



6th Annual

NATIONAL KITTEN COALITION VETERINARY CONFERENCE

October 19, 2025

SPONSORED BY:



This Conference is intended for veterinarians, veterinary technicians/nurses, those currently enrolled in veterinary or vet tech schools, veterinary staff members in private practices and shelters, and those involved in veterinary education and research.



2025 National Kitten Coalition Veterinary Conference

Sunday, October 19, 2025

Session Schedule: All times are Eastern Daylight Time

SESSION TIME (EDT)	SESSION TITLE – PRESENTER – LIVE, INTERACTIVE RACE® CE CREDITS
9:45 am -10:00 am	<i>Welcome and Technology Check</i>
10:00 am - 11:00 am	<u>OPTIMAL NUTRITION: ENSURING A HEALTHY FOUNDATION FOR LIFELONG HEALTH IN KITTENS</u> - Kara M. Burns, MS, MEd, LVT, VTS (Nutrition) * 1.0 RACE® CE credit
11:00 am - 11:15 am	<i>Break</i>
11:15 am - 12:15 pm	<u>FROM SNIFFLES TO SWABS: DIAGNOSTIC STRATEGIES FOR COMMON KITTEN INFECTIOUS DISEASES</u> - Maho Okumura, VMD, MPH * 1.0 RACE® CE credit
12:15 pm – 12:30 pm	<i>Break</i>
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm	<u>MANAGING DIARRHEA IN KITTENS</u> - Joyce Carnevale, DVM, MS, DABVP * 1.0 RACE® CE credit
1:30 pm - 1:45 pm	<i>Break</i>
1:45 pm - 2:45 pm	<u>DECODING THE CLOCK: AGE TRANSLATIONS ACROSS FELINE SPECIES AND HUMANS</u> - Christine Charvet, PhD * 1.0 RACE® CE credit
2:45 pm – 3:00 pm	<i>Break</i>
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	<u>PANLEUKOPENIA CRISIS MODE: HOW TO HANDLE A PANLEUKOPENIA OUTBREAK FROM DIAGNOSIS TO RECOVERY</u> - Jennifer Bledsoe-Nix, DVM * 1.0 RACE® CE credit
4:00 pm – 4:15 pm	<i>Break</i>
4:15 pm - 4:45 pm	<u>ENDOSCOPIC THIRD VENTRICULOSTOMY FOR TREATING CONGENITAL OBSTRUCTIVE HYDROCEPHALUS IN A KITTEN</u> - Ji-Hey Lim, DVM, PhD, DACVIM (Neurology) * 0.50 RACE® CE credit
4:45 pm – 5:00 pm	<i>Break</i>
5:00 pm – 6:00 pm	<u>TREATING FELINE PEDIATRIC UPPER RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTIONS</u> - Karen Vernau, DVM, MAS, DACVIM (Neurology) & David Maggs, BVSc(hons), MANZCVS, DACVO * 1.0 RACE® CE credit
6:00 pm - 6:15 pm	<i>Closing Information: CE Certificates & Access to Post Conference Recording/Quizzes/CE</i>

*The National Kitten Coalition is an American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) approved provider for RACE® CE. This conference (AAVBS Course Number: 20-1321960) program has been approved by the AAVSB for 6.50 credits of live, interactive RACE® CE for veterinarians and veterinary technicians/nurses in jurisdictions that recognize RACE® approval.

NKCVC 2025 will be recorded. Recordings of all sessions, including optional RACE® approved CE Quizzes, will be available for all registrants through December 31, 2025.



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WELCOME AND TECHNOLOGY CHECK

Rosemarie Crawford, LVT

Session Description:

Welcome to the 2025 National Kitten Coalition Veterinary Conference! Start your day with a friendly check-in and a quick tour of what's ahead. We'll walk through the session lineup, break schedule, and key tech tips to help you navigate the platform with ease. Pop in to say hello, confirm your audio and video are working well, and get set for a smooth, engaging, and educational experience!



Learning for Life Fund

Supporting Lifelong Learning, Saving Kitten Lives

Thanks to a generous founding gift—and the continued support of donors like you—the Learning for Life Fund makes it possible to offer high-quality, AAVSB RACE® CE learning experiences at a reasonable cost. This fund fuels ongoing education for veterinarians, students, and technicians, ensuring their access to the specialized knowledge needed to care for kittens.

The **Learning for Life Fund** proudly sponsors the NKC Veterinary Conference and our Classroom to Clinic initiative, helping veterinary professionals continue learning long after graduation.

Join us in expanding access to life-saving education.

Your contribution helps provide scholarships, sustain affordable CE programming, and empower every caregiver to make a difference—one kitten at a time.



