



DIPARTIMENTO DI
SCIENZE VETERINARIE

VET Spotlight

Welcome to the first issue, the newsletter of the Department of Veterinary Sciences at the University of Pisa.

EDITORIAL



Vincenzo Miragliotta
*Head of
the Department*

We are delighted to present the first issue of VET Spotlight, the newsletter of the Department of Veterinary Sciences at the University of Pisa. This new platform has been created to showcase and promote the Department's **research** and **innovation**, fostering dialogue with the **scientific community, institutions, professionals**, and the **wider community**.

In this first issue, you will find highlights from some of our innovative research projects, the achievements of our early-career researchers, and the recognition received at national and international level, demonstrating the quality and dynamism of our scientific community. We hope that VET Spotlight will become a regular publication and a valuable tool for sharing knowledge, fostering **collaboration** and **connections**.



Francesco Paolo Di Iacovo
PhD Coordinator

The newsletter you are about to read was created with the aim of highlighting the **research** and **third mission** activities carried out by the Department, often in collaboration with local stakeholders.

As the PhD Programme Coordination Team of the Department of Veterinary Sciences, we believe it is important to **promote doctoral research**. For the Department, this represents an opportunity to explore and deepen innovative topics across the many fields of interest currently covered by the PhD Programme in Veterinary Sciences. Our aim is to raise awareness of and highlight the work carried out by PhD students, while also **encouraging new collaborations with stakeholders**, the scientific community.



Valentina Meucci
*Deputy PhD Coordinator and
Research Delegate*

Doctoral training represents the highest level of academic qualification offered by the University, and the commitment of early-career researchers, carried out under the guidance of their supervisors, deserves the attention and support of everyone: those working in academia and those who, through collaboration with them, can develop projects and initiatives of shared interest.

For this reason, we invite you to use this newsletter as a means of **sharing your research interests** and **questions**, helping to make it a valuable tool for collaboration. We would like to thank you in advance for your contributions and for the valuable ideas and insights you will share with us.

SOURCE – Sustainable and innOvative blUe food pRoduCtion under one hEalth approach

The SOURCE project was created with the aim of promoting more sustainable, safe and innovative aquaculture systems, through the application of integrated and nature-based strategies, in line with the One Health approach. Aquaculture represents one of the fastest-growing sectors in global food production, but its intensification can contribute to the deterioration of water quality, the emergence of infections in farmed organisms and the consequent use of antibiotics. Therefore, SOURCE proposes the study of organic feed additives, in particular essential oils and related bioactive compounds, as possible sustainable alternatives to conventional antibiotic-based approaches. The project will assess the antibacterial potential, ecotoxicological profile and biological effects of these compounds on commercially relevant aquatic species of fish and bivalve molluscs, combining in vitro and in vivo approaches with microbiological, biochemical, histological, pharmacokinetic and metabolomic analyses. The ultimate aim is to contribute to the development of responsible aquaculture models and promote innovative solutions consistent with the Blue Growth Agenda and the Common Fisheries Policy.

Dr Lucia De Marchi

FELINE BETA – Investigation on Feline Betaretrovirus Infection, Pathogenesis and Missing Piece Hypothesis

Feline mammary tumours: is there still a viral piece of the puzzle to be uncovered? This hypothesis led to the development of FELINE BETA, a FIS project of the Department of Veterinary Sciences. Through a multidisciplinary approach, FELINE BETA aims to investigate the possible role of a betaretrovirus in certain feline diseases, including mammary tumours and inflammatory liver diseases. The results may expand current knowledge of feline pathology and, in the future, support new strategies for prevention and clinical management. The project also highlights the cat as a spontaneous model for the study of viral pathogenesis, opening up new perspectives for research from a One Health perspective.

Dr Francesca Parisi



FELINE BETA

Investigation on Feline Betaretrovirus Infection, Pathogenesis and Missing Piece Hypothesis

FIS 3 Starting Grant - Responsabile Scientifico: Dr.ssa Francesca Parisi

			
Approccio multidisciplinare	Vari campioni biologici	Tecnologie avanzate	Nuove conoscenze in patologia felina

  

PhD corner

"Best oral presentation awarded by BRILL" at the congress "Insects to Feed the World 2026" (Turin, 09-12/06/2026)

Asia Zanzot, a PhD student specialising in Zooculture, received the "*Best Oral Presentation awarded by BRILL*" prize at the international conference "Insects to Feed the World 2026" (Turin, 09–12/06/2026).

