

3rd International Scientific Conference “Animal Assisted Therapy: Impact on Human Health and Future Prospects”

3-ioji tarptautinė mokslinė konferencija

“Gyvūnų asistuojama terapija – poveikis žmogaus sveikatai ir ateities perspektyvos“

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Conference venue

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

16-17 OCTOBER 2025

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



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PROGRAM, OCTOBER 16, 2025,

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ORAL PRESENTATIONS

09.00-09.30 Registration (Auditorium VSF102)

09.30-9.40 OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE (Auditorium VSF110)

Moderator: dr. Monika Nutautaitė

9.40-10.00 Plenary lecture „The Preliminary Results of Survey About Fish Welfare Status on Selected Rainbow Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) Farms in Serbia”, **Invited speaker: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miroslav Urosevic**, Marijana Rodic, Jasna Grabic, Mariusz Szmyt, Marko Lazovic (University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Agriculture, Serbia; University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Faculty of Animal Bioengineering, Dep. of Ichthyology and Aquaculture, Poland).

10.00-10.20 Plenary lecture „Horses and Human Welfare in Equine Assisted Services”, **Invited speaker: Vera Lantelme-Faisan** (HETI President, The Federation of Horses in Education and Therapy International AISBL, Belgium).

10.20-10.40 Plenary lecture „Direct Testimony of an Autistic Woman Who Uses Canine Behavior Reading Skills as a Translator of Neurotypical Human Behavior” **Invited speakers: Luisa Di Biagio**, Rebecca Di Biagio, Rosalba Villa (Cascina Blu Onlus, ANILDD; Cascina Blu Onlus; La Cura delle Parole, Italy).

10.40-11.00 Plenary lecture „Trust and Comfort: Dogs in Animal-Assisted Therapy”, **Invited speakers: Jonas Valančius** (MB'Vilniaus Reksas' (Dog training school 'Reksas'), Lithuania).

11.00-11.10 „Equine-Assisted Therapy: A Transformative Approach to Emotional and Social Well-being”, Rasa Vėjelytė (Equine-assisted therapy educator, Equine centre “Žirgų takais”, Lithuania).

11.10-11.20 „Performance and Welfare Assessment of Horses from Diverse Stud Farms”, **Laura Kubiliūtė**, Asta Racevičiūtė-Stupelienė, Monika Nutautaitė, Vilma Vilienė (LSMU Faculty of Animal Sciences, Institute of Animal Rearing Technologies, Lithuania).

11.20-11.30 „Animals in Education: From Eligibility Criteria to the Moral Dilemma Between Animal Welfare and Public Education”, Egidijus Praspaliauskas (Lithuanian Zoo, senior educational program coordinator, Lithuania).

11.30-11.40 „The Professional's Perspective: How Do We Benefit Working with Horses?”, Viktorija Palubeckienė (Public institution “Auksinė kumelytė”, Lithuania).

11.40-11.50 „One Health Conception Overcoming Cancer: The Prospect of Interdisciplinary Use of Dog and Human Research Methods in Medicine”, Assist. Mindaugas Sėjūnas (LSMU Faculty of Animal Sciences, Institute of Animal Rearing Technologies, Lithuania).

11.50-12.00 „The Accessibility of Migrants to Equine-Assisted Therapy for Trauma Treatment Associated With PTSD”, Caroline Erviksæter (Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Department of Health and Care Sciences, Norway).

12.00-12.10 „The First Survey of Fish Welfare Status on Selected Cyprinid and Rainbow Trout Farms in Bosnia And Herzegovina: The Preliminary Results”, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miroslav Urosevic, Jasna Grabic, Nebojsa Savic, Beata Abramowicz, Mariusz Szmyt (University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Agriculture, Serbia; University of Banja Luka, Faculty of Agriculture, Bosnia and Herzegovina; University of Life Sciences in Lublin, Department and Clinic of Animal Internal Diseases, Poland; University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Faculty of Animal Bioengineering, Poland).

12.10-12.20 „Mitoquinol Modulates Liver Responses to Long-Acting Methylprednisolone Acetate in Dogs”, Jevgenija Kondratjeva, Madara Nikolajenko, Aija Ilgaza (Preclinical Institution, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Latvia).