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OPTIMAL NUTRITION: ENSURING A HEALTHY FOUNDATION FOR LIFELONG HEALTH IN KITTENS

Kara M. Burns, MS, MEd, LVT, VTS (Nutrition)

Session Description:

Kittens are dependent on the queen to provide food during the neonatal or nursing period. The transition from queen's milk to solid food (weaning) is a gradual process and is an integral part of the nursing period.

The post weaning period through the first year of life is a critical time for development. It is important for the veterinary team and the pet owner to impart a strong nutritional foundation to help to support the growth and development of the kitten throughout the demanding neonatal and post weaning period. This presentation will discuss proper nutrition for nursing kittens, feeding orphaned kittens, integrating the weaning process, and the nutritional needs of the post weaning kitten. Additionally, we will discuss nutritional assessment, key nutrients for a healthy kitten, and feeding to achieve healthy growth, optimize trainability and immune function, and minimize obesity.

Speaker Bio:

Kara Burns is a licensed veterinary technician with a master's degree in physiology and a master's degree in counseling psychology. Kara is the Founder and Past President of the Academy of Veterinary Nutrition Technicians. She teaches nutrition courses around the world and is an independent nutritional and well-being consultant. She is the Editor in Chief of Today's Veterinary Nurse. She is a member of many national, international, and state associations and holds positions on many boards in the profession: President-Elect of the EveryCat Health Foundation (formerly Winn Feline Foundation); and the first technician to be President of the Pet Nutrition Alliance, to name a few. Kara has authored ~200 articles, textbooks, and textbook chapters and is an internationally invited speaker.

Ms. Burns was named the Bridge Club 2024 Industry ICON Award recipient – the first veterinary technician to be recognized as The Bridge Club ICON. Ms. Burns has been featured on the cover of the Veterinary Technician Journal and the NAVTA Journal and has been featured in PetVet Magazine. She was named the North American Veterinary Conference Technician Speaker of the Year in 2013, 2016, and 2021. She was the Inaugural 2010 NAVTA Veterinary Technician of the Year. Kara was the 2011 Dr. Franklin Loew Lecturer and the 2024 Dr. Roger L. Lukens Lecturer.



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11:00 am - 11:15 am EDT

Break

11:15 am - 12:15 pm EDT

FROM SNIFFLES TO SWABS: DIAGNOSTIC STRATEGIES FOR COMMON KITTEN INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Maho Okumura, VMD, MPH

Session Description:

Respiratory infectious diseases are a major cause of illness in cats, especially kittens, and accurate diagnosis is essential for guiding treatment and management. Yet, selecting the right diagnostic method and ensuring high-quality submissions to the laboratory can be challenging in practice. This session will provide a practical review of three main diagnostic approaches—PCR, culture, and serology—for feline respiratory pathogens such as feline herpesvirus, calicivirus, *Chlamydia felis*, *Mycoplasma* spp., *Bordetella bronchiseptica*, and *Pasteurella multocida*. For each method, we will discuss how the test works, its benefits and limitations, and important considerations for interpreting results.

This session will also highlight best practices for diagnostic submissions: choosing the most appropriate and clinically useful samples, avoiding non-optimal sample types, and ensuring submission forms are filled out completely. We will also highlight how diagnostic laboratories can serve as a resource—answering questions, advising on test selection, and partnering with clinicians to optimize case outcomes. Cost considerations and the spectrum of care will also be addressed, recognizing that accessibility and client resources are key factors in choosing testing strategies. By the end of this session, participants will understand not only the strengths and limitations of PCR, culture, and serology, but also how to optimize diagnostic submissions and collaborate effectively with laboratories to maximize clinical value while balancing cost and accessibility.

Speaker Bio:

Dr. Maho Okumura is a Clinical Microbiology Resident at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. She obtained her veterinary degree from University of Pennsylvania and her MPH degree from Drexel University. Prior to veterinary school, she has experience working on projects sponsored by international organizations themed around public health, health communication, and social and behavioral change. Passionate about One Health, Dr. Okumura is involved in teaching infectious disease and public health courses to veterinary students of all years and her current research includes a surveillance study of carbapenem resistant Enterobacterales in a veterinary teaching hospital setting.



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12:15 pm – 12:30 pm EDT

Break

12:30 pm - 1:30 pm EDT

MANAGING DIARRHEA IN KITTENS

Joyce Carnevale, DVM, MS, DABVP

Session Description:

The session will focus on preventing and managing diarrhea in kittens in clinic, shelter and foster environments. The first part of the discussion will focus on common causes of diarrhea in kittens, intake strategies to prevent the spread of infectious causes in a shelter population, and treatment protocols to follow in kittens that develop diarrhea. The second part of the discussion will focus on managing cases of chronic diarrhea that have not responded to common approaches. The case-based discussion will share current understanding on the role of the gastrointestinal microbiota in disease and evidence-based treatment strategies that address dysbiosis.

