

## SUSTAINING FAVA THROUGH THE YEARS AND BEYOND\*

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### FAVA-How It Began

FAVA was conceptualized by Dr. Teodulo M. Topacio, Jr. when he was elected the President of the Philippine Veterinary Medical Association (PVMA) in 1975-1976. It was approved and adopted by all the newly elected officers as one of its projects. He corresponded with the Presidents of fifteen (15) country veterinary associations and invited them the proposal to support the formation of a federation of a regional veterinary associations for Asia: The country veterinary associations were as follows: **Bangladesh, Peoples Republic of China (PROC), Taiwan (Republic of China) then, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand.** By virtue of their geographical location, the veterinary associations of **Australia and New Zealand** were also invited. Only **five (5)** replied positively to the proposal: **India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia and Thailand.** **India** although willing later could not participate due to financial constraints. In 1977-1978, Dr. Rodolfo S. Peneyra was elected the new President of PVMA. Dr. Topacio as PVMA Past President, proposed to Dr. Peneyra, to pursue the formation of a federation of regional veterinary associations for Asia. The proposal was approved and the federation which was to be called the Federation of Asian Veterinary Associations or FAVA, was finally organized by Dr. Peneyra and his Board with assistance and support of Dr. Topacio.

The 1<sup>st</sup> FAVA Congress was finally held in Manila at the new Philippine International Convention Center, on February 22, 1978, with the joint participation of the PVMA during their annual scientific conference of that year. A total of 144 delegates attended the 1<sup>st</sup> Congress. The Presidents of six (6) veterinary associations with their delegates attended the Congress: Taiwan (China), Chinese Society of Veterinary Science, headed by its President, Dr. Eihyu Ryu, with 12 delegates; Indonesia, Indonesian Veterinary Association with its President, Dr. Herdi Sumeri as the lone delegate; Japan, Japan Veterinary Medical Association, headed by its President, Dr. Hiroshi Nakamura, with 31 delegates; Korea, Korean Veterinary Medical Association headed its President, Dr. Kwai Byeong Yun, with 2 delegates; Malaysia, Association of Veterinary Surgeons Malaysia, headed by its President, Dr. Nik Mahmood, with 2 delegates and the Philippines. Philippine Veterinary Medical Association headed by its President, Dr. Rodolfo S. Peneyra, with 106 delegates. During the Congress deliberations, Dr. Peneyra was elected as the 1st FAVA Congress President with Dr. Topacio as the 1<sup>st</sup> Secretary General.

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\*Read during the 16<sup>th</sup> FAVA Congress February 16, 2011, at the Waterfront Hotel Cebu City,

The proposed Constitution and By-Laws drafted by the PVMA were approved by the delegates. The proposed FAVA Charter with its Declaration of Purpose and objectives which was also prepared by the PVMA was likewise approved and signed by the 6 Charter Veterinary Association members with their respective Presidents, namely: **Chinese Society of Veterinary Science, Dr. Ehiyu Ryu; Indonesian Veterinary Association, Dr. Herdi Sumeri; Japan Veterinary Medical Association, Dr. Hiroshi Nakamura; Korean Veterinary Medical Association, Dr. Kwai Byeong Yun; Association of Veterinary Surgeons Malaysia, Dr. Nik Mahmood and the Philippine Veterinary Medical Association, Dr. Rodolfo S. Peneyra. Thai Veterinary Medical Association was not able to send a delegation.**

In the Charter the Declaration of Purpose whereby the reasons for the establishment of a federation of regional veterinary associations are defined and the objectives of FAVA are enumerated as follows::

- *Contact with regional veterinary associations.*
- *Holding Congresses and information exchange.*
- *Improvement of veterinary education and research.*
- *Promote the standing of the veterinary profession in Asia and Oceania.*

In all the years of its existence since founding in 1978, FAVA has made the following accomplishments. I listed twelve (12):

