Dear VMAA at ISU Members and Potential Members,

Wow! The world sure did not have 20/20 vision to predict that we would be dealing with a human Coronavirus pandemic. I am washing my hands so often that I feel like I have been scrubbing into 10 surgeries every day! I am so thankful for the leadership and work that the government, medical community and businesses are doing to help everyone get through this challenging time. If you look back to the last newsletter, I made the comment that the veterinary profession is one of the most adaptive and creative professions there are. I had no idea we would put it to the test!

I believe that we as veterinarians are in a very unique position when it comes to our roles during this pandemic. First and foremost, we need to continue to provide veterinary care to all areas of the animal kingdom from pets to food animals. At the same time, we need to make sure that we are being responsible with dealing with the public. Social distancing and sheltering at home are not easy tasks to accomplish as a veterinarian while providing care for our clients and patients.

Secondly, there are two areas where I think veterinarians can be of great assistance to our clients and people in our communities. The first has to do with biosecurity. Most of us have probably experienced the clean-up procedures of a Parvo outbreak in our clinics. As a former swine veterinarian, every day involved practicing strict biosecurity rules to minimize the risk of transferring a disease to a farm. Veterinarians are extremely well trained to practice good biosecurity techniques. Are there ways that we can reach out to others in our community to help them understand the importance of social distancing and educate when we can about ways to implement biosecurity protocols into our daily activities? Activities such as getting the mail or a package, getting groceries and filling our vehicles with gas are now met with a new set of risks that many do not understand.

The second area where I believe we can assist others is to use our veterinary knowledge to explain things such as medical terminology, and epidemiology to those that have questions. We work with large population dynamics on a daily basis. Perhaps we can help people understand the importance of sheltering at home, social distancing and self-quarantine.

And thru the turmoil, life continues. The veterinary students are exploring uncharted waters, continuing their education from outside the walls of the vet school. The veterinary teaching hospital and the diagnostic labs are trying to continue to function and provide needed services. Businesses are creatively searching for ways to survive. And professional organizations such as the VMAA at ISU are implementing new ways to stay connected to our members. We are all adapting.

We encourage you to reach out to the VMAA at ISU and network with other veterinarians to share ideas regarding our profession during this challenging time. The VMAA has a new Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Veterinary-Medical-Alumni-Association-at-Iowa-State-University-110951733831513/> as an additional way to stay connected. Please “Like” our page! Professional organizations can be a wonderful tool to help the veterinary profession weather this storm. Please continue to be an active member of the VMAA. If you are not a member, now would be a great time to join and interact with your colleagues to support the veterinary profession. Strength is in numbers.

Stay safe.

Mark Brinkman, Past President of the Veterinary Medical Alumni Association at ISU, on behalf of the VMAA Board of Directors