Speaker Bio:

Dr. Joyce Carnevale is a Clinical Professor at Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine. She serves as the Community Outreach Coordinator working with welfare organizations across Central Iowa to provide shelter pets with spay/neuter and preventative care through the Surgery, Anesthesia, and Community Outreach program.

Dr. Carnevale received her DVM from Cornell University. She is a Diplomate of the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners. She was in private practice for many years before coming to ISU with a passion for teaching and helping prepare students for rewarding careers. Her research interests include feline behavior, shelter medicine, and access to care.



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1:30 pm - 1:45 pm EDT

Break

1:45 pm - 2:45 pm EDT

DECODING THE CLOCK: AGE TRANSLATIONS ACROSS FELINE SPECIES AND HUMANS

Christine Charvet, PhD

Session Description:

We will discuss our long-term research project Translating Time, which equates corresponding ages across species. The dataset relies on time points (e.g., age of eye opening) to find age equivalencies across a range of mammalian species. We will discuss how the dataset has grown to more than 10,000 observations over the years, and why we focused on translating ages across domestic cats, humans, traditional model systems (e.g., mouse, rats), as well as nondomestic felid species (e.g., lions, tigers). The model incorporates time points across a range of developmental processes (e.g., neurogenesis, axonal growth, synapse formation, brain growth, behavioral milestones, changes in gene expression), age-related changes (e.g., brain atrophy), and pathologies (e.g., plaques, tangles). We will discuss the resource and the website (www.translatingtime.org), which enables users to easily find corresponding ages across species. We will focus especially on age translations across humans, cats, and nondomestic felid species. The resource can be used to translate ages in disease states and enhance One Health approaches.

Speaker Bio:

Dr. Christine Charvet earned her PhD in Neuroscience from the University of California, Irvine, and she completed postdoctoral training in neuroimaging at Harvard Medical School and statistical genetics at Cornell University. Before joining Auburn University, she was an Assistant Professor at Delaware State University, contributing to NIH-funded efforts to advance biomedical sciences. Dr. Charvet's research emphasizes the use of cats as valuable model systems for studying human health, particularly age-related brain changes and neurological conditions. Christine and her collaborators developed the Translating Time resource (<https://translatingtime.org>), which aligns developmental ages across humans and model organisms, enabling researchers to translate findings to humans. Her current work focuses on integrating transcriptional, epigenetic, and neuroimaging data to expand this resource, and to improve age translations across diverse species.



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2:45 pm – 3:00 pm EDT

Break

3:00 pm - 4:00 pm EDT

PANLEUKOPENIA CRISIS MODE: HOW TO HANDLE A PANLEUKOPENIA OUTBREAK FROM DIAGNOSIS TO RECOVERY

Jennifer Bledsoe-Nix, DVM

Session Description:

During this session, we will discuss panleukopenia from exposure to diagnosis and recovery. Tested and successful treatment plans will be explored in detail. An easy to follow Treatment Triage Plan will be discussed and shared with attendees. Monitoring parameters will be a key focus of the session with explanations on which monitoring parameters indicate worsening illness. A monitoring plan with document will be explained as a method of determining worsening illness with steps to intervene. Attendees will also learn how following biosecurity measures will help limit spreading of infection. This session will provide attendees with an easy to follow guide for treatment, monitoring and recovery of panleukopenia patients.

Speaker Bio:

Dr. Jennifer Bledsoe-Nix earned her DVM degree from the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine in 2004. After graduation, she spent 12 years in general practice in Tennessee, working extensively with rescue organizations and local animal shelters. During this time, she discovered her passion for shelter medicine and access to care. With a new focus, she became Medical Director at SAFE Haven for Cats in Raleigh, North Carolina, providing medical care to cats and kittens in the shelter, foster program, and Spay/Neuter Clinic. After 4 years in the feline-only shelter, she transitioned to Medical Director of a larger shelter organization in North Carolina. After speaking at the Best Friends National Conference 2022 in Raleigh, she accepted the position of Lead Veterinarian at Best Friends Animal Sanctuary. Working at the Sanctuary was amazing, but she desired to focus on access to veterinary care in underserved communities. She moved to Los Angeles and accepted a position as Access to Care Training Project Lead Veterinarian with the Community Animal Medicine Program. Most recently, Dr. Bledsoe-Nix began her role as Medical Director of Stray Cat Alliance, continuing her commitment to expanding access to care and advancing feline medicine. She has a passion for kitten medicine, HQHVSN, shelter medicine, and access to veterinary care. When not working, she relaxes with her husband and menagerie of cats, including three with Cerebellar Hypoplasia of varying severity.



