



In this special edition of the July 2019 HSBLAS Newsletter we have the honor to present interviews from the FELASA 40 years' Anniversary Award Winners:

- **Werner Nicklas** - the FELASA 40 Years Anniversary Scientific Award for his scientific merits.
- **Patri Vergara** - the FELASA 40 Years Anniversary Educational Award for her development of courses and teaching programmes and her pedagogical vision.
- **Camilla Bengtsson** and **Maria Eriksson** - the FELASA 40 Years Anniversary Technical Award for their initiatives towards the furtherance of animal technology.
- **David Anderson** - the FELASA 40 Years Anniversary Communicational Award for his accomplishment regarding communication and transparency of laboratory animal science to the public.



**Werner
Nicklas**

The FELASA 40 Years Anniversary Scientific Award for his scientific merits.

DVM, DipECLAM

Formerly: German Cancer Research Centre, Heidelberg, Germany, retired.

1. Please give us a short description of the work leading up to the award.

I was in the lucky situation that I could work in the same field for a long time. After few years at the Institute for Microbiology at the Veterinary School in Hannover (Germany) I started working in the Central Animal Facility at the German Cancer Research Centre in Heidelberg (Germany) in 1979 and retired in 2015. In my first years many infectious agents were widespread in laboratory rodents. Mycoplasma infections were common as well as many different ecto- and endoparasites. I saw mousepox and other viral and bacterial infections. My primary task was to establish a diagnostic laboratory to detect causes for disease and even death of our rodents. Especially during the first 25 years I could bring practical experience from the animal facility together with findings from my diagnostic work. We were a good team with experienced and motivated lab technicians. Many developments were

only possible because there has been a fruitful cooperation with researchers from our institution and with external specialists. First of all, I had service functions in the diagnostic laboratory and many other routine tasks like all of us who are working in the animal facility of research institutions. However, I always got the opportunity to further develop the diagnostic laboratory and to expand the panel of tests and agents, adapting them to the needs of the facility. Although it may seem to be “only” routine work, it has been interesting and challenging all the time. For example, whenever a test had been developed, new methods became available, or new agents were detected. I started with diagnosing Mycoplasma and other bacterial infections and ended with multiplex serology and multiplex PCR for a broad panel of agents including murine astrovirus. It seems to me that my work in rodent microbiology and health monitoring over more than 30 years together with activities in various working groups of FELASA were the reason for FELASA to select me for the FELASA 40 Years Anniversary Scientific Award.

2. How do you feel that the field of the award contributes to the goals of FELASA and the advancement of the 3Rs?

Diseases of laboratory rodents were very common worldwide when I started working in laboratory animal medicine. It happened frequently that scientific experiments were terminated by infections and had to be repeated. Especially long-term experiments were sometimes started with higher animal numbers than scientifically necessary because there was a risk that not all

animals would survive the whole period of the experiment. So, the eradication of pathogenic microorganisms contributed a lot to the reduction of animal numbers used in experiments. Also, apathogenic agents leading to silent infections need to be eliminated as far as possible as they may have serious impact on results of animal experiments. Improved microbiological standardisation and harmonisation of health monitoring procedures and reporting as suggested by FELASA health monitoring recommendations therefore contributed to the use of fewer animals for experimentation and better research results by refinement. This is naturally not my merit, but I hope that I could contribute to these advancements.

3. Please share an inspiring moment of your career, either one leading to the award or one you consider critical for your contribution to LAS.

There has not been only one single inspiring moment. The development of our diagnostic laboratory and the permanent adaption to needs has frequently been inspiring and made my work exciting during all the time. I very well remember when we successfully propagated our first virus in cell culture and started producing our own antigens for serology. Another highlight during my first years was diagnosing and, naturally, subsequent eradication of mousepox. Later, it was a great period when multiplex serology could be used step by step for routine serology. These advancements naturally were merits of the whole team, and in these and many other situations we all felt that we had together done a good job.



Patri Vergara

The FELASA 40 Years Anniversary Educational Award for her development of courses and teaching programmes and her pedagogical vision.

