



**LSMU Veterinary Academy –
90th Anniversary
1936-2026**



**LSMU Faculty of Animal Sciences –
80th Anniversary
1946-2026**

4th International Scientific Conference “Animal Assisted Therapy: Impact on Human Health and Future Prospects”

**4-oji tarptautinė mokslinė konferencija
„Gyvūnų asistuojama terapija – poveikis žmogaus sveikatai ir ateities perspektyvos“**

**Conference venue
Lithuanian University of Health Sciences Faculty of Animal Sciences,
Tilžės str. 18, LT-47181 Kaunas, Lithuania (Auditorium VSF110)**

October 22-23, 2026

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The Conference is organized by the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences Faculty of Animal Sciences, together with the LSMU Animal Science Institute and the Division of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences



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Mindaugas Sėjūnas, LSMU Faculty of Animal Sciences
Prof. dr. Aleksandr Bulatov, LSMU Faculty of Animal Sciences
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PROGRAM 22/10/2026

Auditorium VSF110, Tilžės str. 18, LT-47181 Kaunas, Lithuania

09.00-09.30 Registration

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

09.30-09.50 OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

09.50-10.10 PLENARY LECTURE „Animals Supporting Human Health and Wellbeing - Current Evidence and Future Perspectives“, Lina Anskienė (speaker), Vaiva Kairienė, Gediminas Anskis; Department of Animal Breeding, Veterinary Academy, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania.

10.10-10.40 Coffee Break (Auditorium VSF102)

Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kristina Morkūnienė,
Institute of Biological Systems and Genetics Research, Faculty of Animal Sciences, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania

10.40-11.00 PLENARY LECTURE „Restricted Agency under Human Management: Implications for Companion Dog Welfare“, (*remotely*) Agnieszka Gryniewicz (invited speaker); Faculty of Psychology, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland.

11.00-11.20 PLENARY LECTURE „The Role of the Dog and Human-Dog Relationship in Studying Well-Being Signals in Autism“, Luisa Di Biagio (invited speaker), Rebecca Di Biagio, Filippo Di Biagio, Rosalba Villa; Associazione Culturale “Centro Cinofilo LA MADONNINA”/ANILDD; La Cura delle Parole, Milan, Italy.

11.20-11.40 PLENARY LECTURE „Beyond the Clinic Walls: The Potential Benefits of Equine-Assisted Learning“, (*remotely*) Tory Candea (invited speaker), Gwen Scott Ruttencutter, Mary-Katherine Mathews; Georgia Southern University, Savannah; Valdosta State University, Valdosta; Georgia, United States.

11.40-11.50 „Transportation of Exotic Animals: Biological Challenges and Animal Welfare Considerations“, Gerardas Paškevičius (speaker), Vilma Vilienė; Ecologist / herpetologist; Institute of Animal Rearing Technologies, Veterinary Academy, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania.

11.50-12.00 „Equine Well-Being in Active Service: Applying the Positive Association Methodology and EvaSE Protocol in Non-Conditioned Equestrian Sessions“, (*remotely*) Carlos Ganzabal Cuenca (speaker); Physical education and expert in equine assisted activities, iPoney Outdoors Spaces, Zuia, Álava, Spain.

12.00-12.10 „Beyond Fur and Feathers: Exploring The Potential of Invertebrates in Animal-Assisted Interventions“, Rasa Kirkaitė (speaker); Lithuanian Zoological Gardens, Kaunas, Lithuania.

12.10-12.20 „Beyond a Suitable Dog: How Handler-Dog Compatibility Shapes Welfare and Safety in Canine-Assisted Interventions“, Monika Nutautaitė (speaker), Vilma Vilienė, Asta Racevičiūtė-Stupelienė, Iolanda Altomonte and Mindaugas Sėjūnas; Institute of Animal Rearing Technologies, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania; Department of Veterinary Sciences, University of Pisa, Pisa, Italy.

12.20-12.40 „Legame Invisible: Animal-Assisted Interventions Through the Language of Film“, Martina Gallini (speaker), Nicola Bozzo, Chiara Rebolino, Lorenzo Urgesi, Massimo Scarzi; Animal-Assisted Interventions; Centro Veterinario Scarzi, Genoa, Italy.

