

2016 Robert Fraser Gordon Memorial Lecture

Lecturer: Prof. Dr. Michael Hess, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, Austria

Michael Hess grew up on a farm in a small village in the black forest in the southwest of Germany. After completing his school education and compulsory military service he started to study agriculture. In 1984 he switched to veterinary medicine at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Free University in Berlin where he completed his degree in 1990. Following graduation he performed his thesis at the Institute of Poultry Diseases of the aforementioned faculty on avian Adeno-associated Viruses in poultry. He continued at the institute concentrating on avian adenoviruses. The main subject was the investigation of highly virulent fowl adenoviruses causing hepatitis-hydropericardium syndrome. In 2000, after completing his habilitation, he moved to Intervet UK, to take over the Avian Research Department with a strong focus on Infectious Bronchitis Virus and Avian Metapneumoviruses. After 1 ½ years he was approached by the Veterinary University in Vienna and became Professor for Poultry Medicine, with the aim to integrate fish medicine into the clinic. The main task was to build up a research programme on poultry and to set up state of the art laboratories and animal facilities with the appropriate infrastructure. Furthermore, the diagnostic services of the clinic had to be reorganised, including the accreditation according to EC17025 and the implementation of various research projects combined into a research programme "Avian Pathology". Establishing two units for poultry and fish medicine completed the reorganisation of the clinic within the Department for Farm Animals and Veterinary Public Health which he is heading since 2008.

Michael has authored approximately 140 primary research papers, mainly in avian pathology, virology and parasitology. His research is supported by the poultry industry, the Austrian Science Fund, EU, and national Ministries. In 2014 he started a Christian Doppler Laboratory for Innovative Poultry Vaccine, a partnership with vaxxinoa and Aviagen. He holds a visiting appointment at the University of Veterinary and Pharmaceutical Sciences Brno, Czech Republic. He is associate editor of Avian Pathology and member of the editorial board of Avian Diseases. He has supervised numerous PhD and doctoral students and acts as an external reviewer for different grant agencies, journals and universities. He is a founding member and was the first president of the European College for Poultry Veterinary Science (ECPVS).

His research focuses on various pathogens ranging from parasites (*Histomonas meleagridis*) to viruses (Fowl aviadenovirus). To establish experimental models which reflect a natural infection are a specific focus of his group, in order to investigate host-pathogen interactions in poultry. The clinic provides a wide range of diagnostic services, from post mortems up to molecular investigations. Already in 2004 the clinic has established an inter-laboratory proficiency test, the first of its kind for poultry pathogens, to compare and evaluate PCRs used to detect *M. gallisepticum* and *M. synoviae*. This activity was recently extended towards detection of IBV.