The current strategic plan of the AVMA, adopted by the Executive Board in 2012, has enabled the association to mobilize significant resources to accomplish important goals for the profession and the organization. This report provides highlights of key objectives and tactics that have been completed or are in progress.

The strategic plan has five goals:
- Strengthen the Economics of the Veterinary Medical Profession
- Catalyze a Transformation of Veterinary Medical Education
- Promote Animal Welfare
- Advance Scientific Research and Discovery
- Enhance Membership Participation and Engagement

**Strengthen the Economics of the Veterinary Medical Profession**

The economics goal has two primary initiatives:

1. The veterinary medical profession’s economic growth and profitability are improved within private veterinary medical practice.
2. Veterinary employment opportunities are identified and solutions developed to effectively balance the needs of society with the supply of veterinarians.

The following activities have been accomplished:

- The AVMA Veterinary Economics Strategy Committee, established in 2012, and the Veterinary Economics Division, established in 2013, are critically-important elements of the AVMA’s plan to strengthen the economics of the veterinary medical profession. The Veterinary Economics Strategy Committee held three meetings in 2012 and quickly assumed oversight for several areas of work, most importantly an analysis of the US veterinary medical workforce supply and demand.

- The AVMA initiated a series of collaborative meetings in 2012 with AAVMC to identify economics issues and develop strategies to achieve solutions. Representatives of the two associations developed three initial program areas as follows: veterinary workforce analysis, incurring and managing educational debt, and successful transitions from student to practice associate. Teams were developed for each program area, and projects are on target to be completed in 2013.

- Key activities to date have included advocacy at the federal level to advance AVMA’s small business legislative agenda in 2012 and 2013; expanding the reach of MyVeterinarian.com in 2012 to over 13,000 practices to enable greater visibility and awareness of practices and services, especially when integrated to public awareness and education campaigns; and the 2012 and 2013 association reports on benchmark statistics on veterinary compensation and business financial data.

- In 2012, the AVMA completed transition of the NCVEI website to AVMA ownership and operations. In 2012, the Veterinary Economics Strategy Committee completed a review and inventory of all key resources and calculators on the website. For 2013, the committee and economics staff will finalize its decisions on the best strategy to provide a central web-based
Regarding enhancement of the veterinary medical workforce, AVMA hired IHS Global Insight in June 2012 to conduct a veterinary supply-demand study and develop a forecasting model of the US veterinary workforce. A Workforce Advisory Group was established to provide oversight and insight to the study. The study report is due to the AVMA in April 2013, and will be considered by the Executive Board at its April 18, 2013 meeting.

In August 2012, AVMA established a staff position within the Office of the Executive Vice President entitled Associate Director for International and Diversity Initiatives to advance, in part, AVMA’s objectives to promote and nurture increased diversity, inclusion, and cultural competency within the Association and the veterinary profession. Diversity, inclusion and cultural competency are key components of addressing the veterinary medical workforce to meet future societal needs. This position will foster programs to develop and maintain informational pieces on diversity, inclusion and cultural competency, regular outreach to desired diverse groups, and work with other associations such as AAVMC and SAVMA to ensure veterinary students have a greater degree of and appreciation for diversity and inclusion.

Catalyze a Transformation of Veterinary Medical Education

The education goal is as follows:

In collaboration with AAVMC and other organizations, the AVMA promotes the development of a sustainable and affordable educational model that graduates competent veterinarians who meet the practice, scientific, global societal, and workforce needs of the 21st century.

The following activities have been accomplished:

In cooperation with the AAVMC, the AVMA Council on Education received the NAVMEC Report and appropriate background information for consideration as part of the ongoing review process for the standards of accreditation. In response:

- Standard 9, Curriculum was revised to include a requirement to provide opportunities throughout the curriculum for students to gain an understanding of the influences of different cultures on the delivery of veterinary medical services. As part of the accreditation process, the colleges are now required to describe opportunities provided for students to learn how different cultural and other influences (e.g., ethnic origin, socio-economic background, religious beliefs, educational level, disabilities and other factors) can impact the provision of veterinary medical services.

- Standard 9, Curriculum was revised to include a requirement to promote knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, aptitudes, and behaviors necessary to address responsibly the health and well-being of animals in the context of advancing technologies. As a part of the accreditation process, colleges are now required to describe the resources available to students for improving their skills in evaluating information relevant to veterinary medicine from all media sources.

- As part of the accreditation process, the colleges are now required to report curricular and extracurricular opportunities available for students to develop leadership skills.
AVMA collaborated with AAVMC to form a joint task force to study the existence of financial aid resources and information about financial obligations management and develop a national resource on this information. The near-future outcome is a centralized web-based clearinghouse of substantial financial aid information from all available sources and financial management information that will be available for all veterinary medical students and early career veterinarians.

