



Prof. Ann van Soom

Ghent University

Ann Van Soom graduated in 1988 as a DVM at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Ghent University, Belgium, and obtained a Ph.D. on the development of bovine embryos in 1996. She has been employed at Ghent University since 1990. Currently, she holds a position as a full professor in the Department of Internal Medicine, Reproduction, and Population Health, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Ghent University. She has been teaching assisted reproduction in domestic species, small animal reproduction, and obstetrics to veterinary students for more than 20 years.

She is a diplomate of the European College of Animal Reproduction (ECAR) since 1999 and has been a member of the EVSSAR and the IETS for many years. She was elected as a governor for IETS in 2007 and 2013. She served as a member and Chair of the HASAC (Health and Safety Advisory Committee) Research Subcommittee of IETS for about ten years. She chaired the COST Action Epiconcept FA1201 from 2012-2016, was a member of the EU-ITN network RepBiotech, and is now involved in the EU-ITN network EUrova. She has been a member of the EVSSAR board since 2023 and a member of the ICAR standing committee. She also serves on national and international advisory committees on sanitary risks involved with assisted reproduction in domestic species and authored a chapter in the 4th edition of the IETS Manual on these issues.

She supervises a group of about 10 Ph.D. students and three postdocs working on embryonic development and semen quality in various model species, including horses, cattle, cats, dogs, and pigs. The main goals of her research at the Reproductive Biology Unit are to determine the causes of epigenetic changes and inferior quality of in vitro-produced embryos, focusing on suboptimal culture conditions in vitro and embryo-maternal interaction in vivo. The research aims to define key molecules and messengers, like extracellular vesicles, involved in oocyte maturation and embryo-maternal dialogue, as well as communication between oocytes/embryos during group culture in vitro. Additional research focuses on factors affecting fresh and frozen semen quality in different domestic species and the impact of heat stress on bull fertility. Molecular biology techniques, including whole genome sequencing and protein analysis, are used to evaluate gene expression, chromosomal instability, and secretions of oocytes

and embryos, investigating interactions with the maternal tract and during in vitro culture to gain insights into underlying mechanisms and pathways. Prof. Van Soom has published more than 400 papers with an h-index of 47.

She has supervised a total of 47 Ph.D. students as the main supervisor or co-supervisor and has served on the examination committee for 20 international Ph.D. students and more than 30 national Ph.D. students.

Her clinical activities relate to small animal reproduction, focusing on semen collection, gamete cryopreservation, and artificial insemination in cats and dogs. She also visits catteries and dog breeding facilities experiencing breeding problems, offering advice on new methods of contraception and estrus induction in dogs and cats to practicing veterinarians, and providing advice in small animal obstetrics. As a hobby, she breeds English Springer Spaniels and Somali cats. For more information, you can view her

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