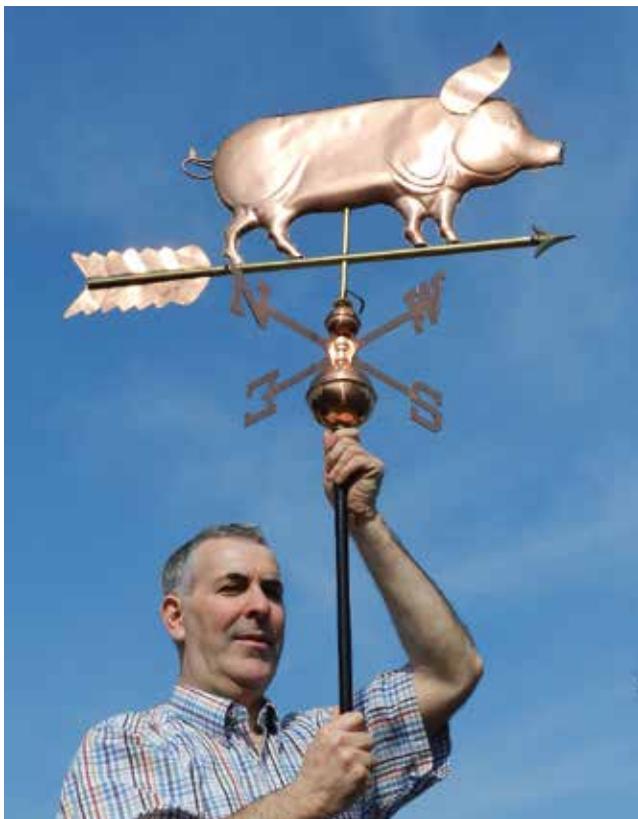


International Pig Veterinary Symposium 2016

Pat Kirwan MVB CertPM, Chairman of the Local Organising Committee, and former President of Veterinary Ireland, presents a detailed preview of the 24th International Pig Veterinary Congress and 8th European Symposium of Porcine Health Management, taking place from June 7-10, 2016, at the Royal Dublin Society (RDS), Dublin



All roads leading to Dublin this year.

The pig veterinary community in Ireland is a small one. Only 20 or so vets are involved in clinical practice in the pig sector. Add to this those involved in industry and those involved in the laboratory service and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) centrally and you probably have 30 'pig vets' on the entire island. Because of this, the arrangement of continuing veterinary education (CVE) events is limited and most of those involved in the pig industry in Ireland would travel elsewhere to attend these events. The International Pig Veterinary Society (IPVS) is the largest event in the pig calendar, consisting of a conference every two years. I was a serial attendee of conferences in Iowa (2002), Hamburg (2004) and Copenhagen (2006). I missed the one in Melbourne in 2000 and the one in Durban in 2008. One thing that I always would have said after attending such an event was – "I wonder could we put on a similar show in Ireland?" Some time between the Durban event and the one to be held in Vancouver in 2010, I made contact with the

professional conference organising company (PCO), MCI, based in Dun Laoghaire. It was interested in underwriting conferences from a number of professional associations with a view to bringing them to Dublin. It had prior experience and success with the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA), hosted by Veterinary Ireland in Dublin in 2008. All they were looking for was interested associations that might be willing to put a bit of effort into securing a bid. I jumped at the opportunity and our first outing was in Vancouver, where our opposition was from Cancun and Barcelona. The experience of making a bid and presenting to a general assembly was fabulous and, though we lost to Cancun marginally in the vote-off, all the heavy lifting in terms of bid preparation, budgeting, personnel and conference format had been done. We came home from Vancouver thinking that we would try once more to submit a bid in Jeju (South Korea) in 2012. The only difference in South Korea was that we only had four Irish delegates in attendance to assist with the bid here, whereas previously we had 15 Irish delegates in Vancouver, two years earlier.

The bid in Jeju was prefaced by the successful World Buiatrics Conference (WBC) bid at the WBC conference in Lisbon a week before we were to depart for South Korea. Our opposition this time was from Beijing and Rio de Janeiro, both worthy opponents and with a lot of local support. 'Needs must' applies to pressurised situations as we donned the green, the feather boa, the leprechaun hats and even a few bars of Molly Malone! Armed with the lessons learned from the failed bid in Vancouver two years previously, Dublin was first past the post with 53% of the votes cast – a fair achievement for a 'minnow' in the pig world.