AVMA developed a “Successful Graduate Initiative” to develop guidelines for the profession on transitioning from veterinary student to practice associate. AVMA launched this program by sponsoring a facilitated discussion forum in August, 2012 at the AVMA convention with 30 invited participants that included 10 veterinary college deans, 10 companion animal practice owners, and 10 early career veterinarians who are practice associates. Workgroups were formed and outcome guidelines are in development.

AVMA supported a Veterinary Career Fair and identified a speaker (Dr. Kay Russo, a recipient of the AVMA/AVMF Food Animal Veterinarian Recruitment and Retention Program) to speak to high school and early college students interested in the veterinary profession at the AAVMC Annual Meeting in March 2013 in Washington DC in order to develop and promote student diversity initiatives. Also, the AVMA participated in the AAVMC Iverson Bell Symposia in 2012 and 2013 (both national and regional) and promoted and reported promotion of and reporting on the symposia to AVMA members through AVMA online and other resources (eg, JAVMA news).

Promote Animal Welfare

The animal welfare goal has three primary initiatives:

1. Increase utilization of Veterinary Services
2. Promote Veterinarians as Authorities and Advocates for Animal Welfare
3. Advocate Oversight of Veterinary Medical Procedures

The following activities have been accomplished:

- The AVMA is a leader of the Partners for Healthy Pets, an unprecedented effort of a coalition of professional associations and animal health industry partners that have contributed their resources to improve the health of pets. The mission of the Partners for Healthy Pets is to ensure that pets receive the preventive healthcare they deserve through regular visits to the veterinarian. An entire suite of web-based practice tools and resources are now free and widely available to the profession. The tools focus upon addressing those things that research told us were needed to reduce the barriers to pet owners obtaining preventive healthcare. These include implementing preventive healthcare guidelines, communicating the value of an annual exam, reaching pet owners through internet marketing and social media, developing feline friendly practices, and developing and implementing preventive healthcare payment plans.

- The Steering Committee on Human-Animal Interactions (SCHAI) was established in September 2012 to foster a better understanding of the characteristics of the different types of human-animal relationships encountered by veterinarians practicing within the profession, to promote the veterinarian’s role in supporting good human-animal relationships, and to communicate expectations for those relationships outside of the profession. The Steering Committee replaces the former Committee on the Human-Animal Bond.

- AVMA significantly enhanced its programs to heighten public awareness of animal health and disease and appropriate animal care, ensuring that veterinarians are highly visible and
consistently viewed as the authority on animal-related issues. Public education and outreach that promotes veterinarians as leaders and authorities on animals' welfare is a cornerstone of the AVMA’s communications strategy. AVMA uses a variety of communications vehicles and approaches to educate the public about the critical role veterinarians play in all aspects of animal health and welfare. Efforts are substantial, ongoing and a regular part of Association activities.

- AVMA developed continuing education sessions at the AVMA Convention and other conferences addressing animal welfare topics affecting various species and animal uses. Continuing education is important to positioning veterinarians as authorities and advocates for good animal welfare. Sessions were offered in 2012 and are planned for the 2013 and 2014 AVMA Conventions. Day-long programs were also developed and provided at the Southwest Veterinary Symposium and North Carolina State Veterinary Association annual meeting in September and November 2012, respectively.

- Animal welfare-focused symposia are being developed to provide continuing education and discussion opportunities. Two symposia have been approved. “Can You Hear Me Now? The Conversation” is a summit on intra-professional communication about animals’ welfare and will be held in November 2013. An international symposium on euthanasia, depopulation and slaughter with plenary sessions and multiple species- and practice-specific sessions is anticipated to be conducted in early 2014.

- AVMA continues to expand the successful veterinary division of the Animal Welfare Intercollegiate Judging and Assessment Contest. This educational contest enhances understanding of welfare issues affecting animals, affords veterinary medical students an opportunity to practice their animal welfare assessment and presentation skills, teaches ethical reasoning, and encourages objective assessment of animal welfare on the basis of scientific theory and data. And, in 2013, the AVMA will assume responsibility as the coordinating organization for the entire contest, including its undergraduate, veterinary and graduate student divisions.

- In late 2011 the AVMA initiated a new quarterly E-newsletter on animal welfare for distribution to the profession, other stakeholders and the public. While its primary goal is provision of information, it also assists the AVMA in delivering a consistent and unified message on animal welfare. Prepared by Animal Welfare Division staff, with significant contributions from volunteers on the AVMA Animal Welfare Committee, the newsletter is a key means for keeping AVMA leadership and members abreast of the range of issues being addressed internally by AVMA and externally by various stakeholders, and to share AVMA policy-guided responses to those issues.

