

## 29<sup>th</sup> WAAVP conference – Chennai, India

As a Master student of the department of Zoology and Entomology at the University of the Free State, being able to attend an international conference was one of my biggest dreams. The WAAVP 29<sup>th</sup> International Conference, Chennai, India was my second conference but the first international conference. This opportunity was only possible with the travel award of the WAAVP African Foundation.



Travelling to India was an unforgettable experience. Three flights via Dubai with layovers later we arrived in Chennai. I am still amazed with the green cities and the many cultures seen in India. The stay in Chennai is one of the best experiences, the locals were friendly and always willing to help. With a fully packed conference with four breakout sessions, the Leela Palace was my home for the conference. It is difficult to describe the experience in words.

It was a great honour to be accepted to present my research findings to an international audience. Attending the conference was a life-changing experience filled with opportunities to grow academically and personally. Experts in different parts of the veterinary parasitology field provided valuable inputs on my work. At the time of the conference, I was not finished with the write-up of my thesis. All the comments, suggestions and constructive criticism were used to complete my MSc studies.

The keynote speakers at the conference provided me with valuable tools for future research. It is important to be innovative as a scientist; this conference showed me how everyday objects can be used as research tools. This conference also provided me with the opportunity to network with researchers and students across the world. For instance, Dr. Srikant Ghosh from the Indian Veterinary Research Institute provided me with the opportunity to visit the facilities in the future.

Thank you to the organizers of the 29<sup>th</sup> WAAVP conference for creating the opportunity to share my research and meet experts in the field. Lastly, I want to sincerely thank Prof. Rosina Krecek and my supervisor Dr. Ellie van Dalen for making this experience possible and supporting me.

