Good morning. I am truly honored to stand before you for the final time as your president. Thank you for electing me and allowing me to represent you, the AVMA and our profession, both here in the United States and around the world. It has truly been the honor of a lifetime.

As I mentioned last summer in Boston, as members of the House of Delegates, YOU are the essential link between our membership and the AVMA. This year’s informational forum and the first email recently sent by you to our members are the first steps to enhancing our communications with our members and addressing current topics that are relevant to them. I hope that, as we move forward, we will continue to improve this process and open up more dialogue with our members.

I also want to commend the Board of Directors for looking within and addressing needed changes in our governance, and helping us become a more strategic and entrepreneurial organization. It is essential that the Board, with the help of the House, continue to look ahead and guide us into the future. We have an extremely talented and hardworking staff that can carry forward our strategic plans and objectives. I see a bright and successful future for the AVMA.

Let me take a few minutes to highlight some of this past year’s accomplishments:

- Our annual Economic Summits have been extremely successful in bringing together representatives from veterinary practice, industry and academia to share thoughts and strategies about how we can capitalize on the economic strengths of our profession and address the challenges we face. And, after receiving substantial interest and feedback, we have elected to make the PDF version of our 2016 Veterinary Economic Report series free to our members.

- It was both humbling and inspiring for the AVMA to host the many passionate people who gathered in March for our first-ever wellness roundtable. It helped us set the stage for continuing efforts that will address the topic of wellness and well-being in the profession.

- I am proud of the progress we continue to make in tackling student debt and other financial issues that impact young veterinary professionals. Our Fix the Debt summit in April generated a number of recommendations on how to help solve this problem; the summit planning committee has identified ten of those recommendations and is working with the veterinary community in moving them forward.

- An outstanding leadership conference each January offers workshops and networking opportunities, and continues to attract individuals from
throughout the profession who want to learn more about leadership and team building.

- A new **Committee on Antimicrobials** has been formed, and will meet for the first time in November.

- A new relationship between the AVMA and the AMA has resulted in a **joint article on wellness** in our respective professions that has been co-authored by both presidents and will soon be published by both organizations. The collaborative effort is a reflection of the growing understanding that both professions can work together to help elevate the issue of wellness among our members.

- The surgeon general has recognized the benefits of pet ownership and regularly walking the family dog as part of his **campaign to promote walking**, which is one of the most important things we can do to improve human and animal health.

- NACIQI has agreed with the US Department of Education’s recommendation to continue recognition of the **AVMA COE as the accrediting body for veterinary education**.

- And, we must not leave out that the AVMA president continues to serve as the **official North Pole Veterinarian**!

Once again, I thank you for all you do for the AVMA, and for your commitment, dedication and service to the profession. Together, we are working to protect, promote and advance this honorable profession and make it stronger for both today and tomorrow. Thank you.