

VET Spotlight

The newsletter of the Department of Veterinary
Sciences at the University of Pisa



BRIGHT NIGHT: European Researchers' Night!

Research Takes to the Streets: DSV at BRIGHT Night

This year, the Department of Veterinary Sciences once again took part in **BRIGHT – European Researchers' Night**, with a stand packed with activities, games, demonstrations and opportunities to discover veterinary research in a direct and engaging way. The stand, which attracted visitors of all ages, was lively throughout the afternoon thanks to the enthusiasm and contributions of lecturers, researchers, PhD students and undergraduate students, who brought research to life through interactive experiences, games and engaging science communication activities.



With **"Blood Matters!"**, visitors had the chance to discover the world of Veterinary Transfusion Medicine, learning more about blood donation and its importance for the health and treatment of animals. There was also great enthusiasm for the activities **"One Health Detectives"**, exploring parasites, animals and the environment through microscope observations. These activities gave visitors the opportunity to step into the shoes of real research "detectives". One of the most engaging and popular moments was **"Emergency Vets: Ready for Actions"**, the flash mob dedicated to veterinary emergency care and resuscitation. Lecturers, researchers, PhD students and undergraduate students danced together, turning the stand into a small celebration for a few minutes and drawing the audience in with energy and enthusiasm, while keeping the focus firmly on the theme of veterinary emergencies.

The result was an afternoon filled with science, participation and plenty of fun, made possible by the collaboration of all members of the Department and, in particular, by the active involvement of PhD students and undergraduate students, who helped engage the public and share the excitement of research with enthusiasm.

SPOTLIGHT - Bright Night



Inside Discovery: Two FIS Award Winners Share Their Stories

As part of the BRIGHT programme, Dr **Lucia De Marchi** and Dr **Francesca Parisi**, recipients of the Italian Science Fund (FIS), took part in a joint interview conducted by Professor Valentina Meucci, the Department’s Research Delegate. The conversation was an opportunity to talk not only about their research projects, but also about what it means to carry out research every day, looking beyond publications and funding.

Through questions about their career paths, the challenges they have faced, and the role of creativity and curiosity in science, Lucia and Francesca shared their research projects as well as some more personal insights into the life of a researcher. Their answers highlighted just how important it is, alongside individual skills and determination, to be able to rely on a supportive network of people. This includes family, whose support is essential when it comes to balancing the often unpredictable schedules and demands of research with personal life, as well as colleagues, with whom researchers share experiments, challenges, successes and the inevitable moments of stress on a daily basis. They also spoke openly about some of the most demanding periods of their careers: difficult moments that are part and parcel of scientific life, but which can also be overcome with the support of those working alongside us. Looking ahead to the future, they were asked: *“What kind of science would you like to see in ten years’ time?”* Both expressed a shared hope for **research to become increasingly merit-based, recognising and valuing the work of researchers, and supported by greater levels of funding.**

The two FIS projects also took centre stage, with activities designed to actively engage the public. At **SOURCE**, the large cut-outs proved particularly popular, allowing visitors to transform themselves – at least for a photo – into a mussel or a sea bream. These were accompanied by games and activities exploring mussels and the scientific themes of the project. **FELINE-BETA** also used games as a way of bringing research to life. A stylised cat, where participants had to place the organs in the correct position, and a themed memory game engaged both children and adults, while also offering an opportunity to learn more about the project’s aims.



SPOTLIGHT- Bright Night

PhD corner



"Selection, molecular identification and biosafety assessment of plant growth-promoting bacteria from organic amendments"

Fabio Castronovo, PhD student in Veterinary Sciences in the sector of Agronomy and Herbaceous Crops, under the supervision of Professor Sergio Saia, has developed a scientific contribution for the 10th Edition of the International Research School (EIR 2025), taking place in Agadir, Morocco, from 11 to 13 December 2025.

The contribution, entitled *"Selection, molecular identification and biosafety assessment of plant growth-promoting bacteria from organic amendments"*, focuses on the isolation and characterisation of plant growth-promoting bacteria from organic amendments of animal origin, with particular attention to poultry manure and frass, a natural organic soil conditioner and fertiliser. The work stems from a collaboration with the University of Granada – Institute of Water Research, Microbiology Department, Faculty of Pharmacy – and contributes to the development of sustainable microbial strategies to improve soil fertility and crop productivity.

"Participation in the scientific programme associated with the Agadir conference and the collaboration with Granada represents an important opportunity to compare the findings of the PhD research with an international scientific community working on soil, microbial biotechnology, the bioeconomy and the agroecological transition in the Mediterranean context."

Safety and Risks in the Trade of Fishery Products between China and the European Union

Jixiang Zhang is a PhD student in Veterinary Sciences in the Animal Food Inspection sector and a member of the FishLab research group, under the supervision of Prof. Andrea Armani and in collaboration with Zhejiang Ocean University. His research focuses on the risks associated with fishery product trade between China and the European Union, with particular attention to food safety, regulatory requirements, and control systems along the supply chain. The aim is to identify the main critical issues and contribute to improving risk assessment and management in fishery product trade between China and the European Union.

