

Veterinary Research News

The Veterinary Community

WesternU College of Veterinary Medicine accepts first class

The AVMA Council on Education has granted Western University of Health Sciences College of Veterinary Medicine the status of provisional accreditation. The council made its decision on the basis of a letter of reasonable assurance, subsequent semiannual reports documenting progress, and the college's acceptance of its first class. By late May 2003, the college had accepted and received deposits from 86 students who plan to attend this fall.

During the first two years of the academic program, students will participate in a problem-based learning curriculum. This emphasizes learning basic sciences in the context of case studies and focusing on students mastering the ability to be self-directed learners.

Committed to a reverence for life philosophy, the college will obtain anatomy cadavers through a willed-body program. Students will focus on clinical skills first with a variety of models and simulations, and then with procedures on animals that need them for medical reasons. The college also places an emphasis on partnerships and alliances with veterinary practices and other institutions, such as zoos and laboratory animal facilities.

The college may remain on provisional accreditation status for only five years. During this time, the college must provide evidence, including semiannual reports, to ensure future compliance with each Standard Requirement for an Accredited College of Veterinary Medicine. The council will keep a watchful eye to protect the interests of enrolled students, by conducting site visits and evaluating additional evidence.

The council's next site visit is scheduled for the fall of 2004, the first semester of the second year of the inaugural class. The visit will be a full site audit wherein a self-study describing the program and additional plans must be submitted to the council.

Dr. Shirley Johnston, dean, says the college may have a leg up because it is a private institution. "The state economic downturn will not directly impact us, because we do not receive state funding," she said. "That is something that I see as an advantage of private schools in these challenging times."

Phi Zeta honors two researchers

Phi Zeta, the national honor society for veterinary medicine, recently presented awards to two veterinarians for their outstanding scholarship and research in animal welfare and animal health.

The national awardees are judged on the basis of research manuscripts and are selected from a pool of local Phi Zeta chapter awardees.

Dr. W. Daniel Mertens, winner of the Eta chapter competition at Texas A&M University, received the 2003 national award in the basic sciences category for his manuscript "Polysulfated glycosaminoglycans modulate transcription of interleukin-1B treated chondrocytes in monolayer culture."

Dr. Alison J. Patricelli, winner of the Alpha Alpha chapter competition

at the University of Wisconsin, received the 2003 award in the clinical sciences category for her manuscript "Juvenile pubic symphysiodesis in dysplastic puppies at 15 and 20 weeks of age."

Excellence in teaching recognized by Pfizer, UGA

Dr. Scott Brown, a professor of physiology at the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine, was awarded the national 2002 Carl Norden-Pfizer Distinguished Teacher Award at the annual meeting of the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges in March 2003. He was selected on the basis of character, leadership, and teaching ability as judged by the responsiveness of his students.

He received an engraved plaque and a gift of \$1,000 as part of the award, which is sponsored by Pfizer Animal Health.

In addition to the national award, he recently received the Josiah Meigs Award, the highest honor given by the university for teaching excellence.

Dr. Brown, a 1982 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, joined the faculty of the Georgia veterinary college in 1989, and since then, he has received five awards for research and been published in numerous textbooks and journals. A renal pathophysiologicalist, he has been awarded research grants totaling \$2.75 million and teaching grants totaling \$200,000.

Veterinarians appointed to USPOULTRY advisory committees

The U.S. Poultry and Egg Association recently appointed several veterinarians to its advisory committees. Dr. Ron Prestage of Prestage Farms of South Carolina will serve on the nominating and the environmental impact

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committees. Dr. John Smith, Baldwin, Va., of Fieldale Farms will serve on the research advisory committee. Dr. Elizabeth Krushinskie, Broadway, Va., of Pilgrim's Pride will serve on the microbial advisory. Dr. Don Waldrip, Oakwood, Ga., of Wayne Farms will serve on the poultry health committee.

Research in Progress

Researchers study foodborne pathogens

Researchers are currently about a third of the way through a project to investigate the source, diversity, and resistance of three harmful bacteria, *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, and *Yersinia*, in swine fed antimicrobials and swine that are not fed the drugs.

