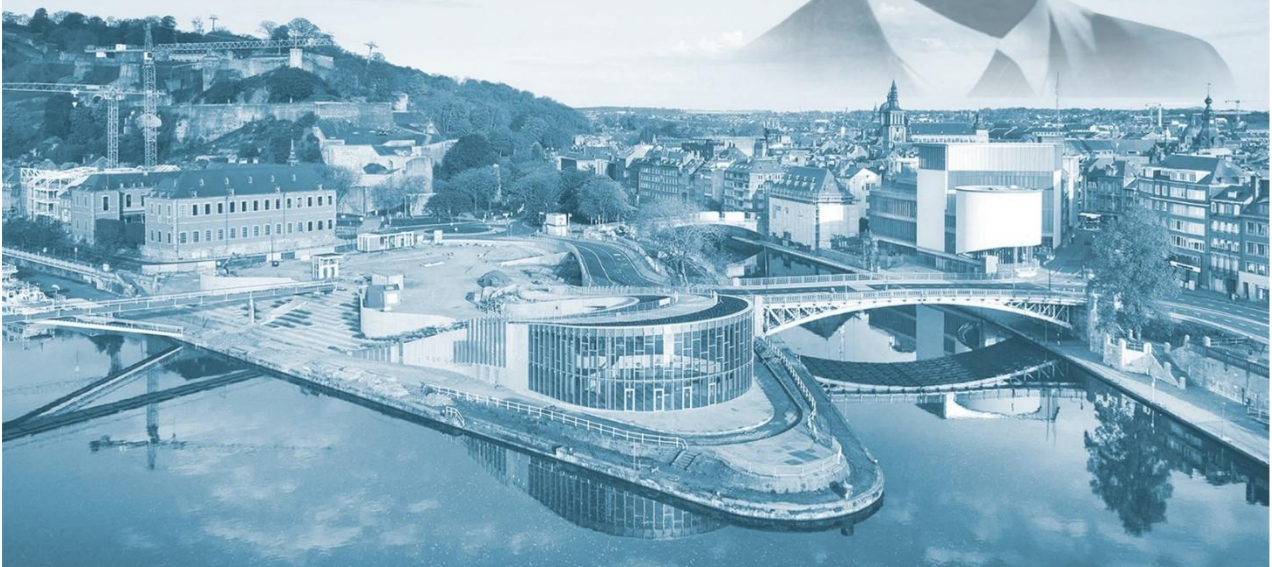
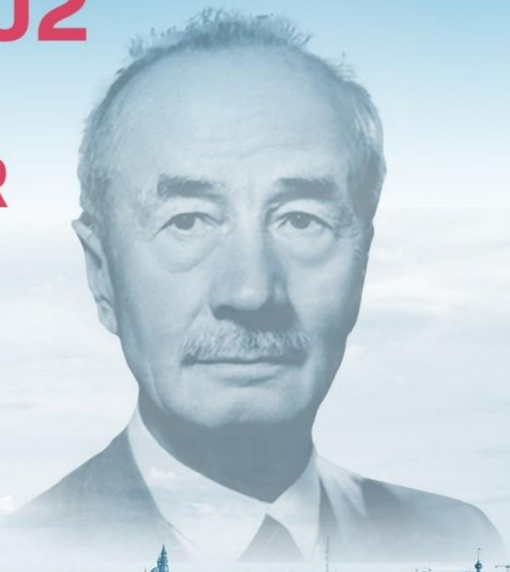


15th International Symposium



**on Marek's Disease
and Avian
Herpesviruses**
(MDAH 2026)

**June 29
July 02
2026
NAMUR**



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Programme

Monday June 29, 2026

PRE-SYMPOSIUM COURSE OF "AVIAN ANATOMY, HISTOLOGY AND PATHOLOGY"

- 08:30 – 09:00 Pre-symposium registration
- 09:00 – 09:30 Introduction to the courses
- 09:30 – 11:45 Practicals in parallel sessions
 - Group 1: Avian anatomy and pathology
 - Group 2: Avian histology
- 11:45 – 12:45 Lunch
- 12:45 – 15:00 Practicals in parallel sessions
 - Group 1: Avian histology
 - Group 2: Avian anatomy and pathology

15TH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON MAREK'S DISEASE AND AVIAN HERPESVIRUSES

- 14:00 – 20:00 Symposium registration
- 15:00 – 17:00 Guided tour of Namur | Groups A & B
- 15:30 – 17:30 Guided tour of Namur | Groups C & D

OPENING CEREMONY

- 18:00 – 18:15 Welcome speech by Benoît Muylkens, University of Namur, Belgium
- 18:15 – 19:15 **KEYNOTE LECTURE**
Karel « Ton » Schat, Cornell University, USA
Marek's Disease Virus history: key discoveries over five decades of research
- 19:15 – 21:30 Welcome dinner with Belgian delights