12.40-12.50 „Physiological Responses of Horses to Exercise under Different Seasonal and Thermal Conditions“, (*remotely*) Ivan Imrich, Stanislav Zafko (speaker), Eva Mlyneková; Institute of Animal Husbandry, Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Nitra, Slovakia.

12.50-13.00 „Early Selection and Preparation of Dogs for Animal-Assisted Interventions: A Behavioural and Developmental Approach“, Mindaugas Sėjūnas (speaker), Monika Nutautaitė; Institute of Animal Rearing Technologies, Faculty of Animal Sciences, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania.

13.00-13.30 Coffee Break (Auditorium VSF102)

Moderator: Dr. Lina Anskienė

Department of Animal Breeding, Faculty of Animal Sciences, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania

13.30-13.40 „Studying the Origin of the Human-Dog Symbiosis: First Italian Protocol for Training and Working Dogs for Autism and Deafness, and Others Important Elements Emerged“, Luisa Di Biagio (speaker), Rebecca Di Biagio, Filippo Di Biagio, Rosalba Villa, Simona Di Leo Boato, Vincenzo De Laurenzi, Viviene Lopez, Rodrigo Bejarano, Eleonora Arata, Viviana Martelli; Associazione Culturale “Centro Cinofilo LA MADONNINA”/ANILDD; La Cura delle Parole; University “G.D’Annunzio”, Chieti; Agricolture MInistry of Cape Verde; Comité Paralimpic of Cape Verde, Italy.

13.40-13.50 „Acute Cardiovascular Responses of Adolescents During a Hippotherapy Session“, (*remotely*) Eva Mlyneková, Magdaléna Zafková (speaker), Marko Halo, Ivan Imrich, Stanislav Zafko, Monika Šmondřková; Institute of Animal Husbandry, Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Nitra, Slovakia.

13.50-14.00 „Therapeutic Relationship in Equine-Assisted Therapy: Professional Insights“, (*remotely*) Viktorija Palubeckienė (speaker); Public institution “Auksinė kumelytė”, Vilnius, Lithuania.

14.00-14.10 „When Touch is Stressful: Acute Endocrine and Behavioral Responses of Domestic Rabbits to Unfamiliar Human Handling“, (*remotely*) Michaela Součková, Martina Frühauf Kolářová, Lucie Příbylová (speaker), Katarína Kováčová, Michal Zeman; Department of Ethology and Companion Animal Science, Faculty of Agrobiological Sciences, Food and Natural Resources, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Prague, Czechia.

14.10-14.20 „Behavioural Suitability of Llamas and Alpacas for Animal-Assisted Therapy“, Ugnė Rainė (speaker), Asta Racevičiūtė-Stupelienė, Agnė Žūkaitė, Kristina Šataitė, Urtė Pučkoriūtė, Marija Galkina, Monika Nutautaitė, Vilma Vilienė; Institute of Animal Rearing Technologies, Veterinary Academy, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania.

14.20-14.30 „Assessment Of Equine *Longissimus Dorsi* Mechanical Properties Before and After Hippotherapy Study Protocol“, (*remotely*) Kristina Žemgulienė, Laura Žalienė (speaker); Department of Holistic Medicine and Rehabilitation, Faculty of Health Sciences, Klaipėda University, Klaipėda, Lithuania.

14.30-14.40 „Application of Essential Oils and Herbal Substances for Supplementary Ectoparasite Control in Dogs: Scientific Evidence and Practical Application Possibilities“, Jolita Plepienė, Ugnė Pliašė (speaker); SMK aukštoji mokykla, Klaipėda; Faculty of Pharmacy, Lithuanian university of health Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania.