"Personally, studying in Italy is giving me a new perspective on both research and life. The academic environment at the University of Pisa is helping me become more focused and clear about my goals, while also teaching me to approach my work and daily life with greater calm and balance."





Externship at Louisiana State University (LSU), Baton Rouge

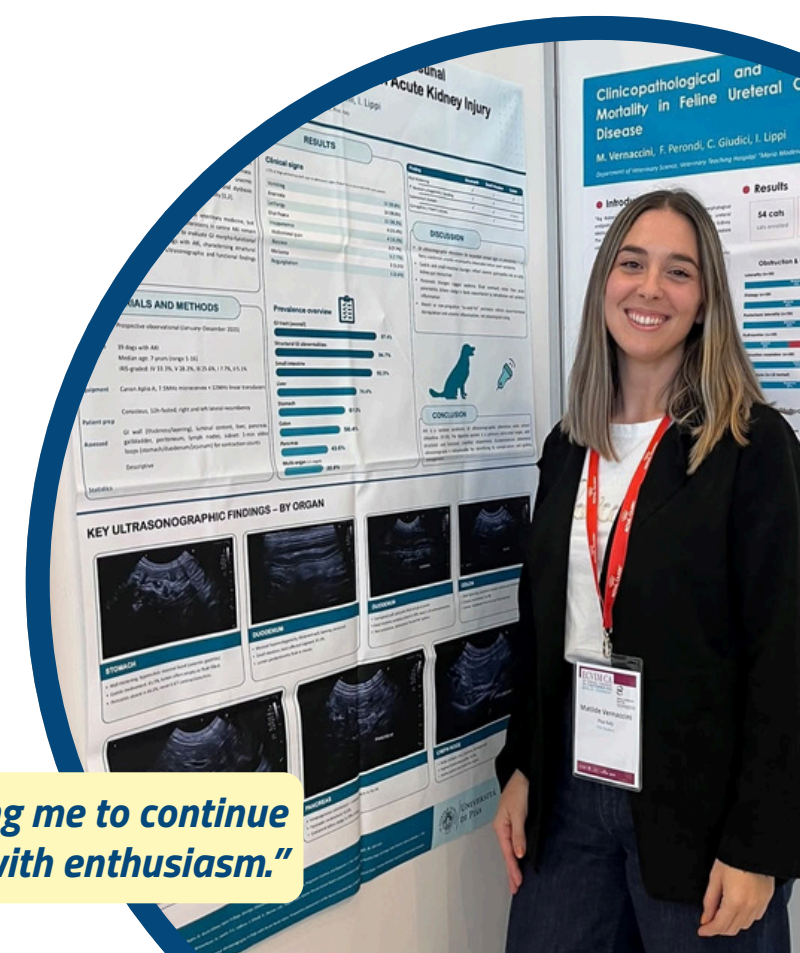
Aurora Cogozzo, PhD student in Veterinary Sciences in the sector of Translational Veterinary Gastroenterology and Hepatology, undertook an externship from June to August 2026 at Louisiana State University (LSU, Baton Rouge), under the supervision of Professor Veronica Marchetti and with Professor Agostino Buono as her academic tutor. During her time abroad, she had the opportunity to begin collecting cases for a research project investigating thyroid profiles in patients with chronic liver disease. She also took part in an experimental project investigating the safety of rectal administration of stem cell-derived secretome in healthy dogs and its effects on the wound healing of canine enterocytes.

"Getting to know a new environment was a truly interesting and stimulating experience. I had the opportunity to closely follow both the clinical activities of the veterinary hospital and the research work, acquiring new skills and exploring different areas of research. It was an experience that allowed me to broaden my knowledge and engage with a different scientific and professional environment."

"Clinicopathological and Ultrasonographic Predictors of Early Mortality in Feline Ureteral Obstruction with Asymmetric Renal Disease"

Matilde Vernaccini, PhD student in Veterinary Sciences in the field of Veterinary Clinical Medicine, under the supervision of Prof. Ilaria Lippi and Prof. Angela Briganti, received the Best Poster Award at ECVIM 2026. The contribution, entitled *"Clinicopathological and Ultrasonographic Predictors of Early Mortality in Feline Ureteral Obstruction with Asymmetric Renal Disease"*, focuses on the implementation of Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) protocols at the University Veterinary Hospital. Particular attention is devoted to the use of Highest Priority Critically Important Antimicrobials (HPCIA), as defined by the WHO, assessing the appropriateness of antimicrobial therapies and the implementation of AMS across the European veterinary landscape. The poster was prepared in collaboration with Francesca Perondi, Chiara Giudici and Ilaria Lippi.

"Receiving this award is a great satisfaction and an important recognition of the work carried out, motivating me to continue my research with enthusiasm."



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