Tuesday June 30, 2026

- 09:00 – 09:45 **KEYNOTE LECTURE**
Benjamin Dewals, University of Liège, Belgium
Unraveling the pathogenesis of malignant catarrhal fever: a peripheral T cell lymphoma of cattle

SESSION 1: VIRUS/HOST-OMICS

Chairs: **Keith Jarosinski** and **Benoît Muylkens**

09:45 10:30	[O1]	Moriah Szpara Pennsylvania State University, USA	Genome-wide analyses of an avian herpesvirus identify 10 loci associated with tumorigenicity and vaccine escape
	[O2]	Aijian Qin Yangzhou University, China	Different regulation of gut microbiota-metabolism by oncogenic and/or attenuated Marek's Disease Virus
	[O3]	Damien Coupeau University of Namur, Belgium	Viral Lipase of Marek's Disease Virus: a model to study the biogenesis of non-canonical circular RNAs
10:30 – 11:00		Coffee break	

11:00 12:30	[O4]	Yaoyao Zhang The Pirbright Institute, UK	Mapping chicken immune cell landscapes during MDV-induced tumorigenesis
	[O5]	Steven Fiddaman The Pirbright Institute, UK	Rural Indonesian chickens reveal a deeply divergent clade of Marek's Disease Virus associated with low virulence
	[O6]	Hasitha Disanayaka University of Melbourne, Australia	Comparative transcriptomics of Infectious Laryngotracheitis Virus and Mycoplasma gallisepticum coinfections in chicken tracheal organ cultures
	[O7]	Md. Sirazul Islam University of Melbourne, Australia	Transcriptomic analysis of host-virus interactions during infection of chicken embryo kidney cells with live attenuated vaccine strains of infectious laryngotracheitis virus
	[O8]	Keith Jarosinski University of Illinois, USA	Nucleocytoplasmic shuttling of Marek's disease virus UL47-TEG5 is required for its role in horizontal transmission in chickens
	[O9]	Sophie Cutts The Pirbright Institute, UK	Characterising the activity of the Marek's disease virus virion host shutoff protein
12:30 – 13:30 Lunch			

SESSION 2: VIROLOGY

Chairs: **Caroline Denesvre** and **Benedikt Kaufer**

13:30 15:00	[O10]	Pierre Lombard University of Namur, Belgium	Functional characterization of Meq-derived circular RNA in the tumorigenesis of Marek's disease virus
	[O11]	Wei Wu Zhejiang University, China	Host ssDNA Gap Prevention Pathways Are Exploited by α -Herpesviruses to Support GC-rich Genome Replication and Reactivation
	[O12]	Stephen Spatz Athens, GA, USA	Identification of ILTV genes involved in dysregulation of the interferon type I response
	[O13]	Caroline Denesvre INRAE, France	A recombinant Marek's disease virus using ANCHOR™ technology: a novel tool to monitor viral infection in vitro and in vivo in the chicken
	[O14]	Kallinikos Chalvatzis University of Oxford / The Pirbright Institute, UK	Ultrastructural insights into Marek's Disease Virus-host cell interactions using cryogenic electron and light microscopy (cryo-CLEM) and cryogenic electron tomography (cryo-ET)
	[O15]	Camille Ponsard University of Namur, Belgium	Identification and functional characterization of a conserved locus producing circular RNAs in avian herpesviruses
15:00 – 15:30 Coffee break			
15:30 – 16:30 Panel Discussion: "Field perspectives on Marek's disease challenges"			
16:30 – 17:30 Poster session – odd numbers			
17:30 – 18:30 Free time			
18:30 – 22:00 Boat cruise on the Meuse & Walking dinner			

Wednesday July 1, 2026

09:00 – 09:45 **KEYNOTE LECTURE**

Sébastien Pfeffer, University of Strasbourg, France

A perspective on the role of RNA regulation during virus infections

SESSION 3: CLINICAL PRESENTATIONS AND DIAGNOSIS

Chairs: **Joanne Devlin** and **John Dunn**

09:45 10:30	[O16]	Susan Baigent The Pirbright Institute, UK	Marek's Disease Virus Reference Laboratory: diagnostics and research
	[O17]	Soumendu Chakravarti The Pirbright Institute, UK	Marek's disease virus serotype 2 circulates freely and naturally in commercial poultry flocks in the UK and Europe: A10-year molecular surveillance study by real-time PCR
	[O18]	Haijun Jiang Beijing Academy of Agriculture and Forestry Sciences, China	Molecular Characterization and Enhanced early Pathogenicity of Recently Circulating Marek's Disease Virus Strains in China
10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break			