14.40-14.50 „Hydrogel Dressing Enriched with Camel Milk and Vitamin E for Wounds Associated with Hyperglycaemic Conditions – Preparation and Characterization“, (*remotely*) Dominika Majcher (speaker), Piotr Szatkowski, Justyna Gogola-Mruk, Zuzanna Flis, Kamila Kozłowska-Tomczyk, Anna Ptak, Jacek Grzyb, Kinga Pielichowska, Tomasz Misztal, Paulius Matusevičius, Edyta Molik; Department of Glass Technology and Amorphous Coatings, Faculty of Materials Science and Ceramics, AGH University of Krakow; Department of Animal Biotechnology, Faculty of Animal Science, University of Agriculture in Krakow; Laboratory of Physiology and Toxicology of Reproduction, Institute of Zoology and Biomedical Research, Faculty of Biology, Jagiellonian University, Krakow; Department of Microbiology and Biomonitoring, Faculty of Agriculture and Economics, University of Agriculture in Krakow; The Kielanowski Institute of Animal Physiology and Nutrition, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland; Department of Animal Science, Veterinary Academy of Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania

14.50-15.00 „Evolution of the Application of Equine-Assisted Therapy (EAT) Strategies and Techniques Over Thirty Years of Work in Italy: Direct Experience from the ReSaBe Cooperative Reality“, Benedetta Nesti, Fulvio D’Alberto, Luisa Di Biagio (speaker); Cooperativa ReSaBe, Pianella; Associazione Culturale “Centro Cinofilo LA MADONNINA”/ANILDD, Pianella, Italy.

15.00-15.10 „Fish-Derived Bioactive Lipids and Human Health: ATR-FTIR Authentication of Fish Oil and Future Perspectives within Animal-Assisted and One Health Approaches“, (*remotely*) Dijana Blazekovikj-Dimovska (speaker), Fatos Rexhepi; Faculty of Biotechnical Sciences, University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Bitola, North Macedonia; Faculty of Food Technology, University "Isa Boletini", Mitrovica, Kosovo.

15.10-15.20 „Becoming the Clinician: How Equine-Assisted Learning May Impact Professional Identity“, (*remotely*) Tory Candea (speaker), Mary-Katherine Mathews; Georgia Southern University, Savannah, Georgia, United States.

15.20-15.30 „Nutrition and Risk of Zoonoses in Animal-Assisted Therapy Dogs, Public Health Challenges and Control Strategies a Literature Review“, (*remotely*) Živilė Sadauskaitė (speaker), Rolandas Stankevičius; Department of Animal Nutrition, Faculty of Animal Sciences, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania.

15.30-15.40 „Visual and Neurobiological ASPECTs of Animal-Assisted Therapy“, Natalija Bulatova, Aleksandr Bulatov (speaker), Laimutis Kučinskas; Laboratory of Visual Neurophysiology, Institute of Biological Systems and Genetics Research, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania.

15.40-15.50 „Immersive Technologies as an Adjunct to Hippotherapy: A Research Protocol for Evaluating VR Visualization for Spatial Perception and Motor Planning Development“, (*remotely*) Liubov Kolesnikova (speaker); Aphrodite Hills Riding Club Ltd, Kouklia, Cyprus.

15.50-16.00 „Evaluation of Dog Breed Choice Criteria Among People Living in Different Residential Areas“, Renata Japertienė (speaker), Irma Poškutė; Department of Animal Breeding, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Faculty of Animal Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania.

16.00-16.30 Coffee Break (Auditorium VSF102)

16.30-16.40 Summary of the Conference, Conclusions

PROGRAM 23/10/2026

OneDrive link to poster presentations (October 23) will be provided to registered participants

„The Karpman Drama Triangle in Human–Animal Interaction: Potential Risks to Human and Animal Welfare“, Aliona Krištopaitienė (presenter); LSMU, Kaunas, Lithuania.

„Assessment of the Personality Traits of Therapy Cats Using Fe-BARQ: A Generational Comparison“, Daniela Hypšová (presenter); Nezávislý chovatelský klub and International Feline Activities & Behavior Association, Mladá Boleslav, Czech Republic.

„Are Laying Hens Suitable for Animal-Assisted Therapy?“, Terézia Hegerová (presenter), Gabriela Miháliková, Martin Fik, Peter Juhás; Department of Animal Husbandry, Faculty of Agrobiology and Food Resources, Slovak University of Agriculture, Nitra, Slovakia.

