

WSAVA - Our History

Veterinarians in the UK launched the original impetus to organize a specialist group for small animal veterinary care - an initiative which led first to the creation of the British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) and, later, to the WSAVA.

In 1956, at a meeting of the World Veterinary Association, the decision was taken to sectionalise World Congresses and grant affiliation to specialist associations to encourage closer contact between colleagues working in the same field. A group of British veterinarians then decided to form a specialist group in the UK, similar to the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) which had been established for some time. They believed that, once a UK association had been established, other European countries would follow and the creation of an international association would then be possible. The BSAVA held its inaugural meeting in March 1957.

At a meeting in Madrid, Spain, in 1959, representatives from Denmark, Holland, Italy, Germany, Mexico, Norway, Portugal, the UK and the USA, created an organization called the International Association of Small Animal Specialists (IASAS). It had an Executive Committee and a set of Statutes. Its first meeting was sponsored by the BSAVA and took place in London in 1961. One of its first decisions was to rename itself the World Small Animal Veterinary Association.

Initial progress was slow but, with each World Congress, more associations joined, attendance increased, and the committees became more effective. The Journal of Small Animal Practice, which had become the WSAVA's official publication, helped to share information between countries.

By the end of 1977, associations in 18 countries had joined, representing 8,000 small animal veterinarians globally. As time went on, more and more organizations became involved and, as sponsors also came on board, the work of the WSAVA became more diverse and more far-reaching. A further boost to its momentum came with the fall of the Iron Curtain in Europe in 1989. This sparked the formation of further national small animal associations and specialist groups, which, in turn, joined the WSAVA.