DVM, PhD, Dipl.ECLAM
Facultad de Veterinaria
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

1. Please give us a short description of the work leading up to the award.

Basically it was a recognition to my work on Education and Training. I have been organizing LAS courses for scientists at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona for more than 30 years. In addition, I contributed to the FELASA guidelines on education and training (for FELASA category B, and for the FELASA E&T Accreditation system). I was Chair of the FELASA E&T Accreditation Board for 11 years and I was founder member of the European College of Laboratory Animal Medicine (ECLAM).

2. How do you feel that the field of the award contributes to the goals of FELASA and the advancement of the 3Rs?

In the case of education, I think that E&T is a key element to contribute to the 3Rs. In fact, currently the practical totality of researchers in Europe are aware of the 3Rs and that they must be applied when preparing research projects requiring

animal models. The role of FELASA has been crucial since the 1990s. Training the young researchers is an excellent opportunity to introduce in research groups new refined methodologies for handling or sampling. In addition, those courses including Experimental Design give important tools to use the adequate number of animals to obtain solid results.

3. Please share an inspiring moment of your career, either one leading to the award or one you consider critical for your contribution to LAS.

I think that probably my biggest contribution has been to help to consolidate the FELASA E&T Accreditation system. In an international perspective and through the International Council of Laboratory Animal Science (ICLAS), the promotion of training for veterinarians in countries where specialized training is absent and the development of the ICLAS Laboratory Animal Quality Network offering tools to laboratories and institutions to keep and improve the microbiological status and the genetic quality of rodents used in research.



Camilla Bengtsson &

Maria Eriksson

The FELASA 40 Years Anniversary Technical Award for their initiatives towards the furtherance of animal technology.

Researchers/Project Leaders
Chemical and Pharmaceutical Safety, RISE
Research Institutes of Sweden.

1. Please give us a short description of the work leading up to the award.

Since 2015 we have actively worked to reduce the stress levels in laboratory rodents to prepare them for experimental procedures in our toxicology studies. We see our laboratory rodents as our companions and heroes. Without them we would not be where we are today, and as long as we really need to use them in our science, we should do this with great care and work for best possible scientific results, without unnecessary influence of stress, or stress related mistakes.



2. How do you feel that the field of the award contributes to the goals of FELASA and the advancement of the 3Rs?

As FELASA particularly emphasizes on ensuring animal welfare we think our work meets this criterion very well. By using our in-house developed handling and training protocols, we have created a good collaboration with the animals which makes it easier to perform experimental procedures with minimal or no restraint, which has resulted in reduced stressful behaviors and a maintained good social contact with the animals. How we relate to the animals makes a huge difference for their well-being and welfare. By being gentle and loving and considering

individual differences anyone can ensure a better life for our laboratory rodents.

3. Please share an inspiring moment of your career, either one leading to the award or one you consider critical for your contribution to LAS.

In 2016 we had our first oral presentation at Astra Zeneca 3R Awareness week, "Refinement of handling of research animals". We were very nervous that the audience would criticize our way of thinking and working saying that it is too time consuming and difficult to implement. Instead we got standing ovations. This gave us the courage to send an abstract to Scand Las in 2017 and we got an oral presentation, and in 2018 Scand Las board nominated us to The FELASA 40 Years Anniversary Awards.



**David
Anderson**

The FELASA 40 Years Anniversary Communicational Award for his accomplishment regarding communication and transparency of laboratory animal science to the public.

BVMS MVM MRCVS

Vice-President of IAT, immediate Past President of LASA and a current member of LAVA Council.

1. Please give us a short description of the work leading up to the award.

I have worked the last 25 years as a regulator and the last nine years as a Technical Advisor with the European Commission on the implementation of Directive 2010/63/EU. I have been president of LASA, am presently a Vice President of IAT and also a member of Council of the Laboratory Animal Veterinary Association (LAVA). My main work at present is directed at promoting a smooth implementation of the Directive across Europe, in particular promoting the implementation of the 3Rs, speaking at conferences, meeting people, hosting Expert Working Groups, in essence trying to improve the understanding across Europe of all issues regarding animal research within the EU legislative framework.