„Beyond Breed: Early Temperament Assessment of Puppies for Dog-Assisted Therapy“, Katarzyna Kazimierska (presenter), Angelika Cieśla; Department of Animal Sciences, Faculty of Biotechnology and Animal Sciences, West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin, Szczecin, Poland.

„Reptile Welfare in Animal-Assisted Interventions: Current Evidence and Future Research Directions“, Róbert Kirchner (presenter), Jaroslav Andreji, Martin Fik; Institute of Animal Husbandry, Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Nitra, Slovakia.

„Can Genomics Improve Animal-Assisted Therapy? Opportunities and Ethical Challenges in Selecting Future Therapy Dogs“, Nicola Oster (presenter), Ewa Czerniawska-Piątkowska, Inga Kowalewska, Martyna Muszyńska; Department of Animal Science; Department of Genetics, West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin, Szczecin, Poland.

„Human–Honey Bee Interactions and Mental Wellbeing: A One Welfare Perspective“, Jolita Šarkauskienė (presenter); Institute of Animal Rearing Technologies, Faculty of Animal Sciences, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Veterinary Academy, Kaunas, Lithuania.

„Expression of Aggression Among Riders in Different Equestrian Disciplines and Its Implications for Equine Welfare“, Ugnė Šveistytė (presenter), Šarūnas Šniras, Rūta Šveistienė; Lithuanian Sport University; Animal Science Institute of Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania.

„The Influence of Treadmill Locomotion on the Movement Mechanics of Dachshunds“, Martin Fik (presenter), Jaroslav Andreji, Róbert Kirchner, Terézia Hegerová, Ladislav Toth; Institute of Animal Husbandry, Faculty of Agrobiology and Food Resources; Department of Electrical Engineering, Automation and Informatics, Faculty of Engineering, Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Nitra, Slovak Republic.

„Indicators Of Welfare in Dog-Assisted Interventions. Is The Therapy Dog Really Enjoying the Session?“, Kamila Kaszycka (presenter), Małgorzata Goleman, Wanda Krupa; Department of Ethology and Wildlife Management, University of Life Sciences in Lublin, Lublin, Poland.

„Changes in the Social Behavior of Working Dogs in AAI: 29 Years Observations in Assistance and Service Projects and Training Courses in Five Countries on Three Continents“, Luisa Di Biagio (presenter), Rebecca Di Biagio, Filippo Di Biagio, Rosalba Villa; Associazione Culturale “Centro Cinofilo LA MADONNINA”/ANILDD; La Cura delle Parole, Milan, Italy.

„The Role of the Horse in Applying Special Education Parameters for Basic Neurological Organization for People with Disabilities“, Luisa Di Biagio (presenter), Fulvio D’Alberto, Benedetta Nesti, Rosalba Villa, Vincenzo De Laurenzi; Associazione Culturale “Centro Cinofilo LA MADONNINA”/ANILDD; Cooperativa ReSaBe; La Cura delle Parole; University “G.D’Annunzio”, Chieti, Italy.

„The Use of Bee Products in Veterinary Practice: Links to the Professional Experience of Veterinarians“, Meda Katauskaitė (presenter), Šarūnė Sorkytė, Gintarė Vaičiulienė, Neringa Sutkevičienė; Animal Reproduction Laboratory, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Veterinary Academy, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania.

„Associations Between Owner-Selected Feeding and Dental Care Practices and Oral Health in Dogs“, Jūratė Rudejevienė (presenter), Birutė Karvelienė; Dr. L.Kriauceliunas Small Animal Clinic, Veterinary Academy, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania.

„Monitoring-Guided Use of Harris’s Hawks for Non-Lethal Pigeon Management on a Livestock Farm“, Lukáš Molčani (presenter), Peter Juhás, Terézia Hegerová; Faculty of Agrobiology and Food Resource, Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Nitra, Slovakia.

„Predispositions of Cats from Various Environments to Animal Therapy“, Aleksandra Garbiec (presenter), Anna Grodecka; Department of Animal Ethology and Wildlife Management, University of Life Sciences in Lublin, Lublin, Poland.