12.20-12.30 „Canine therapy: Working Mechanisms and Dog Welfare During Sessions”, Skaistė Skibiniauskienė (Head of Dog training center GABO, specialist of dog training and behavior, Lithuania).

12.30-13.00 Coffee Break (Auditorium VSF102)

Moderator: lect. dr. Kristina Morkūnienė

13.00-13.10 „Animal Assisted Therapy in Prisons”, Barbara Bellettini (President of Do Re Miao, Italy).

13.10-13.20 „Reptiles and Aquarium Fish as Unconventional Partners in Animal-Assisted Therapy”, Ing. PhD Róbert Kirchner, Jaroslav Andreji, Martin Fik (Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Institute of Animal Husbandry, Slovakia).

13.20-13.30 „Impact of Pet Ownership on Mental Health Among Cancer Patients: A Systematic Review”, Rithika Menon, Saranya T S (School of Liberal Studies, CMR University, India; Clinical Psychology Department, School of Liberal Studies, CMR University, India).

13.30-13.40 „Ancient Sound Healing and its Influence on Equine Psychology”, Neda Petrūnaitė, Vilma Vilienė (LSMU Faculty of Animal Sciences, Institute of Animal Rearing Technologies, Lithuania).

13.40-14.00 Plenary lecture „Apitherapy – A Complementary and Alternative Health Care Service Based on Scientific and Practical Research”. Invited speaker: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Agila Daukšienė, Povilas Rimkus (Institute of Animal Rearing Technologies, Apiculture Center, LSMU Faculty of Animal Sciences; Department of Anatomy and Physiology, LSMU Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Lithuania; President of Lithuanian Apitherapy Society, Lithuania).

14.00-14.20 Plenary lecture „Animal-Assisted Interventions (dogs) to Relieve Stress in Oncology Patients in Waiting Areas and Chemotherapy Rooms at Bellaria Hospital, Bologna”, Invited

speaker: Dr. Marina Casciani (Project Manager and Intervention Coordinator Valentina Cambria – Dog Handler Francesca Arduini – RAA); Dr. Francesca Coltra (Veterinarian, Specialist in Animal-Assisted Interventions, Italy).

14.20-14.30 „Heavy metal levels in search and rescue dogs' hair”, Klaudia Kaliszyk, Justyna Wojtaś, Kamila Kaszycka, Bengü Bilgiç, Duygu Tarhan, İbrahim Ertuğrul Yalçın, Piotr Czyżowski, Mirosław Karpiński, Mehmet Erman (Department of Animal Ethology and Wildlife Management, University of Life Sciences in Lublin, Poland; Department of Internal Medicine, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Istanbul University-Cerrahpasa, Avcılar, Turkey; Bahcesehir University, School of Medicine, Department of Biophysics, Turkey; Bahcesehir University, Faculty of Engineering and Natural Sciences, Department of Civil Engineering, Turkey).

14.30-14.40 „The Physiological Effects of Hippotherapy on the Human Cardiovascular System”, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Eva Mlyneková, Marko Halo, Ivan Imrich, Marko Halo, Monika Šmondrková (Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Faculty of Agrobiological Sciences, Institute of Animal Husbandry, Slovakia).

14.40-14.50 „Ethical aspects and animal welfare in the field of human health promotion. A literature review”, Assist. Živilė Sadauskaitė, Rolandas Stankevičius (LSMU Faculty of Animal Sciences, Department of Animal Nutrition, Lithuania).

14.50-15.00 „Dog Inclusion in Institutions Operating in Klaipėda City: Analysis of Employee Well-being, Customer Experience and Reputation of Organizations”, Assist. Ugnė Nedzinskaitė, Gabrielė Lečaitė-Uznienė (LSMU Faculty of Animal Sciences, Department of Animal Nutrition, Lithuania).

15.00-15.30 Coffee Break (Auditorium VSF102)

15.30-15.50 Plenary lecture „Welfare and Safety of Working Horses in Film Production”, Invited speaker: Gerda Janeliūnaitė (The Devils Horsemen, The Wychwood Stud, Mursley, United Kingdom.).

15.50-16.00 „Beyond Welfarism: Reimagining Human-Equine Relationships Through Ethical Awareness and Sustainable Practices”, Carlos Ganzabal Cuenca (Physical education and expert in Equine Assisted Activities, Spain).