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4:00 pm – 4:15 pm EDT

Break

4:15 pm - 4:45 pm EDT

ENDOSCOPIC THIRD VENTRICULOSTOMY FOR TREATING CONGENITAL OBSTRUCTIVE HYDROCEPHALUS IN A KITTEN

Ji-Hey Lim, DVM, PhD, DACVIM (Neurology)

Session Description:

This presentation introduces Endoscopic Third Ventriculostomy (ETV) as a novel surgical alternative to ventriculoperitoneal shunting (VPS) for congenital obstructive hydrocephalus in kittens. Highlighting the first reported veterinary case in a 3-month-old Maine Coon, the session explores surgical technique, neuroanatomical landmarks, postoperative outcomes, and complications.

Attendees will gain insight into the translational potential of human neurosurgical techniques for veterinary practice, particularly in managing complex congenital neurologic conditions. This session encourages critical consideration of surgical innovation in feline neurology and highlights the importance of detailed anatomical knowledge and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Speaker Bio:

Dr. Lim is an Assistant Professor of Small Animal Neurology and Neurosurgery at the University of California, Davis, School of Veterinary Medicine. She earned her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from the College of Veterinary Medicine at Seoul National University in South Korea, where she also completed a PhD in veterinary science and three years of advanced training in orthopedic surgery. Dr. Lim then moved to North Carolina State University, where she served as a research fellow before completing a rotating internship in small animal medicine and surgery. She went on to complete a residency in neurology and neurosurgery at the University of Florida. Her professional interests encompass all aspects of advanced neurosurgery, with particular emphasis on minimally invasive neurosurgical techniques and regenerative medicine.



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4:45 pm -5:00 pm EDT

Break

5:00 pm - 6:00 pm EDT

TREATING FELINE PEDIATRIC UPPER RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTIONS

Karen Vernau , DVM, MAS, DACVIM (Neurology)

David Maggs, BVSc(hons), MANZCVS, DACVO

Session Description:

This session presents findings from a prospective, randomized, triple-masked, placebo-controlled clinical trial evaluating treatment outcomes for kittens with ocular signs of infectious upper respiratory disease (IURD). Attendees will explore the comparative effectiveness of standard antibiotic therapy (doxycycline) versus combination therapy with doxycycline and famciclovir. Through stratification by age and disease severity, the study assessed clinical and ophthalmic recovery and resolution over a 21-day period.

Veterinary professionals will gain insight into how early administration of famciclovir may reduce disease progression, shorten shelter stays, and improve adoption outcomes—offering practical implications for shelter medicine and feline care protocols.

Speaker Bio:

Karen M. Vernau

Dr. Vernau is a clinical professor of Neurology/Neurosurgery and is a member of the Accessible Veterinary Care program at UC Davis. She has an interest in feline neonatal medicine and strives to improve the health and welfare of kittens.

Dr. Vernau serves as faculty mentor for the Orphan Kitten Project (OKP) at UC Davis, which is a veterinary student-run non-profit organization. OKP takes in orphaned and abandoned neonatal from the community and local shelters. Kittens are fostered by veterinary students or members of the community, who raise them in their own homes. Kittens with medical or surgical conditions are prioritized for intake into OKP where their medical conditions are treated. Kittens are vaccinated, microchipped, FeLV tested, spayed/neutered, and dewormed before adoption. Dr. Vernau and her family have been fostering kittens together since 2013. They have one dog and five cats, all rescues.



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Speaker Bio:

David Maggs

Following graduation from the University of Melbourne in 1988, Dr. David Maggs spent 5 years in mixed practice throughout Australia, England, Scotland, and Wales. He then completed both small animal and equine internships at Colorado State University, and a research fellowship and comparative ophthalmology residency at the University of Missouri.

Dr. Maggs joined the faculty at the University of California-Davis in 2000 where he is now Professor Emeritus. He is co-author of Slatter's Fundamentals of Veterinary Ophthalmology, which has been translated into 6 languages. Dr. Maggs' major interests are ocular surface disease, with a particular focus on the management of dry eye disease and feline herpesvirus.

6:00 pm – 6:15 pm EDT

CONFERENCE CLOSE

Session Description:

Stay for our quick closing session, where we will outline our process for providing participants with CE Certificates. We will also provide information on accessing the Conference recordings and optional CE Quizzes for any sessions you may have missed.

Thank you to our scholarship sponsors, Yoko Co and IDEXX, for making veterinary education more accessible through their generous support of the 2025 NKC Veterinary Conference.





2025 National Kitten Coalition Veterinary Conference

Thank you for being a part of the 6th Annual National Kitten Coalition Veterinary Conference!

The conference would not be possible without the expertise and insight of our speakers and the generosity of our sponsors. The National Kitten Coalition would like to thank our speakers, sponsors, and participants for trusting us with providing these continuing education opportunities. We look forward to seeing you next year!

SAVE THE DATE

7th Annual National Kitten Coalition Veterinary Conference

Sunday, October 18, 2026

THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 NATIONAL KITTEN COALITION VETERINARY CONFERENCE SPONSORS