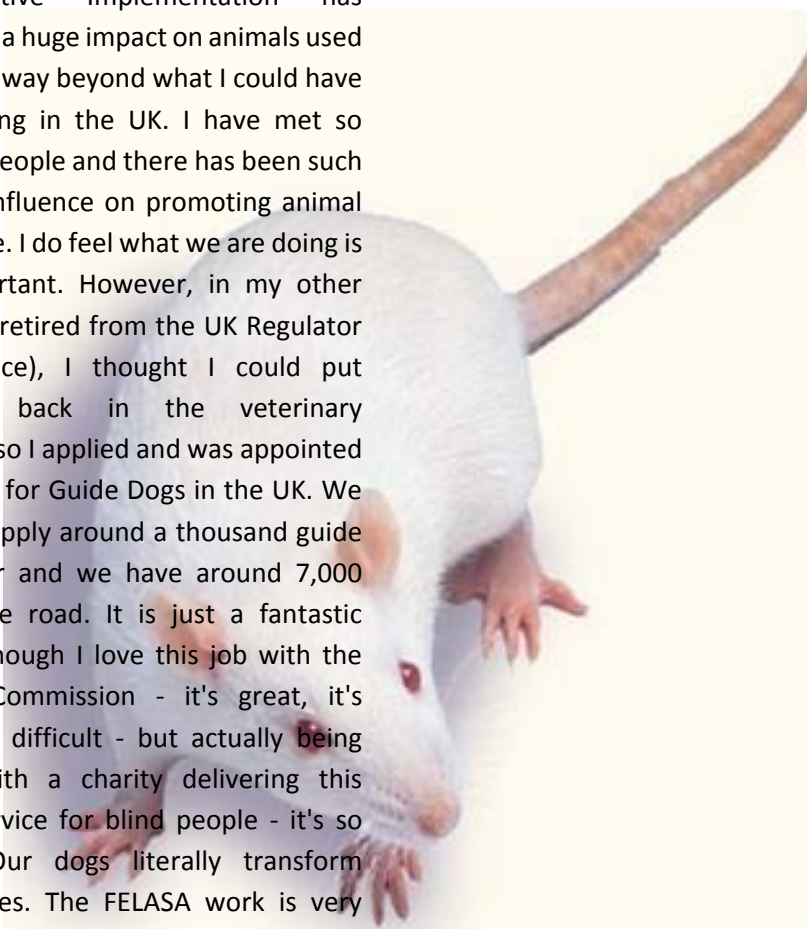
2. How do you feel that the field of the award contributes to the goals of FELASA and the advancement of the 3Rs?

I was surprised and honored to receive the communication award by FELASA because most of my work is behind the scenes, regarding the regulatory field and the implementation of the Directive. So it was very pleasant to be recognized for the work we've done. Within the FELASA framework over the last 3 years, I've been involved in over 40 workshops, trying to spread knowledge of the severity framework and implementation of the 3Rs in projects. I have been in 21 countries. This has been a real opportunity because obviously when you go to these meetings you can cover many topics, make good contacts, resulting in a huge network of contacts. With my Commission work, we have lots of questions and answers coming in, but I think the most important thing is being able to share information and good practice. Probably from the FELASA point

of view they've recognized me most for work on the severity framework.

3. Please share an inspiring moment of your career, either one leading to the award or one you consider critical for your contribution to LAS.

I worked in the UK for many years as a vet, regulator, President of LASA. Joining and working for the European Commission on the Directive Implementation has contributed a huge impact on animals used in research, way beyond what I could have done working in the UK. I have met so many nice people and there has been such a positive influence on promoting animal use and care. I do feel what we are doing is really important. However, in my other life, when I retired from the UK Regulator (Home Office), I thought I could put something back in the veterinary profession, so I applied and was appointed as a trustee for Guide Dogs in the UK. We train and supply around a thousand guide dogs a year and we have around 7,000 dogs on the road. It is just a fantastic charity. Although I love this job with the European Commission - it's great, it's challenging, difficult - but actually being involved with a charity delivering this mobility service for blind people - it's so inspiring. Our dogs literally transform people's lives. The FELASA work is very rewarding, but the impact of the dogs in my other life is just fantastic.



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