The project, led by Dr. Wondwossen Gebreyes, assistant professor of food safety and molecular epidemiology at North Carolina State University, also includes Dr. Peter Bahnon, assistant professor of swine medicine at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Dr. Julie Funk, an assistant professor of food safety and epidemiology at The Ohio State University. The Department of Agriculture's National Research Initiative is funding the study with a \$520,715 grant.

The three-year project involves 60 farms throughout the United States, half that use antimicrobials and half that do not use them. By examining fecal samples from the pigs and taking swabs from carcasses in the slaughterhouse, the investigators hope to discover food safety risks involved in both systems of production. The risks of potential foodborne pathogens have not been clearly defined for antimicrobial-free swine production.

Global News

Monkeypox virus found in Midwest

Monkeypox virus was diagnosed for the first time in the Western Hemisphere in June. As of early July, the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had confirmed 32 cases of monkeypox infection in people, with some 49 possible infections

under investigation. No human deaths are related to the outbreak.

Infected persons had direct or close contact with sick pet prairie dogs, a Gambian rat, or a rabbit that was housed with an ill prairie dog. Person-to-person transmission by contact with lesions has also been reported. The Department of Health and Human Services had banned the sale and display of prairie dogs and six specific African rodent species. Moreover, importation of all rodents from Africa was embargoed.

Monkeypox was reported in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, and Ohio. Federal and state investigators have traced the virus to an exotic pet dealer in Villa Park, Ill.

The CDC has confirmed the presence of monkeypox virus in one Gambian rat, three dormice, and two rope squirrels. The animals were part of a shipment of African rodents exported to the United States on April 9. This shipment is believed to be the source of the current U.S. outbreak of monkeypox. As a result, CDC has issued guidance on the quarantine and euthanasia of all animals from the shipment, as well as prairie dogs from the United States that were exposed to the imported species or with other animals suspected to have monkeypox. These recommendations aim to prevent further spread of the monkeypox virus to humans and other animals.

Monkeypox virus is less infectious than the deadly smallpox virus and people infected with monkeypox virus rarely die as a result of the disease. Some of the infected animals have died, however. The virus incubates in people for about 12 days, but that period can range from four to 20 days. Animal species susceptible to monkeypox virus include nonhuman primates, rabbits, and some rodents. Person-to-person transmission of monkeypox virus has been reported to occur at a rate of 1 percent to 10 percent.

Funding Announced

Academy funds dermatology research

The American Academy of Veterinary Dermatology has awarded a

research grant of \$8,895 to Drs. John Angus and Karen Campbell at the University of Illinois for their research proposal titled "Evaluation of aerobic and anaerobic microbial flora and antimicrobial susceptibility patterns of isolates from the horizontal ear canal and tympanic bulla of dogs requiring total ear canal ablation."

The academy announced the grant at its annual meeting, April 9-13 in Monterey, Calif.

News Updates

Stakeholders discuss ECFVG, PAVE

Stakeholders interested in processes to certify the educational equivalence of graduates of non-AVMA-accredited veterinary colleges gathered in Philadelphia June 26 to comment about existing programs and to talk about the feasibility of establishing a single, independent program.

The two current programs designed to measure educational equivalence are the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates program, administered by the AVMA, and the American Association of Veterinary State Boards' Program for Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence.

In 2001, the AAVSB introduced the PAVE as an alternative to the ECFVG program. Since then, 10 states and the Virgin Islands have adopted the PAVE in addition to the AVMA program.

As debate over the best way to assess educational equivalence continues, the AVMA and AAVSB are attempting to find common ground for what requirements foreign veterinary graduates must meet to sit for state licensure. Three representatives each from the ECFVG and PAVE Board met for the first time in February to discuss the philosophies and processes of their respective programs. The representatives subsequently recommended, and their boards approved, a public meeting in June for interested parties to voice their thoughts about educational equivalence.

Numerous stakeholders, from

deans and state veterinary board members to veterinary students and professional representatives, submitted written comments. Many of them traveled to Philadelphia to personally address the ECFVG and PAVE Board panel. Comments ranged from support or criticism of the ECFVG program and PAVE, to recommending joint recognition of both the ECFVG program and PAVE, to expressing hopes that a certifying entity independent of the AVMA and AAVSB might be established.

