THE GOLD MEDAL OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN VETERINARY ASSOCIATION

DR JAN AUCAMP VAN WYK

The Gold Medal of the SAVA is awarded to any person resident in South Africa, or a veterinarian who is not resident in South Africa but who is a member of the SAVA, in recognition of outstanding scientific achievement of veterinary science. The medal will only be awarded once to any person.

The Gold Medal of the SAVA was awarded to Dr Jan van Wyk for his exceptional and sustained scientific achievements as helminthology researcher in a professional career stretching over an impressive 55 years.

Jan graduated as veterinarian in 1962 and spent 6 years as state veterinarian before transferring to the Onderstepoort Veterinary Research Institute's Helminthology Department, where he was an assistant-director from 1983-1997. Hereafter he was appointed as extraordinary lecturer at the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Veterinary Science, a position that he still holds.

He dedicated his entire career to research in helminthology, concentrating on the control of verminosis in sheep, with emphasis on avoiding the development of resistance to conventional chemical methods/chemotherapy by helminth management. His scientific productivity and absolute objectivity are exceptional.

His impressive CV lists 93 papers as either first author (60) or co-author (33) published in peer reviewed or refereed journals, 34 full-length and 37 less formal addresses at international and local conferences, 12 workshop abstracts and 166 contributions that were published in local media for technology transfer purposes to livestock farmers and veterinarians and 15 lengthy technical reports compiled for either local or international consumption. His dedication to improvement of the health and production of livestock and thus the quality and success of farming is phenomenal, always going out of his way to make his scientific studies of practical value to the commercial and developing farming community.

His research highlights are many. The majority deal with the emergence of resistance to worm remedies, particularly in *Haemonchus contortus* (wireworm) and the development of novel methods of control that do not rely on the use of anthelmintics. He was a pioneer in researching resistance of wireworms of sheep to anthelmintics and worked closely with Australian colleagues where the problem was first identified. In 1997, he was first to record worldwide that a local strain of *H. contortus* was resistant to 5 unrelated anthelmintics, comprising all the classes of anthelmintic drugs available at the time, making the strain uncontrollable chemotherapeutically.

In the 1990’s, he developed a managerial field control method comprising the genetic dilution of a resistant *H. contortus* gene pool on a sheep farm by the introduction of overwhelming numbers of susceptible worms at a time when the numbers of resistant worms in the pastures was very low, which was followed by reversion to susceptibility. This was the first radical diversion from the clearly doomed, obsolete method of regular blanket treatment of entire flocks of sheep.

A more practical method of control followed with the development in the early 1990’s, together with Dr Faffa Malan and Prof Gareth Bath, of the FAMACHA system that amounts to targeted selective treatment of only those sheep in flocks that are actually suffering clinical anaemia from haemonchosis. A farmer-friendly, clinical diagnostic test for individual sheep was developed, enabling farmers to not only build up a herd which is much more resistant to haemonchosis, but also saving on the cost of treatment and reducing the chance of the development of resistance to the drug used.

Dr Van Wyk’s scientific achievements have not gone unnoticed, both locally and internationally and he was awarded (naming just two): In 2003 the Elsdon-Dew Medal, the senior award of the Parasitological Society of Southern Africa; in 2001 the Eduard Saouma Award of the FAO for one of the best projects yet supported by FAO under the FAO Technical Cooperation Project programme.

Since his appointment in 1997 as extraordinary lecturer, Van Wyk’s research projects and staff salaries have been funded entirely by the grants he has obtained, generating (up to 2014) >R17 million, mainly from international donors. Dr van Wyk’s involvement in the Belgian/SA Scientific Cooperation programme was also very helpful in facilitating the subsequent
HONORARY ASSOCIATE LIFE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN VETERINARY ASSOCIATION

MRS ANN VAN DYK

Honorary Associate Life Membership of the SAVA is awarded to any person who is not a veterinarian and who has rendered outstanding service to veterinary science. The nomination must be supported by at least three members of Federal Council.

The name Ann van Dyk is synonymous with the successful breeding of cheetah in South Africa. Since the early 1960’s, cheetah have been regarded as endangered. In 1971, under the custodianship of the National Zoological Gardens, Ann and her brother Godfrey received the first 9 cheetah on their farm in De Wildt, outside Pretoria, and this was the start of her involvement in the breeding and conservation of endangered species. Originally known as the De Wildt Cheetah Research and Breeding Centre which was formally opened in 1971, the Ann van Dyk De Wildt Cheetah Centre has in recent years expanded to the De Wildt-Shingwedzi Wildlife Ranch near Bela-Bela.

Many of South Africa’s leading veterinarians have been involved with projects and research facilitated by Ann – Prof David Meltzer, Henk Bertschinger, Brough Coubrough, Drs Joseph van Heerden, Peter Caldwell, Gerhard Steenkamp, Remo Lobetti, Emily Lane, Kobus du Toit, Markus Hofmeyer, Cindy Harper and Richard Burroughs to name but a few.

From the outset, Ann’s vision has been to breed and manage the conservation of cheetah, and subsequently African wild dog and many other endangered species including the Suni antelope, riverine rabbit, Cape griffon, white-backed vulture, Egyptian vulture, brown hyena and aardwolf. Had it not been for the generous access to research material that Ann provided, the veterinary and scientific knowledge of these species would have been significantly diminished.

To date, over 150 theses, dissertations and publications can be directly attributed to studies and projects facilitated by Ann van Dyk. She has published three books herself and has been significantly recognised by a variety of organisations, having been awarded the Chancellor’s Medal by the University of Pretoria, the Gold Medals of the South African Nature Foundation and Wildlife Society of South Africa and the Conservation Award from the Cheetah Conservation Fund, Namibia amongst others.

Ms Ann van Dyk is a worthy recipient of the Honorary Associate Life Membership of the South African Veterinary Association.

Ann van Dyk could not attend the Gala Dinner, and the award was handed to her by Gerhard Steenkamp, Dr Jill Drake and Mr Gert Steyn, MD, at Nazareth House in Waterkloof.

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>R45 million grants from the Belgian Institute of Tropical Medicine from 2008-2016 to the Department of Veterinary Tropical Diseases of the Faculty. These outstanding achievements clearly illustrate, in monetary terms, how highly his research is rated not only locally, but also internationally.

He has refereed 42 articles for international journals of repute, including *Acta Parasitologica, Veterinary Parasitology, International Journal for Parasitology, Research in Parasitology* and the *Veterinary Journal*. His international standing is best illustrated by his teamwork and collaboration with the leading helminthologists of international repute.

Dr Jan van Wyk ranks among the best veterinary helminthologists that South Africa has produced and he is a worthy recipient of the Gold Medal of the SAVA.