1. Organized the country veterinary associations of Asia and Oceania into one regional organization: The **Federation of Asian Veterinary Associations (FAVA)**. From the original 6 charter members there are now nineteen (19) veterinary countrys association members as follows: **Australia, Bangladesh, Hongkong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand and Viet Nam** with a total of more than 75,000 veterinarian members.
2. Establishing linkages thru the Council meetings and the Congresses.
3. Continuing exchange of scientific and professional information through the Council meetings and Congresses
4. Effective operations of the Secretary General and Secretariat even with limited funds, specially for travel to attend Council meetings and Congressess
5. Publication of FAVA news bulletin: ASIAN UPDATE.
6. Approval of the FAVA Solidarities as proposed by Indonesian Veterinary Association, namely:
  - Ethics
  - Profession
  - Science and education
  - Research and Development
  - National Development
7. Continuing dialogue in unifying veterinary education.
8. Veterinary exchange program initiated by Japan Veterinary Medical

Association, under Dr. Sugiyama and participated by Bangladesh, China China (PROC), India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

9. Revision and amending the Constitution and By-Laws.
10. Organized thirty two (32) FAVA Council meetings and sixteen (16) FAVA Congresses.
11. Promoted the standing of the profession through Items 9 and 10.
12. Recognition of FAVA by the World Veterinary Association (WVA) through its President, Dr. Rantios.

In assessing the performance of FAVA one must know its strengths and weaknesses. I have listed the following:

### **STRENGTHS:**

1. It is the only Asian Federation of Veterinary Associations recognized by WVA.
2. There are always regional exchanges of information among the region's veterinarians during the Congresses.
3. FAVA's strong capability in building networks.
4. There is an effective Secretariat.
5. The on-going dialogue in unifying veterinary education.
6. Unique regional livestock problems
7. Effective leadership with the full support of the veterinary association members.
8. Commitment of active members
9. Represents more than 75,000 veterinarians in the region.

### **WEAKNESSES:**

1. Lack of commitment of some members
2. Untapped or barely tapped support from the agro-vet industry sector.
3. Weak financial resources.
4. Weak communication among members
5. Not well known in the regions
6. High cost of attending the meetings of the Council and the Congresses.
7. Weak relationships with government and non-government bodies, e.g. OIE, FAO, WHO, ADB and World Bank.

Realizing the need for a long range plan for the performance of FAVA, the Council of Representatives decided to hold a strategic plan. This was decided to hold such a plan at the **17<sup>th</sup> Council meeting at Lahore, Pakistan on March 30, 1994**, where the **1<sup>st</sup> Strategic Plan** was drafted and approved. The Council meeting was hosted by the Pakistan Veterinary Medical Association by Dr. Ramzee. During that meeting after a long deliberation, it was agreed that FAVA to be an effective organization representing

Asia should have a Vision and Mission. It was finally agreed that FAVA should have its own version:

***VISION: FAVA will be recognized as a unified veterinary association serving the needs of the region.***

***MISSION: Enhance the quality of life in the region through responsible animal care and welfare.***

**STRATEGIES:** These are directed towards the following:

### **Membership**

To encourage the members specially in attending the Congress ways and means must be devised so that the cost of Congress attendance be reasonable. Similarly the membership of country association must be increased.

### **Veterinary Profession**

To upgrade the professional knowledge of the members, Congress must be held every 2 years. Likewise, the Council of Representatives should meet every year with all the members present. The FAVA news bulletin, ASIAN UPDATE, started by Australian Veterinary Association should be continually published.

### **Community at Large**

For FAVA to be appreciated, the member Countries should do outreach professional Community services and educate the public on the importance of the veterinary services.

### **Agro-Vet Industries**

FAVA should establish closer relationships with veterinary pharmaceutical industries and get their support. This is mutual and can be considered symbiotic. They should be invited as sustaining members of FAVA.

### **Veterinary Education and Academe**

An active Committee on Education should be organized to study the possibility of unifying veterinary education in the region. The Committee should be holding a dialogue on this every Congress. An exchange program started by JVMA

should be continued with other associations hosting a similar program this time to include the faculty and students.

At the **10<sup>th</sup> FAVA Congress** that was hosted by the Australian Veterinary Association at Cairns, Queensland on August 24-28, 1997, the theme was “The Multi-Faceted Veterinarian”, to emphasize the versatility of the veterinarian in various fields. The thrust of the Congress was directed to the agro-vet industries. In the coming age of globalization the following issues were discussed thoroughly.