Expanded coverage of the meeting will appear on the AVMA Web site (www.avma.org) and in the August 1 *JAVMA* News section.

From the AVMA

New congressional fellow announced



Dr. John Herrmann

The AVMF Congressional Fellowship Selection Committee is pleased to introduce Dr. John A. Herrmann as the new addition to the 2003-2004 class of AVMA/AVMF Congressional Science Fellows. Dr. Herrmann joins Drs. Michael Q. Bailey and Rebecca Walton. Their fellowships were announced in the July *AJVR*, along with that of Dr. Derek A. Mosier, who has withdrawn as a fellow.

Dr. Herrmann, a private practice clinician and owner from Freeport, Ill., will go to Washington, as he says, "...to collaborate with other science fellows, political leaders, and staff while working to inform public policy." He looks to the fellowship as a means of exploring important health issues at the national level.

A 1978 graduate of the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Herrmann recently received his MPH degree from the UI School of Public Health. He is a diplomate of the American College of Theriogenologists.

Call for *AJVR* reviewers

Members of the Board of Scientific Reviewers of the *American Journal*

of *Veterinary Research* play a vital role in the peer review of manuscripts submitted for publication and in assisting the editors to maintain the high standards of the journal.

During its September 2003 meeting, the AVMA Council on Research's Committee on the *AJVR* will make appointments to the *AJVR* Board of Scientific Reviewers. Every year, the committee selects 20 to 25 individuals representing a variety of subject areas to serve on the board.

Readers who wish to be considered for appointment to the *AJVR* Board of Scientific Reviewers should contact Dr. Kurt Matushek at the AVMA office for an application form. Completed application forms must be returned by Aug. 15, 2003. Appointments are for a three-year term; new appointments will become effective Jan. 1, 2004. Individuals appointed to the board will use the AVMA's new online system for manuscript peer review.

Reports Released

Poll finds Americans cool on animal rights

A Gallup poll testing public reaction to several animal rights goals found that most Americans aren't willing to fundamentally change their views about animals.

Conducted May 5-7, the Gallup survey of 1,005 adults discovered that a majority—71 percent—believe animals are entitled to some protections from harm and exploitation. But just 25 percent think that animals deserve the same rights as people.

In addition, most of those surveyed opposed banning all product testing or medical research on laboratory animals or prohibiting all types of hunting. There was, however, substantial support—62 percent—for passing stricter laws regulating the treatment of farm animals.

Bernard E. Rollin, PhD, a professor of philosophy and biomedical sciences at Colorado State University, says increased federal regulation of the biomedical research industry has assuaged public concerns about laboratory animal abuse. "Now," Dr. Rollin

observed, "people are asking for agricultural protections."

Interestingly, of the 25 percent who say that animals deserve the same rights as people, many nevertheless objected to limitations on animal use. For instance, 48 percent reject the notion of banning medical research on animals, 38 percent oppose prohibitions on testing products on animals, 23 percent don't support greater regulation of farm animals, and more than half oppose banning all types of hunting.

Informational Resources

Antimicrobial testing standards published

The National Committee for Clinical Laboratory Standards has recently published a reference report concerning antimicrobial testing standards: NCCLS Report M42-R, "Methods for Antimicrobial Disk Susceptibility Testing of Bacteria Isolated from Aquatic Animals; A Report." The document provides the most up-to-date techniques for disk diffusion susceptibility testing of aquatic isolates, as well as quality control ranges for monitoring the performance of study conditions.

Many bacteria that cause disease in aquatic animals require growth conditions that vary substantially from routine mammalian veterinary pathogens. Researchers, therefore, have developed antimicrobial testing standards for organisms that prefer or require conditions such as low temperatures, semisolid media, or supplemented media (e.g., sodium chloride, serum).

Future documents will be prepared to describe standard broth dilution and agar dilution techniques. As more information becomes available, especially regarding interpretive criteria, it will be added to future editions of this new NCCLS report.

Individuals can purchase the NCCLS report by visiting the committee's Web site at www.nccls.org, clicking on "catalog" and then "reports," and selecting the new reference publication. The publication costs \$35 for NCCLS members and \$65 for nonmembers.