16.00-16.10 „Effects of Castration Mandate for Psychiatric Support Dog Certification: Analysis in the Psychoemotional, Clinical and Cultural Fields, and in the Zootechnical Field: Analysis of the effects of a twenty-year project in Italy”, Luisa Di Biagio, Rebecca Di Biagio, Rosalba Villa (Cascina Blu Onlus, ANILDD; Cascina Blu Onlus; La Cura delle Parole, Italy).

16.10-16.20 „The Effects of Medicinal Leeches on the Human Body and Their Application Principles in Complementary and Alternative Healthcare Practices and Veterinary Medicine”, Tamara Bundzienė (University of Klaipėda, Lithuania).

16.20-16.30 „The Importance of Animals in The Narrative Lives of Traumatized Children and Their Play”, Kate Nicoll (LCSW, RPT Founder Emeritus, Soul Friends, Inc - Animal Assisted Therapy Programs of CT, graduate Smith College, Northampton, MA; Field Supervisor for UCONN USA, Quinnipiac University, Hamden, CT); Jean Ruggiero (MSW Graduate Student Quinnipiac University, Hamden, CT); Rebecca Mangs, LMSW, Social Worker, Soul Friends, Inc. ,USA).

16.30-16.40 „Practitioners’ Perspectives of Equine-Assisted Services: A Qualitative Study from the UK and Ireland”, Rita Seery, Lisa Graham-Wisener, Deborah L. Wells (Animal Behaviour Centre, School of Psychology, Queen’s University Belfast, UK).

16.40-16.50 „The Role of Farm Animals in Modern Recreational Activities: Benefits and Challenges”, Jurgita Dailidavičienė, Lina Merkevičienė, Elena Bartkienė (Department of Anatomy and Physiology; Institute of Animals Rearing Technology; Department of Food Safety and Quality, LSMU, Lithuania).

16.50-17.10 Plenary lecture „The Therapeutic Role of Cats in Supporting Terminally Ill Patients”, Invited speaker: Martina Gallini (Animal-Assisted Interventions, Italy).

17.10-17.20 „Learning with the Herd: Developing First-Year Students’ Noncognitive Skills through Equine-Assisted Learning”, Assist. Prof. Gwen Scott Ruttencutter, Kate Warner, Tory Candea (Valdosta State University, Georgia, USA; Georgia Southern University, Georgia, USA).

17.20-17.30 „Manes and Memories: An Equine-Assisted Program Bridging Neurodegenerative Care and Graduate Clinical Training”, Dr. Tory Candea, Kate Warner, Gwen Scott Ruttencutter (Georgia Southern University, Georgia, USA; Valdosta State University, Georgia, USA).

PROGRAM, OCTOBER 17, 2025,

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

OneDrive link to poster presentations (October 17) will be provided to registered participants