SESSION 4: PATHOGENESIS

Chairs: **Mark Parcels** and **Shiro Murata**

11:00 12:30	[O19]	Kathrine Van Etten University of Illinois, USA	The role of Mardivirus glycoprotein C in cross- species transmission
	[O20]	Benoît Muylkens University of Namur, Belgium	A Meq-derived circular RNA is a potent mitigator of the virulence associated with Marek's disease virus
	[O21]	Yulin Cong Freie Universität Berlin, Germany	Decoding Marek's disease virus pathogenesis and shedding using barcode viruses
	[O22]	Yoshinosuke Motai Hokkaido University, Japan	Very short isoform of Meq protein reduces tumorigenicity and immunosuppressive capacity of Marek's disease virus
	[O23]	Christian Gravino University of Delaware, USA	The Meq oncoprotein of very virulent plus Marek's Disease Viruses (vv+MDVs) specifically binds chromatin modifier BRG1 and increases its transcriptional activity
	[O24]	Mark Parcels University of Delaware, USA	The Meq oncoprotein of Marek's Disease Virus binds DNA-damage and repair proteins and the chromothripsis-inducing protein NEDD4-BP2 (N4BP2)
12:30 – 13:30 Lunch			

SESSION 5: IMMUNOLOGY, VACCINES AND PREVENTION

Chairs: **Venugopal Nair** and **Aijian Qin**

13:30 14:30	[O25]	Vishwanatha Reddy North Carolina State University, USA	<i>In vitro</i> evaluation of intergenic sites suitable for insertion of foreign genes in the infectious laryngotracheitis virus (ILTV) genome to develop as a vaccine vector
	[O26]	Aniek Garritsen Royal GD, The Netherlands	Development and validation of a real time PCR for the detection of the Prevexxion™ RN1250 vaccine strain
	[O27]	Shaozhi Zuo The Pirbright Institute, UK	Comparative dynamics of vaccine and virulent Marek's disease virus replication and host responses in vivo
	[O28]	Jun Luo Henan Academy of Agricultural Sciences, China	A novel double-gene deleted vaccine against hypervirulent variant of MDV (HV-MDV) generated by the CRISPR/Cas9-based gene editing technology
14:30 – 15:00	Coffee break		
15:00 – 16:00	Panel Discussion: " Bridging scientific research and field realities in Marek's disease "		
16:00 – 17:00	Poster session – even numbers		
17:00 – 18:00	Free time		
18:00 – 18:30	Cable car to the Citadel of Namur		
18:30 – 22:30	Gala dinner at the Castle of Namur and return by bus to the hotel		

Thursday July 2, 2026

SESSION 5: IMMUNOLOGY, VACCINES AND PREVENTION

Chairs: **Shayan Sharif** and **Isabel Gimeno**

09:00 10:30	[O29]	Sohee Lee University of Delaware, USA	Proteomic and Kinomic Analysis of the Effects of Marek's Disease Virus Tumor-associated Exosomes (TEX) on Innate Immune Signalling
	[O30]	Hoa Do Duy Boehringer Ingelheim, Vietnam	Evaluation of the Efficacy of rHVT+IBD+ILT Vaccine in Commercial Native Broiler Chickens in Vietnam
	[O31]	Ahmed Kheimar Freie Universität Berlin, Germany	Meq-specific immunity protects against Marek's Disease virus-induced pathogenesis
	[O32]	Jaap Kool MSD Animal Health, The Netherlands	Recombinant HVT-vectored Innovax®-ND-IBD-ILT vaccine induces early and long-lasting protective immunity against four major poultry pathogens
	[O33]	Declan Kehlbeck Pennsylvania State University, USA	Evaluating the impact of tandem repeats and structural variants on Marek's disease virus attenuation and vaccine effectiveness
	[O34]	Janan Shoja Doost University of Guelph, Canada	Transcriptomic profiling reveals early immune activation and metabolic remodeling in lymphoid tissues following in ovo Marek's disease virus mRNA vaccination in chickens
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee break		

11:00 11:45	[O35]	Kun Qian Yangzhou University, China	A Recombinant Marek's Disease Virus Vected Vaccine Conferring Dual Protection against Virulent NDV and MDV Challenges
	[O36]	John Dunn Athens, GA, USA	Comparing Marek's disease vaccines' effect on virus shedding based on vaccine type and pathotype
	[O37]	Rachel Jude University of Georgia, USA	Mass Administration of Infectious Laryngotracheitis Virus (ILTV) Chicken Embryo Origin (CEO) Vaccine: Hatchery vs. Drinking Water Vaccination

CLOSING CEREMONY

11:45 – 12:30	Boehringer Ingelheim Karel Schat Awards Meeting wrap-up by Mark Parcels, University of Delaware, USA Presentation of the 2028 symposium in Japan by Shiro Murata
17:00 – 18:00	Lunch box distribution

