

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE AETE**THEMATIC SECTION: 39TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF EMBRYO TECHNOLOGY IN EUROPE (AETE)**

From the President of the AETE

Dear friends and colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that I invite you to the 39th Annual Scientific Meeting of AETE. The meeting will take place on the magnificent island of Crete, in its capital city of Heraklion from 7th to 8th September. The venue, Hotel Galaxy, is located close to the city center. With comfortable and spacious rooms, a nice restaurant and coffee area, and a beautiful pool, it is an excellent venue for our meeting. While writing this, the preparations of the next AETE meeting are proceeding with pace.

The Local Organizing Committee, chaired by Georgios Amoiridis, together with Artion, have worked hard to provide us ideal settings for our meeting as well as an outstanding social program. The theme of our 2023 AETE meeting is *The Interaction of ARTs and the Environment*. We address this interaction from two perspectives: how the environmental changes might affect the reproduction of livestock and how our activities in ART might affect the environment. We have put together an exciting scientific program and invited excellent speakers to discuss these challenging topics.

Our meeting will start with a Welcome Reception that takes place in the evening of Wednesday, September 6th, at the hotel's pool area. After this reunion, the scientific program will be launched on Thursday by Urban Besenfelder with a title "*The interaction between the environment and embryo development in assisted reproduction*". The talk of our second invited speaker, Hilde Aardema will address a current topic titled "*The potential impact of microplastics on reproduction*". Pietro Baruselli, representing our Brazilian sister society SBTE, will cover "*The contribution of assisted reproductive technologies and reproduction management to reducing the CO₂ equivalent emissions of dairy and beef industry*". Conservation biology will be addressed in William Holt's talk entitled "*Environmental effects on developmental plasticity in conservation biology*".

The AETE board is honored to announce Sabine Meinecke-Tillmann and Burkhard Meinecke will be presented with the Pioneer Awards of 2023 for their pioneering, wide and versatile work in the field of assisted reproduction, especially in sheep and goat. Burkhard Meinecke served as a president of AETE in mid 1990's.

We thank everyone for sharing high quality abstracts for this year's meeting, to compete for the best oral presentation, best poster and student competition, where for the first time, the winner from the finalists will be selected by a jury composed of you among others, and not by the board as usually.

The practitioners' forum, "*SOPs for Donors and Recipients*" will be sponsored and coordinated by Calier and will present the outcome of the work of an international expert committee, followed by a round table discussion. On Friday, the scientific program will culminate in a Workshop on "*Animal Welfare in ARTs*". This interactive workshop aims to: discuss the perception of animal welfare; present current situation of regulations and; highlight some initiatives, including some research studies, to evaluate impacts of some ARTs on animal welfare.

The social program will take us to Arolithos Traditional Cretan Village and our meeting will end in a Farewell Party in a club downtown on Friday. This meeting would not be possible without the valuable support of our sponsors! On behalf of the whole board, I want to express our gratitude to all of them, old and new ones.

I want to thank the board of governors for their dedicated work for the society as well as our members for support. I hope that you all enjoy the AETE meeting in Heraklion.

Marja Mikkola

President of the AETE