



### Featured Contributor

*Thomas R. Shryock, PhD, Senior Research Advisor, Global Regulatory Affairs, Elanco Animal Health*

1. Currently, you are the Senior Research Advisor, Global Regulatory Affairs, at Elanco Animal Health in Greenfield, Indiana, USA. Can you please describe a bit about the work you do in this position?

My role is to provide technical information to regulatory authorities to support registrations of antimicrobial products for use in animals. The use of standardized antimicrobial susceptibility testing (AST) methods is essential to generate data that are acceptable for the authorities and to support veterinarians who use antibiotics.

2. Tell me about your experience as a member of the CLSI Subcommittee on Veterinary Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing (VAST) and the CLSI Consensus Committee on Microbiology.

I have had the privilege to participate in various leadership roles since the inception of the subcommittee. The opportunity to help shape and influence the practice of veterinary medicine by the implementation of the various VET documents has been rewarding. This was only possible by the CLSI consensus process that brought together academia, industry, and professions.

3. The Mind the Gap Working Group through the CLSI Subcommittee on VAST seems like a valuable and interesting undertaking. Can you please describe the working group's main objectives as well as your contributions to that group?

The Mind the Gap Working Group was proposed and formed to draft a proposal for organizations and agencies to be able to target research funding to projects that would generate specific data that would fill gaps identified as necessary to establish clinical breakpoints for certain antibiotics.

4. How have you benefited by becoming a CLSI volunteer?

Serving as a CLSI volunteer has enabled me to establish a global network of colleagues and friends. I have been able to improve my leadership capabilities by working within the consensus process and applying it to other situations. I have increased my technical competency and ability to apply the documents to regulatory, public, and animal health issues; research projects; and journal editing. In short, CLSI has enabled my career success.

5. What are some highlights or resolved consensus issues in the CLSI document development process of which you are particularly proud?

My philosophy on the consensus process as the Chair of the VAST Subcommittee was to strive to make everyone a little unhappy. That may seem to be an unusual outcome, but if everyone was only a little unhappy, that meant that no one got everything they wanted and no one lost everything. A good example of this was during the drafting of VET02 (Development of *In Vitro* Susceptibility Testing Criteria and Quality Control Parameters for Veterinary Antimicrobial Agents) on a new process to establish clinical breakpoints. Views between various disciplines and affiliations were quite different, which required a lot of listening and understanding from everyone. By maintaining focus on the outcome desired for the veterinary professional, creative approaches were found that were agreeable for achieving consensus. The tough discussions were not taken as personal and this enabled productive working relationships that continue even today.

6. Do you believe CLSI documents are helpful resources for professionals in your field in day-to-day practice?

The CLSI VAST document collection is considered a "best practice" approach for anyone conducting AST today. Whether it is researchers seeking to publish data, government organizations reviewing regulatory submissions or conducting national antimicrobial resistance monitoring programs, or individuals using them for other applications, the collection is now viewed as essential to conduct proper testing.

7. What do you see as the most pertinent issues right now in your field?

In both human and animal medicine, there is a lack of new antimicrobial products in the pipeline. Appropriate AST is crucial for the early evaluation of novel agents. Within the animal health sector, as we look to future animal production needs to assure food security for the growing human population, there will be a need for not only new products, but also refinements to responsible antibiotic use programs, which includes a diagnostic laboratory component for AST to guide veterinarians in the proper selection of antibiotics.

8. How does your field differ in other countries?

The issue of antimicrobial resistance has similarities at a high level among most countries, but it varies according to local conditions, which can be challenging for implementation of actions. With regard to AST, there is interest in harmonization of testing methods, as well as capability and capacity building.

9. If you had never gotten into the health care arena, what would you be doing for a living?

My doctoral training in the area of medical microbiology and immunology was leading toward an academic career to research bacterial pathogenesis of human disease. However, I found an opportunity in the animal health pharmaceutical industry that allowed me to contribute in a slightly different way.

10. What has been the highlight of your professional life?

I have had many opportunities to help shape antimicrobial use in veterinary medicine by participation in many meetings, expert panels, presentations, and manuscripts. However, the highlight has been the formation of the CLSI VAST Subcommittee and the opportunity to chair the group and direct the completion of the early editions of the VET document collection, which now have global application.

11. What has been the highlight of your personal life?

The highlight was raising our four girls and watching them transform into successful ladies.

12. What is an interesting fact about you that most people would not know?

I received my MBA (Master of Beer Appreciation) certificate in December 2013.

13. What is your favorite hobby?

I enjoy sampling different styles of beers, watching sports, reading, and traveling.