CHANCE ENCOUNTERS

In advance of the visit to Jeju in South Korea, I enquired as to whether there were any Irish out in South Korea that we might use to support our bid. Someone said that there was an Irish priest out there some time ago but that he may have passed a long time ago. Imagine my surprise, when confronted by two Irishmen at the Irish stand in Jeju – one, the aforementioned but very much alive missionary priest Fr PJ McGlinchey and his colleague Fr Michael Riordan, a 1977 Dublin graduate from the old veterinary college in Ballsbridge. PJ arrived in Jeju in South Korea in the 1950s when Korea was just emerging from the terrors of the Korean War. Originally from Letterkenny, he introduced

structured pig farming to the island, an industry which developed as the basis for the one of the Korean national dishes, Jeju Black Pork. It was one of the original self-help projects that empowered local people on the island to engage in sustainable agriculture practices. Having divested themselves of the pigs to local sustainable farms, the mission commenced an organic farm involved in organic meat and milk production. Later, they commenced a horse-breeding operation in 2003 and introduced the stallion Yehudi, a son of Saddler's Wells, to the island's Isidore Farm via a bequest from the Coolmore operation. All profits from the horse breeding and farming operations are diverted to the local social welfare and sanatorium hospital.

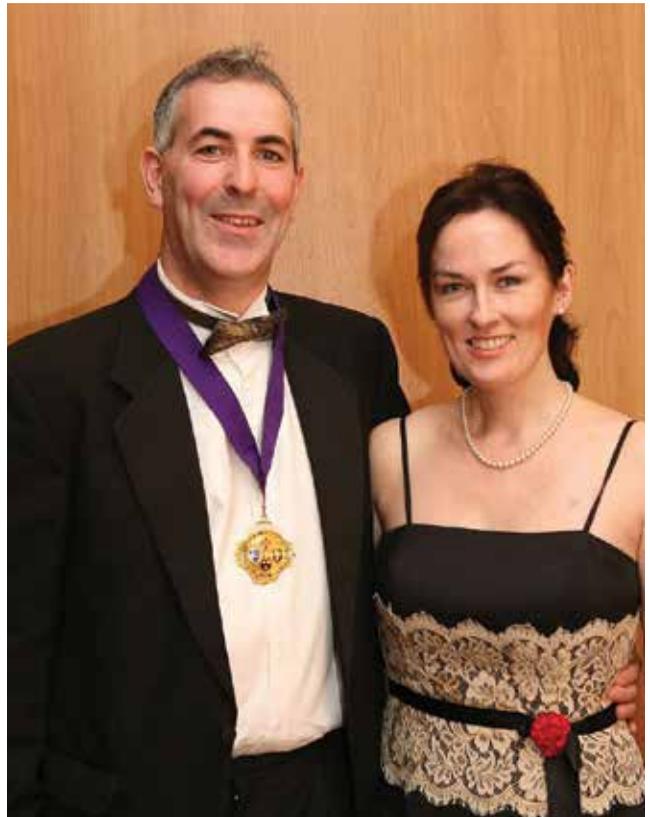
Michael Riordan qualified from UCD as a vet in 1977. His initial Gorta (APSO) contract was for two years but he later joined the Columban Missionary Society (Dalgan Park near Navan). After 18 years working on the Korean mainland he returned to Jeju to be parish priest where he formerly worked as a vet and now, since Fr McGlinchey's retirement six years ago, he is also in charge of the Isidore project. The former president, Mary McAleese, made a historic visit to the island in 2005 where she celebrated the extraordinary work of Fr McGlinchey. A road on the island was also named in honour of Fr McGlinchey's work with the poor. The island of Jeju hosted some of the soccer games during the infamous 'Saipan' World Cup. It has recently been in the news again because of plans by the US to develop an army and navy base on the island amid loads of local protests. I pointed to the work and dedication of both missionary priests in my presentation to the general assembly, a claim that went down well among the audience and may have contributed to our successful bid.

JOINT WBC-IPVS PLATFORM BID

Given that Ireland had won two major farm animal conferences in such a small time and given that both associations were being assisted by the same PCO, I felt that there was a possibility of hosting the two conferences back to back, perhaps with a crossover session on topics that might be of interest to both cattle and pig vets – we would have to be able to learn from each other. There could be mutuality associations with having both conferences back to back and, 'Big Pharma', common to both the IPVS and WBC, would have been delighted with such a unique event. However, after some joint discussions and consultation with the boards of both the WBC and IPVS, the shared platform wasn't to be and we set about arranging and promoting our individual conferences.

ESPHM CONFERENCE COMES TO IRELAND

In the meantime, since the IPVS was last held in Copenhagen in 2006, a new conference had emerged in Europe called the European Symposium on Porcine Health and Management (ESPHM) and it was becoming more popular year on year. I approached the ESPHM with an offer to co-host the conference and they acceded to our request. Hence, the conference that occurs in Dublin



Pat Kirwan MVB CertPM (Veterinary Ireland President 2011) and his wife Allison Kirwan MVB CertPM MRCVS (Irish Pig Health Society President 2014 and 2015).

