

In memoriam

Cristiana Patta, DVM, 1958-2012

Virologist and specialist in African swine fever and exotic animal diseases



The veterinary world is shocked and deeply saddened by the untimely death of Cristiana Patta, manager at Sardinia's *Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale*.

Cristiana was a nationally and internationally acclaimed virologist, distinguished throughout her intense but all-too-brief life by her talent and professionalism. After studying microbiology and virology at the University of Sassari, specialising in microbiological and virological techniques, she began her career as a researcher in the viral animal diseases sector at the *Istituto di Sassari*. Her work included the main aspects of exotic animal diseases, from diagnosis

to control, as well as the planning and management of eradication programmes for the principal infectious diseases (swine fever, brucellosis, tuberculosis and bluetongue) under European Union surveillance.

Her knowledge of swine fever – and particularly African swine fever – led her to become a national and international expert in the control of this disease. In this role, she became a member of the roster of experts of the Ministry of Health and the European Commission. She contributed to numerous European research projects and was an invited speaker at many scientific assemblies sponsored by international organisations such as the OIE, FAO and EU.

Cristiana also provided an authoritative contribution to training activities promoted by the *Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise 'G. Caporale'* in Teramo in its capacity as OIE collaboration centre for veterinary training, epidemiology, food safety and animal welfare, offering her expertise in exotic livestock diseases. The Italian veterinary service and national and European reference centres all benefitted from her experience and knowledge, through training events organised by the Ministry of Health and the regional authorities. Her technical expertise was matched by her managerial skills, in particular in the clinical management of veterinary public health facilities.

The gap left by Christiana cannot be filled: she will be missed not only for her professional services to the veterinary community but, above all, for her humanity, warmth and great empathy. She will leave an indelible trace in the hearts of all those who had the good fortune to know her.