

Veterinary Research News

Biosecurity

Animal extremist group claims responsibility for vandalizing university laboratory

The Animal Liberation Front claimed responsibility for vandalizing a laboratory Sept. 24 at Louisiana State University's School of Veterinary Medicine where the effects of environmental pollutants on human health are studied.

Computers and research equipment were destroyed and red paint was splashed throughout the laboratory. "ALF" was painted across a glass partition. Mice used as part of the research were housed in another building and were unaffected. None of the research data were lost. At press time, damage costs had not yet been assessed, according to school officials.

An e-mail sent to local news media the day of the incident stated that members of ALF, a radical animal rights group, were responsible for the attack. The message detailed the destruction to the laboratory while also condemning the use of animals in research.

"These gas chambers subject suffering animals to daily doses of cigarette smoke and industrial pollutants causing pain, suffering, and death," the e-mail stated. "It should be clear that animals do not deserve to be tortured and die in this pointless research."

Veterinary school Dean Michael G. Groves explained that no lethal gas experiments are conducted at the facility. Rather, mice are exposed to air pollutants, such as secondhand smoke, and then observed to determine the long-term health effects, he said.

ALF and its counterpart, the Environmental Liberation Front, are domestic ecoterrorist groups that target perceived abusers of animals and the environment. Research facilities, housing developments, farms, even sport utility vehicles and Humvees, have been vandalized as part of the groups' activities.

The threat posed by ecoterrorists has become so acute that a provision in the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 imposes fines and prison sentences on persons convicted of committing or conspiring to commit such acts.

The attack on the laboratory occurred while the facility was being renovated. The facility is unmarked and one of several outlying buildings located behind the main veterinary facility. Although a fence surrounds the outlying buildings, security is concentrated primarily in the main veterinary facility, where dangerous biologic agents are housed.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is treating the incident as an act of domestic terrorism.

Repairs to the laboratory are under way, and the veterinary school was also looking at enhancing security for the outlying buildings. Repairs and renovation have been put on a fast track, with the goal of getting the laboratory up and running by Nov. 1.

Reports Released

NRC issues revised nutrient requirements for dogs and cats

A new report from the National Academies' National Research Council recommends revised nutrient guidelines to keep dogs and cats healthy. These guidelines update the dietary recommendations made by the NRC in 1985.

The National Academy of Sciences released the report Sept. 8 during a symposium and public hearing at the National Academies' Keck Center in Washington, D.C. Webcast around the world, the symposium featured presentations by the international team of experts who developed the report. The Webcast will be archived at www.nationalacademies.org for future listening.

The National Institutes of Health, Food and Drug Administration, and

Pet Food Institute sponsored the report. The NRC is the principal operating arm of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering.

The 450-page report reviews and summarizes thousands of scientific papers published over the past 25 years and makes science-based recommendations on nutrient requirements. Recommendations are based on an animal's physical activity level and stage in life. The report also looks at how nutrients are metabolized.

"Nutrient Requirements of Dogs and Cats" is available from the National Academies Press; phone, (800) 624-6242 or (202) 334-3313, and on the Internet at www.nap.edu.

Invitations

AVMF calls for research proposals

The American Veterinary Medical Foundation is requesting proposals for 2003-2004 AVMF Research Grants: Clinical Research Related to Diseases Affecting Cats and Dogs.

The foundation is offering a total of \$80,000 to fund two to four research proposals related to the following three topics:

- Prevention of cranial cruciate deterioration and ligament rupture in dogs
- Assessment and treatment of behavioral abnormalities in geriatric companion animals
- Assessment or development of prognostic indicators for cancer in companion animals

The AVMF and the AVMA Council on Research encourage collaborative research, and in particular, collaboration between private-practice veterinarians and academic veterinarians.

The deadline for submission of proposals is March 1, 2004. The Council

on Research will review all submitted proposals, using ad hoc reviewers as necessary. Grant award winners will be announced in August 2004. For more information or to obtain a copy of a brochure detailing grant requirements, contact Dr. Elizabeth Sabin, phone, (800) 248-2862, Ext. 6675, or e-mail, esabin@avma.org.

AVMA council, committee nominations invited

Nominations are invited for 13 AVMA council positions, 24 vacancies on committees and trusts, and four liaison representatives. The House of Delegates will fill council openings when it meets in July 2004 in Philadelphia. The Executive Board will make committee and liaison appointments at its April 2004 meeting.