- AVMA created a new online tool for obtaining member input on the association’s professional policies. While all AVMA professional policies are open at all times for comment, policies currently under review by AVMA volunteer entities are identified as such. This policy review and input tool provides a substantial opportunity for members to provide information and feedback to the AVMA. The tool was initiated with animal welfare policies in 2010, and effective January 2013, the concept has been extended to all AVMA professional policies.

- The AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals has been thoroughly updated by a team of more than 60 volunteers and staff and was published in February 2013. Two companion reports are under development, the AVMA Guidelines for the Humane Slaughter of Animals (expected completion in November 2013) and the AVMA Guidelines for the Depopulation of Animals (anticipated to be completed in 2014).
The AVMA Public Policy Symposium, which was held in conjunction with the Southwest Veterinary Symposium in September 2012, provided an ideal platform for the development and implementation of sessions on legislative and regulatory strategy for scope of practice issues, as well as opportunities for discussion of other animal welfare-related legislation being proposed around the country. Programs such as this are critically important to professional advocacy at the state and national levels as the AVMA works to promote its legislative agenda and support state and allied veterinary associations with proactive approaches to legislative and regulatory activity.

**Advance Scientific Research and Discovery**

The scientific research and discovery goal is as follows:

AVMA supports the promotion and appropriate funding of veterinary scientific research and discovery to ensure the advancement of veterinary medical knowledge.

The following activities have been accomplished:

- The AVMA policy on “Research Priorities: American Veterinary Medical Association/Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges” was completely revised by the Council on Research (COR) to reflect current issues and agendas. This policy is used as a basis for communication to legislators, governmental and foundational funding agencies, and the public for the purpose of advocacy for increased animal research funding as well as to educate on the significant contribution the veterinary community can have towards the improvement of both animal and human health. A synopsis of the revised AVMA research priorities was included in a 2013 AVMA brochure distributed to legislators and regulators at various conference and meetings.

- To advance scientific research, a biomedical research landing page has been developed and published on the AVMA website. This outreach focuses on the critical role veterinary education and research plays in maintaining and advancing the infrastructure and status of animal health in the U.S. Plans are currently in progress for the development of content for the public pages of the AVMA website that discuss the responsible use of animals in research and the role of veterinarians in that process, with the goal of educating the public about the importance of biomedical research and advocating for increased funding for research.

- AVMA is a founding member of Supporters of Agricultural Research (SoAR), a non-partisan science-based coalition, that works with policymakers and the public to educate why modern research policy and competitive grant strategy modeled on the National Institutes of Health is essential for achieving national research priorities. Working with this coalition is an ongoing core function of the AVMA to advocate for increased funding.

- The Council on Research is sponsoring a day-long symposium entitled “Genes to Genomes” at the 2013 AVMA Convention as part of its annual “Breakthroughs in Clinical Research” symposium. Each year focuses on a different topic, with the purpose to provide Convention attendees, who are largely clinical practitioners, with research information that is useful to enhancing delivery of high-quality veterinary services either immediately or in the very near future.

- The AVMA supports and promotes the One Health Commission’s goals to develop, implement, and sustain an integrated strategy for improved public health based on principles of One Health, to create national and international awareness of the power of One Health,
and to illustrate the value of One Health through demonstration projects. An AVMA representative has a position on the One Health Commission Board of Directors.

- The AVMF received $250,000 in 2012 from AVMA to establish a business plan and infrastructure to develop the Animal Health Network (AHN). Development, promotion, and maintenance of the AHN is needed to establish the perpetual funding of merit-based, competitively-awarded quality research focused on national priorities in companion animal and equine health. The AVMF, with support of the COR, has expended its own resources to successfully start the species-specific pilot component of the AHN, the Cat Health Network (CHN). Money distributed through that program was used to study the role that genetic variation plays in many important diseases in cats, such as hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, polycystic kidney disease, and feline infectious peritonitis.

- The Merial-NIH National Veterinary Scholars Symposium is now firmly established as a premier research meeting for veterinary biomedical research and graduate research training. This very successful symposium provides an opportunity for veterinary students to learn about the field of biomedical research. The positive experience of participating in structured summer research programs and the symposium encourages many of the students to pursue a career in research after completing veterinary school. The AVMF/AVMA contributes $10,000 towards symposium expenses and sponsors the Young Investigators Award (YIA) Competition with the Council on Research involved in the final award winner selection and distribution of another $10,000 in prize money.