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this June is a joint conference between the IPVS and the ESPHM.

What do these conferences mean to Ireland and what do they mean to the practising food animal vet in Ireland? Tourism is the biggest winner when such conferences come to Ireland. At the time of going to print the IPVS has advance bookings from over 3,000 delegates. If each of these delegates were to spend €2k-€3k during the course of their visit to Ireland, (not terribly difficult given the cost of hotel rooms in Dublin), then it would mean an injection of €6m-€9m to the national economy. Being in a position to showcase our agricultural development to visiting delegates may also lead to inward agricultural investment in Ireland where there will be long-term economic spin-offs to the conferences being hosted here.

An analysis of the delegates, indicates that almost two out of three will come from outside Europe. This highlights the esteem in which the international delegate holds the IPVS. The attendance compares favourably with attendances at previous IPVS conferences.

The practising pig vets in Ireland will all attend and participate in the conference through chairing sessions, presenting papers and making oral presentations. There is great pride associated with hosting a conference like this in Ireland and we, the practising vets in pig practice, will take great pleasure in welcoming our guests to our country and our conference.

There was a relatively long run-in period to both conferences. This four-year lead-in is necessary in order to prepare conferences of this magnitude such are the logistic difficulties that are involved in bringing a conference to fruition. This long run-in also affords local organising committees to prepare social events, scientific programmes, satellite symposia, study tours and ancillary events. A trip to Cancun in Mexico (2014) served as a venue to promote the IPVS in Dublin. A similar trip to the American Association of Swine Veterinarians (AASV) in New Orleans earlier this year aimed to attract the US delegates.

IMPORTANCE OF VENUE ASSOCIATION

We have chosen the RDS as the venue for the IPVS/ESPHM. The RDS has a long association with the farming community and its ethos is to promote science in agriculture so the conference is right up the RDS's street. The RDS also has loads of space to host the delegates and is well located in the leafy suburbs, where there are a number of accommodations within a short walking distance from the venue. Because this is an Olympic year, all Dublin Horse Show events are earlier this year than they would otherwise be. Previous conferences have been held in resorts or modern conference facilities. The RDS is a unique venue and its link with historic, agricultural events will not be wasted on the delegates.

There will be a substantial trade exhibition at the IPVS in Dublin. Over 50 pig industry companies have committed to being in Dublin where they will host the exhibition in the Industries Hall of the RDS. They will have ample

opportunity to mingle with the delegates over the four days. Dublin will be buzzing during the week around the IPVS. Bloom in the Phoenix Park will kick off the week. The Women's Mini-Marathon will take place on the Bank Holiday Monday and we start our deliberations on the Tuesday evening with an opening ceremony (with dancing troupe) and the Tom Alexander lecture.

TOPICAL SPEAKERS AND PRESENTATIONS

Tom Alexander was a pioneer in the pig health and management discipline. He promoted the concepts of minimal disease, health screening, breeding pyramids and artificial insemination in pigs and he was pivotal in the establishment of the first IPVS conferences in the late 1960s. Tom died a number of years ago and the IPVS has had a memorial lecture in his honour ever since. This year's offering is being presented by Dr Jill Thomson from SAC in Edinburgh, a friend of Tom's and a noted world authority in the pathology field.

Over 1,100 abstracts were submitted to the conference. These were double-blind reviewed by a panel of 50 international reviewers and attributed a score. The best were given the opportunity to present their work in the 120 oral presentations.

The headline keynote addresses are from 18 international leaders in the pig veterinary science area. There is an innovation this year in the form of clinical clubs running over the three days of the conference. The presenters need not have presented a paper. All they have to do is to have a novel case and present it to an audience of their peers where it will be commented upon.

Along with the four parallel streams that will occur at the conference, there will also be satellite symposia in the evenings hosted by the pharmaceutical companies. There will be something for everyone at the IPVS.

CONTENT CAPTURE CONCEPT

All conferences try to achieve a legacy. This year we have invested in a new concept called 'content capture'. Here, the audio content plus the PowerPoint slides of each presenter, are recorded and archived for future reference. This also means that delegates can access content that they may have missed or content that was presented while they attended other sessions.

Those unable to attend the conference will be able to subscribe and experience the conference in this new format.

Socially, there are lots of opportunities for the delegates to mix with colleagues from other countries. One of the social highlights will be a night at the races in Leopardstown, followed by an open-air concert featuring Aslan. A gala dinner to be held on the last night for 1,250 delegates will bring proceedings to a close. A range of Irish musicians will perform on the night. Hopefully, delegates will leave the event smiling and longing for a return visit to Ireland in the near future.

For further information see www.IPVS2016.com