



Veterinary Research News

News of the Profession

Vallat earns first Penn Vet World Award

Dr. Bernard Vallat, director general of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), was selected as the first recipient of the Penn Vet World Award.

The award is given annually to a veterinarian who has dramatically changed the practice and image of the profession and substantially influenced the lives and careers of others, and provides \$100,000 in unrestricted funding to the recipient.

The award is underwritten by the Vernon and Shirley Hill Foundation. Dr. Vallat was selected by a jury led by Dr. Alan M. Kelly, dean emeritus of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Vallat was presented the award April 29 during a ceremony at Irvine Auditorium on the Penn campus.

In addition to the Penn Vet World Award, Penn veterinary school announced that Rachel Toaff-Rosenstein and Warren Waybright, both third-year students at the school, were selected as the first winners of the Penn Vet Student Inspiration Award. They each received \$100,000 in unrestricted funding in recognition of their plans to substantially advance the frontiers of veterinary medicine.

Toaff-Rosenstein plans to use her award to pursue postgraduate studies in animal welfare, while Waybright will use his award to develop a veterinary outreach program to Bolivia and other South American countries.

Dr. Vallat was elected director general of the OIE in May 2000 and began serving in January 2001. He was unanimously reelected in May 2005 for a further five-year mandate. Under his leadership, the OIE has taken on more responsibilities in all aspects of animal

health, including veterinary public health, food safety, and animal welfare.

Ecosystem health is goal of Envirovet

In June, the Envirovet Summer Institute welcomed the latest class of veterinarians and veterinary students who will learn how their profession can protect people and wildlife by preserving the ecosystems they share.

The goal of Envirovet is simple: increasing the number of veterinarians working to solve environmental problems that threaten animal and human health. Since its inception in 1991, more than 400 veterinarians and students from some 47 countries have trained in the program.

When Dr. Val Beasley, a professor of veterinary toxicology at the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine, started the organization, he saw it as a means of getting veterinary students engaged in environmental toxicology and ecologic stewardship.

"As a toxicologist myself, I recognized that a lot of problems of aquatic animals were related to contamination issues," said the Envirovet executive director. "I decided there was an opportunity to complement that with more of an emphasis on fresh water and on the effects of contaminants."

Envirovet has since undergone a major evolution. Today, the program is a collaboration of the University of Illinois, the University of California-Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, White Oak Conservation Center, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, and a range of U.S. and international organizations that provide instructors for the course.

In many ways, Envirovet was ahead of its time. "We've been focused on introducing veterinarians and veterinary students to concepts in wildlife and environmental and human health—the one-health concept—since

our inception nearly 20 years ago," said Dr. Kirsten Gilardi, an Envirovet director with the UC-Davis Wildlife Health Center.

The 25 or so Envirovet students are immersed in instruction ranging from epidemiology and wildlife diseases to natural resource economics and hydrology. Through field exercises, lectures, and laboratories, students gain an understanding of the direct and indirect impacts of infectious agents and toxicants on species, communities, ecosystems, and public health.

Moreover, the program provides a greater understanding of the effects of habitat loss, altered predator-prey relationships, and exotic species invasions. These stressors are considered in concert with related environmental regulations, policies, and laws that influence the integrity of wildlife populations.

Envirovet students spend the first part of the seven-week course at conservation and oceanographic institutes in the United States. Next, they travel to a developing country for three weeks to experience how ecosystems health issues and strategies compare from country to country. This year, participants will be in Tanzania.

Envirovet students have included a veterinary college dean, department heads, and professors. Alumni of the course have become veterinary school professors and section directors at a number of diagnostic laboratories. Others have found careers with agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency, while some have started nonprofit organizations. Several heads of wildlife health services in east Africa and elsewhere have gone through the Envirovet training, Dr. Gilardi added.

On April 22—Earth Day—at a meeting in Washington, D.C., hosted by The H. John Heinz III Center for

Science, Economics, and the Environment, Envirovet leaders met with representatives from federal and international agencies and organizations including the AVMA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Agriculture Department, U.S. Agency for International Development, and others to explain the program's mission and how it promotes human and animal health. (For a complete list of the groups attending the meeting, visit www.cvm.uiuc.edu/envirovet/index.html.)

From the AVMA

Resolutions submitted to HOD

Fourteen resolutions were submitted to the AVMA House of Delegates by the May 19 deadline—60 days prior to the HOD regular annual session, July 18-19 in New Orleans. A 15th resolution was submitted after the deadline; for it to be considered, a two-thirds majority vote of the HOD is required to waive the prior notice provision.

The resolutions cover issues ranging from drug compounding to veterinary student concerns. The upswing in submissions attests to the efforts of Dr. Mark Helfat, chair of the House Advisory Committee, to promote more HOD-driven initiatives.

AVMA members can access the 15 resolutions from the AVMA Web site, www.avma.org, by clicking on Volunteer Leadership Area, logging in, selecting House of Delegates, and clicking on Resolutions.

Council on Education accredits Irish school, moves three colleges to limited status

The AVMA Council on Education recently granted full accreditation to an Irish veterinary school and moved three U.S. veterinary colleges to limited accreditation status.

The COE granted full accreditation for seven years to the veterinary school at the University College Dublin in Ireland. Veterinary schools in Australia, New Zealand, England, Scotland, and the Netherlands previously have earned full AVMA accreditation.

On the basis of a report of evaluation, the council moved Western University of Health Sciences College

of Veterinary Medicine from provisional to limited accreditation. As a new program, the WesternU veterinary college had operated under provisional accreditation since 2003.

On the basis of interim reports, the council moved the Louisiana State University and Tuskegee University veterinary schools from full to limited accreditation.

Veterinary colleges on limited accreditation must correct one or more specific deficiencies within two years, unless the COE allows an extension. Accreditation reports are confidential.