- 1. „Equine Studies and Communication Research”,** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lina Anskienė, Ugnė Baidokaitė (LSMU Faculty of Animal Sciences, Department of Animal Breeding, Lithuania).
- 2. „Integrating Bovines into Animal-Assisted Activities: Selection and Training Case Report”,** Lectr. Tautvilė Šukytė, Eglė Gaisrytė-Jurkšienė (LSMU Veterinary Academy, Lithuania).
- 3. „Experiences and Best Practices of Animal-Assisted Education at Karaliaus Mindaugas Vocational Training Center”,** Viktorija Urbanavičienė (Karaliaus Mindaugo Vocational Training Center, Department of Animal Care, Lithuania).
- 4. „Stress Reactions in Hearing and Deaf Cats During Feline Therapy Sessions”,** Dr. Justyna Wojtaś, Weronika Cwalińska, Klaudia Kaliszyk, Kamila Kaszycka (Department of Animal Ethology and Wildlife Management, University of Life Sciences in Lublin, Poland).
- 5. „Fit for Therapy: Requirements for Dogs in Animal-Assisted Therapy according to The Polish Society of Kynotherapy”,** Dr. Kamila Kaszycka, Małgorzata Goleman, Wanda Krupa, Justyna Wojtaś (University of Life Sciences in Lublin, Department of Animal Ethology and Wildlife Management, Subdepartment of Animal Welfare and Behaviour, Poland).
- 6. „The Effect of Two Commercial Preparations on The Occurrence of Ticks in Dogs”,** Dr. Martin Fik, Jaroslav Andreji, Radovan Kasarda, Anton Kováčik (Faculty of Agrobiology and Food Resources: SUA, Slovakia; Faculty of Biotechnology and Food Sciences, SUA, Slovakia).
- 7. „Investigation of DRD4 Gene Polymorphism and Its Association with Canine Behavior”,** Lect. dr. Kristina Morkūnienė, Renata Bižienė, Justina Dambraukaitė, Nijolė Pečiulaitienė, Ramutė Mišeikienė, Viltė Akstinaitė (Institute of Biological Systems and Genetic Research, LSMU Veterinary Academy, Lithuania).
- 8. „Welfare and Efficiency of Service Dogs: The Role of Sex Differences in Task Performance”,** Viktorija Kochtovė, Artūras Kochtovas, Asta Racevičiūtė-Stupelienė (State Border Guard Service under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania; Lithuanian Armed Forces Military Police under the National Defence of the Republic of Lithuania; Institute of Animal Rearing Technologies, LSMU Veterinary Academy, Lithuania).
- 9. „Service Dogs in Search Tasks: Performance, Welfare and Future Perspectives”,** Artūras Kochtovas, Viktorija Kochtovė, Asta Racevičiūtė-Stupelienė (Lithuanian Armed Forces Military

Police under the National Defence of the Republic of Lithuania; State Border Guard Service under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania; Institute of Animal Rearing Technologies, LSMU Veterinary Academy, Lithuania).

10. „Intervention in a Residential Day Center for Adults with Disabilities in Italy: Strategies and Results”, Dr. Luisa L. Di Biagio, Rebecca Di Biagio, Rosalba Villa (Cascina Blu Onlus, ANILDD; Cascina Blu Onlus; La Cura delle Parole, Italy).

11. „Sustainability of the Role of the Relationship with the Service and Psychiatric Assistance Dog in User Accessibility: Analysis and Comparison Between the Situations in Italy, Portugal, Sweden, UK, USA and Cape Verde (Africa)”, Dr. Luisa L. Di Biagio, Rebecca Di Biagio, Rosalba Villa (Cascina Blu Onlus, ANILDD; Cascina Blu Onlus; La Cura delle Parole, Italy).

12. „Analysis of the Relationship Between Microclimate Conditions and Flight Parameters in Falconry-conditioned Saker Falcons (*Falco Cherrug*)”, Terézia Hegerová, Peter Juhás (Institute of Animal Husbandry, Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitre (SUA), Slovakia).

13. „The Relationship Between Physical Activity and Obesity in Canine Health”, Lect. dr. Jūratė, Rudejevienė, Ramutė, Mišeikienė (Dr. L.Kriauceliunas Small Animal Clinic, LSMU Veterinary; Institute of Animal Rearing Technologies, LSMU Veterinary Academy, Lithuania).

14. „Effect of Nutrition on Hoof Health in Horses – Key to a Long Career as Therapy Horse”, Prof. Dr. Paulius Matusevičius, Ugnė Nedzinskaitė, Rolandas Stankevičius, Bogumiła Pilarczyk, Renata Pilarczyk, Piotr Sablik, Augustė Bauraitė (Department of Animal Nutrition, LSMU Veterinary Academy, Lithuania; Department of Animal Reproduction Biotechnology and Environmental Hygiene, Faculty of Biotechnology and Animal Husbandry, West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin, Poland; Laboratory of Biostatistics, Bioinformatics and Animal Research, Faculty of Biotechnology and Animal Husbandry, West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin, Poland).

15. „The Influence of the Owner's Age on the Choice of Dog Breed”, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Renata Japertienė, Irma Poškutė (LSMU Faculty of Animal Sciences, Department of Animal Breeding, Lithuania).

Technical tour for participants of the oral presentation will take place at the Animal Science Institute of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (Baisogala, Lithuania).

Departure from Tilžės St. 18, Kaunas

11.00 - 15.00 During the visit, you will learn about activities and research at the LSMU Animal Science Institute (Baisogala, Lithuania), meet and interact with various farm animals.