Her experimental research, conducted at the "F.L.I.E.S. Facility" laboratory of the Department of Entomology at Texas A&M University, aimed to analyse the effects that feeding on substrates contaminated with sublethal doses of cyromazine (an insecticide) could have on *Hermetia illucens* larvae. The results, which she presented during her talk entitled "Sublethal effects of cyromazine on life history characters and reproductive performances of *Hermetia illucens*", highlighted negative effects at the highest contaminant concentrations in both stages, demonstrating that even low doses can compromise rearing performance and emphasising the importance of careful monitoring of the substrates used.

"I am very happy with the recognition I have received because the topic addressed represents a fundamental aspect for the development of more sustainable and responsible insect farming. I will always carry with me the wonderful experience I had in the United States. It was a pleasure and an honour to work with Professor Tomberlin, whom I sincerely thank for his trust and support, together with Professor Mancini and PhD student Tara N."

"Award for Best Poster Presentation", 14th International Coccidiosis Conference (Belgium, 02-4/06/2026)

Marta Raffaelli, a PhD student in Parasitology, received the "Award for Best Poster Presentation" prize during the "14th International Coccidiosis Conference", held from 2 to 4 June 2026 in Ghent, Belgium. Her research, entitled "Effects of dietary supplementation with essential oil-derived compounds on growth performance in naked neck chickens naturally infected with coccidia (*Eimeria* spp.)", demonstrated that coccidiosis represents one of the main challenges affecting poultry health and production performance, and that current control strategies present several limitations, making it necessary to identify complementary, innovative and sustainable approaches. The study evaluated the effects on zootechnical performance of supplementing the diet of naturally coccidia-infected chickens with compounds derived from essential oils. The study involved contributions from Stefania Perrucci, Margherita Marzoni Fecia di Cossato and Ranieri Verin (DSV, UniPi), Alessia Zoroaster, Antonio Frangipane di Regalbano (Department of Animal Medicine, Production and Health, UniPD), Ilario Ferrocino and Davide Buzzanca (DISAFA, UniTO), and Roberto Marani (La Veterinaria S.r.l., Perugia).

"I expanded my professional network and deepened my understanding of academic research and of the solutions proposed by industry for the control of this parasitic infection. Receiving recognition as the best poster at a conference dedicated to this topic was a highly rewarding experience."





SISVet Young Researchers Award 2026

Dania Cingottini, a PhD student in Equine Medicine at the Department of Veterinary Sciences of the University of Pisa, is the winner of the SISVet Young Researchers Award 2026, a recognition awarded on the occasion of the SISVet Congress, held from 11 to 13 June 2026 in Bologna. The award was presented for the contribution of her research activity in the field of equine internal medicine, with particular reference to the study of heart rate variability (HRV) parameters in horses affected by gastric ulcers, comparing untreated subjects and subjects receiving therapy with omeprazole and sucralfate.

The awarded work, carried out under the supervision of Professor Micaela Sgorbini, was subsequently published in the journal *Open Veterinary Journal* (2026, Vol. 16(4): 2193–2202) with the title "*Heart rate variability in horses with naturally occurring gastric ulcers: Response to omeprazole and sucralfate treatment*".

"I am very happy with the recognition I have received. Gastric ulcers in horses are a complex and widespread condition. This award represents an important opportunity to continue my training path: it will allow me to participate in the ECEIM Congress, further developing my knowledge in the field of equine internal medicine and expanding my professional network."

Circle U. Sandpits 2026 – UCLouvain, Belgium

Naif Onur Ceylan, a PhD student in Functional Neuroanatomy and Translational Neuroengineering Applied to Pelvic Organs, participated in the Circle U. Sandpits (UCLouvain, Belgium) in May 2026, under the supervision of Professor Vincenzo Miragliotta and Professor Angela Briganti. At the Circle U. Sandpits, researchers from different European universities and disciplines collaborated to develop interdisciplinary research ideas addressing sustainability challenges. The programme promoted research design and international scientific collaboration.



"Participating in the Circle U. Sandpits programme was a valuable opportunity to exchange ideas with researchers from different scientific backgrounds, learn new approaches to interdisciplinary research, and expand my international academic network. The experience strengthened my understanding of collaborative research and the development of innovative research projects in a European context."

SEND US YOUR QUESTION

Do you have a curiosity about the world of veterinary sciences?

Fill in the [form](#) and tell us what would you like to know more about. We would be happy to answer your questions!

COLLABORATE WITH US

Do you want to contribute to the newsletter?

Fill in the [form](#) and send us your content.



PHD CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

HIGHLIGHT: VETERINARIANS IN BALANCE



Don't miss the next issue of VET Spotlight! **Discover the latest updates from the world of scientific research.**