The COE granted continued full accreditation status to the remainder of the U.S. veterinary colleges. Canada's University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, opening this fall, received a letter of reasonable assurance from the council—which can be a step toward provisional accreditation. The other Canadian veterinary colleges received continued full accreditation.

Education council schedules site visits

The AVMA Council on Education has scheduled site visits to schools/colleges of veterinary medicine at five institutions for the remainder of 2008.

Comprehensive site visits are planned for Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Sept. 14-18; University of Edinburgh Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, Oct. 19-23; University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, Nov. 2-6; and University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine, Dec. 7-11.

A focused site visit to the Tuskegee University School of Veterinary Medicine will be conducted in November (date to be determined).

The council welcomes written comments on these plans or the programs to be evaluated. Comments should be addressed to Dr. David E. Granstrom, Director, Education and Research Division, AVMA, 1931 N. Meacham Road, Suite 100, Schaumburg, IL 60173-4360. Comments must be signed by the person submitting them to be considered.

Funding Announced

Maddie's Fund supports MAF study

Maddie's Fund, the Pet Rescue Foundation, has made a generous pledge to Morris Animal Foundation to help support the development and testing of a behavioral screening tool for dogs relinquished to shelters.

The gift will support an MAF study that is being conducted at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine by James A. Serpell, PhD. Other sponsors of the study include Firehouse Charities/Firehouse Animal Health Centers, American Humane Association, and P&G Pet Care.

With financial support from MAF and now Maddie's Fund, Dr. Serpell is developing a short survey that will assess the behavioral information provided by owners who give up their pets. His goal is to help shelter staff better predict the adoptability of an animal, which will increase the number of animals that stay in homes after adoption.

According to MAF, nearly half of owners cite behavior problems as a contributing factor to giving up a pet, and a quarter cite behavior as the primary factor. Even when not specifically reported in shelter intake interviews, behavior problems are likely a contributor because they weaken the human-animal bond, the MAF reported.

Maddie's Fund is hoping to create a no-kill nation where all healthy and treatable shelter dogs and cats are guaranteed a loving home. Visit www.maddiesfund.org to learn more.

The MAF has funded nearly 1,400 humane animal health studies with funds totaling more than \$51 million. To learn more, log on to www.MorrisAnimalFoundation.org.

USDA renews funding for integrated research on Johne's

The Department of Agriculture has renewed funding for the Johne's Disease Integrated Program—providing \$4.8 million for four years of research on control programs for bovine infection with *Mycobacterium avium* subsp. *paratuberculosis*.

Currently, the USDA estimates that such infections are present in

almost 70 percent of U.S. dairy herds as well as a smaller percentage of beef herds.

"Johne's is a serious disease affecting large numbers of beef and dairy cattle and accounts for more than \$200 million in economic losses," said Gale Buchanan, USDA undersecretary for research, education, and economics.

The USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service initially funded Johne's integrated research in 2004 with a three-year, \$4.4 million grant. The continuation of the coordinated agricultural project will focus on developing new tests, vaccines, and strategies to help producers manage, control, and prevent the disease.

"This influx of monies is a good thing, as research dollars for food animals are drying up in spite of the increasing pressures of zoonotic and foreign animal diseases in the United States," said Dr. Michael Bolton, president of the American Association of Bovine Practitioners.

Johne's has a potential link with Crohn's disease in humans, though the cause of Crohn's remains unclear.

Congress established a control program for Johne's disease in cattle with the 2002 Farm Bill, authorizing appropriations as necessary through 2007. A provision in the 2007 Farm Bill, which Congress recently passed, authorizes appropriations until 2012.

In addition to the Johne's coordinated agricultural project, the USDA

has helped develop the Voluntary Bovine Johne's Disease Control Program. Another pertinent USDA program is the National Johne's Disease Demonstration Herd Project.

Dr. Bolton said the multiple-state demonstration herd project involves producers in evaluating management practices for controlling Johne's. He is working with part of Michigan's demonstration herd to study early detection of the disease in calves.

The Dairy 2007 study, which the USDA recently released, includes information about the prevalence of Johne's disease and implementation of management practices. The information sheet "Johne's Disease on U.S. Dairies, 1991-2007" provides relevant data from Dairy 2007 and similar studies in 1991, 1996, and 2002.

The report indicates that producers have become more familiar with Johne's, probably as a result of educational efforts. Participation in Johne's disease certification or control programs has increased, with almost a third of operations reporting participation in such a program during 2007.

The full report is available at www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ceah/ncahs/ by clicking on National Animal Health Monitoring System, then looking under "New Publications."

The Veterinary Community University of Tennessee expands teaching hospital

The University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine recently

completed a \$10 million expansion of its small animal teaching hospital.

The hospital treats about 15,000 small animals annually. Since 1978, the caseload has increased by more than 70 percent.

The 32,000-square-foot hospital expansion adds an isolation suite for small animals with infectious diseases as well as areas for medical and radiation oncology, canine physical rehabilitation and therapy, and avian and zoologic medicine. The new space houses a linear accelerator, a therapy pool, and two underwater treadmills.

The college continues to work toward securing funding to expand its large animal teaching hospital.

Abstracts Invited

E-abstract submissions for CRWAD sought

The deadline for abstract submission to the 2008 Conference of Research Workers in Animal Diseases is Aug. 25. The meeting runs Dec. 7-9 in Chicago.

Electronic abstract submission is required for the 2008 meeting. Submissions must be in Word format. E-mail one copy of the abstract as an attached document. The e-mail attachment should be sent to Robert P. Ellis, PhD, CRWAD executive director, at robert.ellis@colostate.edu.

Additional submission guidelines and information about CRWAD are posted at www.cvmbs.colostate.edu/mip/crwad/.