Council nominations may be made by organizations represented in the HOD or by petition of 10 active members. The AVMA Bylaws provide that nominations must be postmarked no later than Feb. 1, 2004; however, because Feb. 1 is a Sunday, nominations postmarked or received Feb. 2 will be accepted. They should be sent to Dr. Bruce W. Little, AVMA executive vice president.

Nominations to committees, trusts, and policy boards may be made by local or state veterinary associations, by allied groups represented in the HOD, or by an AVMA member on that person's or another's behalf. These nominations should be sent by March 1, 2004, to Dr. Arthur V. Tennyson, AVMA assistant executive vice president. Nominations for liaison representatives are normally submitted by the council or committee that has oversight of the liaison relationship.

The vacancies are posted in the AVMA Member Center of the Web site, www.avma.org. Nominating materials for councils—including instructions for publishing candidate biographies in the 2004 campaign guide—were sent in August to AVMA delegates and chief staff officers of organizations represented in the HOD. Others may obtain nomination forms by calling AVMA headquarters at (800) 248-2862, Ext. 6651 for councils, Ext. 6605 for committees.

Nominations sought for laboratory animal research award

Nominations for the American Society of Laboratory Animal Practitioners Research Award are requested.

The award is intended to honor individuals who have made notable and repeated scientific contributions to the field. The contributions may be in the refinement or development of technical procedures that have resulted in advanced animal welfare, animal husbandry, animal health, or development of animal models.

Studies that have used laboratory animals and have resulted in notable contributions to human health, either through basic or applied research, are also applicable.

A nomination letter, four to six supporting letters directly relating to the award criteria, and a curriculum vitae should be sent to the ASLAP secretary prior to Feb. 1, 2004. The award will be presented at the AVMA Annual Convention in July. The award recipient will receive a plaque and an honorarium.

Nominations should be submitted Dr. Jim Fox through the ASLAP Coordinator, 11300 Rockville Pike, Suite 1211, Rockville, MD 20852. For information on the nomination process, refer to the ASLAP Web site, www.aslap.org.

Abstracts invited on nonsurgical contraceptive methods

The Alliance for Contraception in Cats and Dogs invites submission of abstracts for short communications at the 2004 International Symposium on Nonsurgical Contraceptive Methods for Pet Population Control. The symposium will be held June 24-27 in Breckenridge, Colo.

Abstracts will be peer-reviewed for scientific content and relevance to population control in dogs and cats. Those selected will be published in the symposium proceedings. Communications will include oral presentations of up to 12 minutes.

The deadline for abstract submission is Jan. 31, 2004. To obtain a submission form or to submit an abstract, contact Dr. Brenda Griffin, Alliance for Contraception in Cats and Dogs, Scott-Ritchey Research Center,

College of Veterinary Medicine, Auburn University, Auburn, AL 36849; e-mail, griffb1@vetmed.auburn.edu; or visit www.vetmed.vt.edu/ACCD/.

Funding Announced Grants support innovative research by veterinary students

In 2003, the Merck-Merial Veterinary Scholar Program has awarded more than \$350,000 in grants to 19 U.S. veterinary schools to fund innovative student research.

The grants support a variety of summer programs at the veterinary schools that are designed to enrich students' exposure to biomedical research. Grants of up to \$20,000 are awarded to schools with programs that provide a research experience for talented veterinary students.

Students and faculty from these programs met recently at Kansas State University for a symposium to share ideas and learn about each other's research. They presented and discussed 120 research papers on diverse topics from basic to applied science.

Since 1999, this program has contributed nearly \$2 million to support projects promoting research at veterinary schools.

The Veterinary Community Miller inducted into ARS Hall of Fame



Dr. Janice M. Miller

A veterinarian, Dr. Janice M. Miller, was inducted recently into the Hall of Fame of the Agricultural Research Service, the chief scientific research agency of the Department of Agriculture.

Researchers at the ARS nominate their peers for making major contributions to agricultural research. The scientists must be retired, or eligible to retire, to receive the award. Dr. Miller received a plaque citing her achievements during a ceremony Sept. 17 at the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Miller, who joined the ARS in 1972, was recognized for pioneering research in understanding, diagnosing,

and controlling bovine leukemia, transmissible spongiform encephalopathies, and other chronic infectious or zoonotic diseases of ruminant animals.

The knowledge and technology her research provided for the diagnosis and control of bovine leukemia virus infection is internationally recognized as the scientific basis for control and eradication, and is used in regulating international trade.