- To further support increased exposure of veterinary students to the value of research, a liaison relationship was established such that a representative of the Student AVMA attends meetings of the AVMA Council on Research. This valuable liaison activity serves to transfer information of importance related to student research between students and the Council.

**Enhance Membership Participation and Engagement**

The membership participation and engagement goal is as follows:

The AVMA enhances participation and engagement of its membership through the creation of a culture of inclusion, transparency, and community.

The following activities have been accomplished:

- A Task Force on AVMA Governance and Member Participation was established by AVMA in 2012 to evaluate the current governance structure and identify if the current structure will meet the future needs of the membership, profession, and the association. The review includes the Executive Board, House of Delegates, and other entities including councils, committees, task forces, commissions, and trusts. The task force’s report, anticipated in June, 2013, will include a future vision of the AVMA governance that considers the qualities of governance as outlined by the AVMA 20/20 Vision Commission.

- AVMA established an Early Career Development Committee (ECDC) in 2012 to engage recent graduates at a much greater level. Specifically, the ECDC was developed to strengthen the value of membership, programs and services, and develop early career veterinarians as future leaders therefore increasing their participation in councils, committees, and task forces of the AVMA. Recruitment of recent graduates to this initiative was very successful, and nine outstanding veterinarians were added to this new committee.

- A new Assistant Director position for Recent Graduate Initiatives was created in 2012 in the Membership and Field Services Division. The new Assistant Director is responsible for the
implementation of the recent graduate programs, development of the online veterinary community of recent graduates, and the Early Career Development Committee.

- At the 2012 AVMA Convention, a special reception was held to welcome first time convention attendees. The reception was fun, relaxing, and provided a synopsis of the CE programming, a demonstration of MapIt, and an overview of special events. First time attendees also were able to ask questions, meet Convention volunteer leaders and staff, and converse with their peers.

- The AVMA Veterinary Leadership Conference mission is to develop leaders for the benefit of the individual and the veterinary profession. In 2013, attendance was opened for registration to all AVMA members, and the conference was highly successful with participation of 500 registrants.

- AVMA launched the new Compass Mentoring Pilot Program in October 2012. The kick-off event in Wallingford, CT was a huge success with over 20 recent graduates and an equal number of experienced veterinarians volunteered to serve as mentors. There was a reception and dinner, and three round-table discussions: debt management, work/life balance, and career path navigation. The concept and design were developed by the AVMA Future Leaders first class. Funding was provided by the AVMA and the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) along with additional funding from Pfizer Animal Health.

- In August 2012, AVMA launched its new website, following a year-long intensive redesign process. With considerable member input, AVMA made significant enhancements to the website to improve online experience. The new "My AVMA" section of the website allows AVMA to deliver content tailored exactly to member's interests; the AVMA Knowledge Base is a new system that allows members to organize in one place the AVMA's thousands of resources on a single topic, discipline or species, including everything from AVMA policies and press releases to backgrounders and brochures. These are just a few of the highlights along with improved site navigation and search capabilities, automated links to related content, mobile-friendly display, more print-friendly pages and rotating featured content on our home page.

- AVMA created a new online system for membership input on professional policies of the AVMA. This feature is open only to AVMA members and SAVMA members. Members can sign up to receive email alerts about changes and proposed changes to AVMA policies that are up for review as part of the standard five-year review cycle. Members are provided a notice of request for comment, text of the current policy, important background for the policy, a description of the type of information sought, and a deadline. This policy review and input system provides members with a greater voice in impacting AVMA policies about veterinary medicine.

- AVMA’s reach and engagement continued to increase on social media channels. The number of Facebook followers on the main AVMA page (AVMAvets) increased 28% from 24,307 in November 2012 to 31,068 in March 2013. Over the same period, Twitter followers on the @AVMAvets feed grew 17% to 16,007, and our presence on Google Plus grew 33% to 1,123 followers. To date, AVMA videos have been viewed 318,239 times on YouTube, and YouTube channel subscribers increased to 1,045 subscribers in March 2013. Currently, Animal Health SmartBrief e-newsletter has 33,347 subscribers.

- In April 2012 AVMA completed a Needs Assessment Survey of 2,900 members that provided critical information to guide future strategic planning with the purpose to increase perceived value and relevance of AVMA membership to our members. While members are
in alignment with AVMA’s overall strategic goals, there are several opportunities for the Association to meet the emerging – and varying – expectations that members have for the AVMA. In some cases, there is opportunity to improve the awareness and usage of existing programs, and in other cases the Association will need to explore how it can address needs that aren’t yet being fulfilled. By doing so, AVMA can address the more personal reasons that people have for membership in the AVMA, and ensure that overall member satisfaction grows and that the organization remains vital and relevant to its members.