### **The Role of FAVA in Globalization**

If all of you will recall a very significant meeting was held in Uruguay, South America, which was participated by several countries and was called the **Uruguay Round Table Conference**. The result of this meeting was the formation of the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** which was agreed, approved and signed by all the country members present. **WTO** includes legal texts which permeates all aspects of: “ **Human life from trade in goods, services and even intellectual creations**”. Almost all country members of FAVA are signatories to this agreement. Among other provisions **WTO** includes the **General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS)**, one of the objectives of which is to eventually result in the so called “**borderless practice of the profession among member countries**”. This is self explanatory i.e., all veterinarians can practice in any of the of the countries of FAVA. On Commerce, it approved the so-called “**General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT)** that will eventually remove all tariffs of member countries which includes countries of FAVA. In the last ASEAN Ministers meeting these are supposed to be implemented by the year 2015. These are serious matters that concern all and FAVA must start studying these provisions in line with the *FAVA Charter, Vision and Mission and Statements*.

During the **10th FAVA Congress**, “**The Role and Significance of the Agro-Vet Industries in Sustaining FAVA**” was taken up.

This was initiated by the Australian Veterinary Association and the New Zealand Veterinary Association during the Council of Representatives held at Christchurch, New Zealand. The agreement was that FAVA should seek financial support from the Agro-Vet Industries for its activities e.g. Congress and Council of Representatives meetings. It was implemented during 10<sup>th</sup> Congress whereby significant financial support was solicited and was given by the agro-vet industries. It was also at this time that they were invited to be sustaining members.

At this point in time, **FAVA** should think of extending “**Invitation to Other Countries for FAVA Membership**”, specially countries with no veterinary associations which will to expand its membership to include the following:

1. China (PROC)
2. Cambodia
3. Laos

4. Brunei
5. Republic countries or non republic countries of Oceania (Pacific),e.g. Vanuatu, Palau, Saipan, etc.
6. Countries bordering the Pacific Rim (Pacific Ocean),e.g. countries of the North and South American Continents.

In this age of **Globalization** and **WTO**, **FAVA**, will play a significant role and will also fulfill the objectives of the FAVA Charter. China (PROC) is now the 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest economy next to the USA. If they can become a member of the Federation, the advantage to FAVA will be significant. It may be safely assumed that they will have more than 500,000 professional veterinarians with their population of more than 2 billion!

### **Unifying Veterinary Education Among Member Countries**

**FAVA** through its officers should continue its efforts to unify the veterinary education of all the schools of veterinary medicine among its member countries with objective of recognizing and accrediting the curriculum. It is understood that it will take time and serious of study by all members. However the dialogue must continue. The basic professional science courses are, I am sure similar. The difference is on the thrust and the objective of the professional courses leading to the degree. The UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) through its Committee on Veterinary Education has recommended their version of the veterinary curriculum. It can be used as a reference starting point in the effort to unify veterinary education

### **Recommendations to Sustain and Strengthen FAVA.**

In concluding this paper,, I would like to make my own recommendations on how to sustain and strengthen FAVA.

#### **Membership:**

- 1.Invite countries with no veterinary associations. This is provided for in Article 4 of the FAVA Constitution.
2. International Agro-Vet industries should be invited as sustaining members as provided for in the FAVA By-Laws, Sect. A, Item 7. An annual fee of \$250 per year is the membership fee which will be a big help to our financial coffers.
- 3.Invite representatives of OIE, FAO, WHO, ADB and the World Bank as observers in the Council of Representatives meetings.

#### **Other Issues**

- 1.Activate the FAVA news bulletin ASIAN UPDATE. This is provided for in FAVA Constitution, Sec. 7. Articles 21 and 22.

2. Term of Secretary General should be extended from 6 to 8 years for effectiveness and continuity of administrative operations.
3. The dialogue on unifying veterinary education must continue. The FAO Report Committee on Veterinary Education Report can be used as reference.
4. In line with the theme of the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress, FAVA should study its role in globalization and its consequences to the country members taking into consideration the **WTO** agreement on **GATS** and **GATT** and its relationships with **OIE, FAO, WHO, ADB and World Bank.**

**THANK YOU!**

**MARAMING SALAMAT!**