Dr. Miller identified the virus that causes bovine leukemia, as well as practical assays for preclinical diagnosis of the disease. She also developed diagnostic tests for bovine immunodeficiency disease, bovine tuberculosis, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, scrapie, and chronic wasting disease of deer and elk. Surveillance and control/eradication programs run by the ARS and the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service are based on Dr. Miller's tests.

A 1962 graduate of Kansas State University, Dr. Miller works at the ARS' National Animal Disease Center in Ames, Iowa. She is a member of the National Academy of Sciences.

Zhang appointed to endowed chair at Iowa veterinary college

Dr. Qijing Zhang, a researcher of foodborne pathogens of animal origin, has been appointed to the Frank K. Ramsey Endowed Chair at Iowa State University's College of Veterinary Medicine.

Named for the former faculty member, the chair is to enhance the stature and programs of Iowa's veterinary college. It is used to recruit faculty, recognize outstanding faculty in the college, and bring visiting professors to the college.

Dr. Zhang joined the Iowa State faculty in April as an associate professor of veterinary microbiology and preventive medicine. His research focuses on *Campylobacter jejuni*. Previously, he was at The Ohio State University.

Grants from the Department of Agriculture and National Institutes of Health support Dr. Zhang's current research on antimicrobial resistance, molecular biology, immune mechanisms, and intervention strategies for human foodborne pathogens.

Reed honored for contributions to applied equine research

Dr. Stephen M. Reed has been selected as the winner of the 2003 World Equine Veterinary Association Award for Applied Research, funded by a grant from Schering-Plough Animal Health Corporation.

Dr. Reed, a professor and head of equine medicine and surgery at the College of Veterinary Medicine, The Ohio State University, received his award at the 8th Congress of the World Equine Veterinary Association in Buenos Aires, Oct. 15-17. He also gave a presentation on the benefits of applied equine research.

An internationally recognized equine neurologist, Dr. Reed (OSU '76) has focused his research and clinical interests on equine protozoal myeloencephalitis and cervical vertebral stenotic myelopathy. Most recently, Dr. Reed, along with Dr. William J.A. Saville, has helped elucidate the life cycle of *Sarcosystis neurona* and developed a model to reproduce the disease in horses. He also is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine.

Research Results

Airborne antimicrobials cause concern

Researchers have discovered that antimicrobials given to pigs in feed can end up in dust clouds that swirl inside swine housing. The new study was published online June 18 in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*.

Research has shown that veterinarians and other people who work at such operations can develop severe respiratory problems from exposure to dust that contains microorganisms, endotoxins, and allergens. According to researchers of the new study, further risks may arise from inhalation of dust contaminated with a mixture of antimicrobials.

In a retrospective study, German researchers collected dust samples from a pig finishing farm, between 1981 and 2000, and analyzed them for various antimicrobials. In 18 of 20 samples, they detected up to five drugs, including tylosin, various tetracyclines, sulfamethazine, and chloram-

phenicol. Total concentrations ranged from 0.2 mg/kg to 12.5 mg/kg dust.

Gerd Hamscher, a food chemist with a special interest in analytic chemistry at the Hannover School of Veterinary Medicine in Germany, led the study. Hamscher, who holds a doctorate in his field, says he was surprised that they found at least one compound in 90 percent of the samples.

According to the researchers, antimicrobial dust clouds may contribute to farm workers' allergies. Ongoing exposure to subtherapeutic concentrations of various antimicrobials can also create optimal conditions for the development of antimicrobial resistance. Dr. Hamscher emphasizes, however, that further studies are needed.

"It is too early to quantify the health hazards for farmers," he said. "We discussed, in the paper, allergic reactions and the development of antibiotic resistance, but additional studies are required to check these hypotheses."

From the AVMA

Updating AVMA membership records simplified

To further improve the accuracy of the AVMA membership records database and make it simpler for members to notify staff of changes, the AVMA Web site has added two new links, according to Brent L. Heathcott, CAE, assistant director of the Membership and Field Services Division.

One link appears at the top right-hand column of the home page, www.avma.org. Under the "About AVMA" banner, the link reads "Update Your Membership Information." That option allows members to e-mail memberrecords@avma.org or call (800) 248-2862, Ext. 6631, if they have moved, changed jobs, or changed their name.

Another way that AVMA members can access those same options is by going to the home page and selecting the AVMA Member Center, then choosing the "Contact Central" option to access the "Update Your Membership Information" link. This link also allows members to e-mail or call the Membership and Field Services Division with changes to their personal membership information.