of the Association, collect the annual subscriptions, render an annual account of the income and expenses of the Association and pay the expenses of the secretariat. They produce an annual budget of income and expenditures in accordance with the items approved by the General Assembly and report on the results of the previous financial year(s).

ARTICLE 9 - VOTING RIGHTS AND ELECTIONS

9.1. Voting rights are restricted to

- Members of the Body of Representatives
- Members of the Board
- Individual members or honorary members of the Association and members of one of its member societies

9.2 For major decisions about the structure of the Association (amendments to the Constitution; dissolution of the Association), for elections to the Board and for membership exclusions, voting rights are restricted to members of the Body of Representatives and members of the Board.

9.3 All those with voting rights may participate in other decisions.

9.4. Unless otherwise determined in this Constitution, decisions are made by simple majority. In case of equality of votes, the President shall have a casting vote.

Voting shall take place by a show of hands. At the discretion of the President, voting about persons may be done by secret ballot. An electronic ballot may be carried out when required.

9.5. Official delegates representing member Societies have the following number of votes, depending on the number of full members which they represent:

Number of members	Numbers of votes
1-10	1
11-20	2
21-30	3
31-50	4
51-100	6
more than 100	8

9.6. A National Society loses its voting rights at a General Assembly meeting when it has not paid its annual subscription.

9.7. Individual members of the Association from a country where a National Society does not (yet) exist, or when in existence, is not a member of the Association, together have one collective vote.

ARTICLE 10 - OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

11.1. The official language of the Association is the English language.

11.2. Contributions to an International Congress and/or scientific meeting may be presented in another language than English, provided that the speaker offers an English translation of their paper for distribution to the audience. Speakers who wish to speak in another language than English should inform the organizing committee of the congress / meeting upon registration.

ARTICLE 11 - AMENDMENTS ON THE CONSTITUTION

11.1. This Constitution can only be amended at a General Assembly meeting.

11.2. Only members of the Board and members of the Body of Representatives may vote on amendments to the Constitution.

11.3. Any change of the Constitution has to be agreed by a two thirds majority of the authorized voting rights present. The Board must give at least four months' notice in advance of the proposed amendment(s) of the Constitution.

11.4. Any member has the right to propose an amendment of the Constitution; the proposal should be substantially argued and submitted to the secretariat not later than six months prior to the next General Assembly meeting.

ARTICLE 12 - DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION

12.1. A decision to dissolve the Association can only be taken by the members of the Board and members of the Body of Representatives, at a General Assembly meeting.

12.2. The dissolution of the Association requires a three quarters majority of the authorized voting rights present. The Board must give at least four months' notice of the proposal.

12.3. Any member has the right to propose the dissolution of the Association; the proposal should be well-supported and submitted to the secretariat by registered mail, not later than six months prior to the next General Assembly meeting.

12.4. When dissolution has been decided, the assets and financial reserves of the Association shall be handed over to the Society for the Social History of Medicine unless the General Assembly determines another destination.

ARTICLE 13 - FINAL ARTICLE

In circumstances not provided for in this Constitution, the Board shall take the appropriate decisions and/or steps. In such circumstances, the Board shall inform the members of the Association of the decisions/steps taken.

This Constitution is based on the 1998 Constitution (President: Drs. A. H. H. M. Mathijssen; Secretary: Dr. P. Leeflang), was amended and adopted by the General Assembly during their meetings on 24th September 2006 at León, Spain, on 12th September 2008 at Engelberg, Switzerland, and on 21 September 2024 at León, Spain and takes precedence over all former Constitutions of the Association.

Dr. Alison Skipper,
President

Dr. Jons Straatman,
Secretary