

Introduction

My name is Joseph Oundo, currently completing my PhD thesis on the epidemiology and control of tick-borne diseases at the Quantitative Veterinary Epidemiology (QVE) group, Wageningen University & Research, The Netherlands. My recent attendance at the 29th International Conference of the World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology (WAAVP) was a great experience that offered a unique blend of knowledge sharing, networking, and inspiration. I also had the privilege to share part of the results from my PhD work through a poster presentation titled “Insights into the diversity of tick-borne pathogens in ticks and zebu cattle from coastal Kenya”.

The Venue and Organization

The 29th WAAVP conference was held at The Leela Palace in Chennai India. This was a remarkable venue, offering state-of-the-art facilities and a welcoming atmosphere. The meticulous organization ensured that attendees could seamlessly navigate the diverse range of sessions, workshops, and poster presentations. This thoughtful planning allowed participants like me to make the most of this enriching experience.



Keynote Addresses

The WAAVP conference boasted an impressive lineup of keynote speakers, each a luminary in their respective areas of expertise. Their presentations provided invaluable insights into the evolving landscape of parasitic diseases, and also underscored the need for innovative solutions. These thought-provoking talks set the tone for the entire event.

Scientific Sessions and Workshops

The scientific sessions and workshops delved into the latest advancements in parasite detection, treatments, and prevention strategies. The integration of genomics, proteomics, and artificial intelligence in parasitology research was particularly inspiring, highlighting the pivotal role of technology in advancing our understanding of parasites and their impact on animal health.



Poster Presentations

The poster session was a highlight of the conference, showcasing groundbreaking research by researchers and students. Engaging with these presenters, asking questions, and gaining insights into their work was a truly enriching experience. The dedication and passion displayed by these individuals were inspiring and underscored the importance of supporting emerging talent in the field.

Networking Opportunities

Perhaps the most cherished aspect of the conference was the networking opportunities it provided. Meeting fellow attendees, sharing ideas, and engaging in meaningful discussions were immensely rewarding. It was a privilege to connect with individuals who share a common goal: advancing veterinary parasitology to benefit animals and humans.

Supporting Future Generations of Veterinary Parasitologists in Africa

One of the most heartwarming aspects of the conference was the emphasis on nurturing the next generation of veterinary parasitologists in Africa. The WAAVP African Foundation (WAAVP AF), in particular, stood out as a beacon of hope. Their commitment to providing travel scholarships to young researchers underscores the importance of investing in talent and ensuring a bright future for the field. I'm immensely grateful to the WAAVP AF for the travel scholarship that enabled me to attend my first-ever international conference.

The conference also witnessed the official launch of the WAAVP Africa Network (WAAVP AN) whose aim is to promote and support a sustainable network of African scientists, researchers, funders, farmers, and policymakers to address the challenges in veterinary parasitology in sub-Saharan Africa.

Conclusion

Attending the WAAVP conference was a transformative experience that deepened my understanding of veterinary parasitology. It reinforced the importance of continued research, collaboration, and innovation in our quest to combat parasitic diseases of veterinary importance.