Posters

[P1]	Arjan Baijense Animal Health Group, The Netherlands	Prevalence of Marek's Disease Virus Serotype 1 on Slow-Growing Broiler Farms: Findings from the Netherlands and Northwest Germany Between October and November 2025
[P2]	Yaoyao Zhang The Pirbright Institute, UK	Bcl-2 homolog Nr-13 (vNr-13) encoded by herpesvirus of turkeys is essential for the virus proliferation in vivo
[P3]	Paola Vaz University of Melbourne	Investigations into viral-bacterial coinfections in respiratory diseases of animals across 2D, 3D and in vivo models
[P4]	Chengfei Ge Freie Universität Berlin, Germany	Role of Marek's Disease viral Telomerase RNA in low virulent pathotypes
[P5]	Thomas Delquigny Boehringer Ingelheim, France	Unexpected Marek's Disease Virus detection in conventional broilers farms in France
[P6]	Girish Sarma Hygieia Biological Laboratories, USA	Comparison of tumor development potential of pathogenic strains of Marek's disease virus in chickens
[P7]	Zoran Žlabravec University of Ljubljana	Detection of Marek's disease virus in poultry in Slovenia in years 2024–2025
[P8]	Soumendu Chakravarti The Pirbright Institute, UK	Evolution and functional significance of Meq oncoprotein isoforms and polymorphisms in Marek's disease virus across different countries
[P9]	Asok Kumar M ICAR – Indian Veterinary Research Institute	Deciphering the role of exosomes in Marek's Disease Virus Pathogenesis: an <i>in-vitro</i> study
[P10]	Laëtitia Trapp-Fragnet INRAE, France	Exploring the role of endothelial cell infection for Marek's disease pathogenesis
[P11]	Leonardo Gonzales The Pirbright Institute, UK	Understanding the sequence diversity and functional characterization of Meq oncoprotein in Marek's disease virus from different countries
[P12]	Kun Qian Yangzhou University, China	Construction of Recombinant CVI988 Vaccine Expressing H9 Subtype AIV Hemagglutinin and Its Protective Efficacy
[P13]	Muhammad Abid The Pirbright Institute, UK	Generation and efficacy of a recombinant Herpesvirus of Turkeys (rHVT) co-expressing IBDV-VP2 and NDV-F as a Trivalent Vaccine Candidate
[P14]	Molalegne Bitew Ethiopian Bio and Emerging Technology Institute, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	Pathogenicity of Field Marek's Disease Virus Serotype-1 and Vaccine Efficacy Test in Chicken in Eastern Shewa Ethiopia
[P15]	Federico Bonorino North Carolina State University, USA / Universidad de León, Spain	Cellular infiltrations in the feather pulp of CVI-LTR-vaccinated chicken with or without challenge with vv+MDV 648A strain at 3 weeks post infection

[P16]	Abdelhamid Fares North Carolina State University, USA / University of Sadat City, Egypt	Serial back passages of vv+MDV 648A strain in CVI-LTR-vaccinated chickens result in a drastic decrease in its transmission
[P17]	Isabel Gimeno North Carolina State University, USA	Safety and efficacy of HVT vaccines grown in Diploid Growth Serum Reduced Medium
[P18]	Gurudutt Joshi Ventri Biologicals, Venkateshwara Hatcheries Pvt. Ltd, India	Transforming Poultry Health in India: ProVect-NDIBD Experimental Vaccine Against Newcastle & Infectious Bursal Diseases
[P19]	Gurudutt Joshi Ventri Biologicals, Venkateshwara Hatcheries Pvt. Ltd, India	Recombinant HVT Breakthrough in India: Advancing Protection Against Newcastle Disease in Poultry
[P20]	Jaap Kool MSD Animal Health, The Netherlands	The recombinant HVT-vectored Innovax®-ND-IBD-ILT vaccine induces protective immunity against Infectious Bursal Disease Virus two weeks after vaccination
[P21]	Caterina Lupini University of Bologna, Italy	Early post-vaccination assessment of CVI-LTR vaccine intake using a purpose-built molecular detection protocol
[P22]	Henk Pouwels MSD Animal Health, The Netherlands	HVT-ND-H5: A Double Recombinant HVT-Based Vaccine for Protection Against Newcastle Disease and Avian Influenza clade 2.3.4.4b
[P23]	Esther Schonewille MSD Animal Health, Germany	Effect of Combining MDV 1 Vaccines with Recombinant HVT Vaccines on Protection, HVT Replication, and Insert Specific Antibody Responses
[P24]	Yu-Wei Tsai National Pingtung University of Science and Technology, Taiwan	Impact of standardized inversion agitation of vaccine bags on the immunization efficacy against Marek's disease in layer pullets
[P25]	Louann Tournoux University of Namur, Belgium	Characterization of a conserved circular RNA produced from Marek's disease virus UL15 gene, a key component of the viral DNA packaging machinery