Dr. Tom Meyer Summer 2017 HOD Remarks

Greetings, colleagues:

Before I step down as your president, I wanted to share a few thoughts.

Serving in this role, with this wonderful association, has been one of the great honors of my life and an incredibly rewarding experience I will carry with me forever.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

As president, I have tried to focus on three themes in my messaging when representing you during my travels.

I call them the three “C’s”: Connect, Communicate and Celebrate.

We have focused considerable efforts on connecting with our members through a variety of platforms to determine their needs, wants and expectations from us as their association.

And while we need to connect with our members, it is equally important that we connect with those that also have an interest in the veterinary profession.

I have come to term this as “link and leverage.”

We cannot achieve what we want to and advance the profession by ourselves.

It is becoming increasingly more important to identify those who can help us advance veterinary medicine by promoting and explaining the value of our veterinary medical education to society.
Then, we need to link and leverage those opportunities to expand our veterinary footprint not only in our traditional arenas, but into uncharted and innovative waters.

It has been said there is never enough good communication, and the key to successful relationships – whether it is personal, business, corporate or nonprofit associations – is to communicate, communicate, communicate our vision, our values, our expectations and our outcomes.

My president’s messages this past year have been intentionally focused on just that: communicating to our members through my monthly column in JAVMA on the variety of issues we are facing as a profession, what we are doing to address those issues, and some thought-provoking questions such as: “what does it mean to be a professional?” and “what does professionalism mean to us as veterinarians?”

I am grateful that the collegiality and communication between the board and the house has improved dramatically.

We have made great progress as an association, specifically when it comes to breathing new life into the house through the success of the Veterinary Information Forum and by “walking the walk” in listening to our members and addressing their concerns.

The topics at the VIF all come from our members in some fashion; you are our grass roots connection.

This has been great to see, and we need to continue this consistent outreach to our members ... your constituents.

During my short tenure as your president, together we have accomplished much that we can celebrate.

Among those I am most proud are our new wellness initiatives that are providing new support and services to our colleagues in need.
Our focus on veterinary economics and practice profitability is providing cutting-edge resources and continuing education programs that help ensure that every veterinarian finds the profession to be personally and financially rewarding.

We are leading the charge to address the issue of telehealth so that our members are well supported and primed for success when delivering veterinary telehealth services to our patients and clients.

The AVMA is a major player at both the federal and professional levels to ensure judicious use of antibiotics in the best interests of animal and human health.

And we continue to champion the cause of building bridges with organizations across disciplines in the true spirit of One Health.

As I begin to wrap up, I leave you with this: the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe has embarked on a Vet Futures initiative, which carries the tagline, “Taking charge of our future, developing leaders of tomorrow.”

Its goal is to put the profession in control of its future, to develop a confident profession, to speak with one voice to the public and to government officials, and to stop just talking to each other.

My way of saying it is: “Do you want to own your profession? If not, then someone else will!”

As we all know, we are facing significant challenges for our piece of the pie.

Other entities are venturing into the realms in which we thought we owned.

We have to reaffirm our commitment to the AVMA and to our members to ensure our place and our relevancy.
We’re identifying the issues of greatest importance and addressing them.

We’re building bridges and increasing collaboration.

These are all good things, and we need to keep the momentum going to continue to best serve our members and their needs.

Let’s embrace one another as we harness our creativity and collectively commit to the future well-being of our profession.

Thank you.