

Veterinary Research News

From the AVMA

AVMA co-sponsors National Academies study; supports biomedical research campaign

At its May 1-4 meeting in Schaumburg, Ill., the AVMA Executive Board approved several research-related recommendations.

Foremost was a \$100,000 allocation recommended by the Council on Research for the AVMA to co-sponsor a study by the National Academies that will evaluate the current status and future needs of veterinary medical research in the United States.

"I think this study has the potential to be as important to this profession as the (National Commission on Veterinary Economic Issues) has become," observed Dr. Gregory S. Hammer, District II representative.

The AVMA/Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges Task Force on Veterinary Research developed the initial outline for the proposed study. In July of 2001, the AVMA Executive Board approved moving ahead with the proposal.

Since then, the task force, Council on Research, and AVMA staff worked closely with the Board on Agriculture and Natural Resources within the National Research Council at the National Academies to develop and refine the final study proposal, titled "National Needs for Research in Veterinary Science."

In January 2002, the National Academies approved moving forward with the final proposal, saying that support for animal-related research has been fractionated among agencies, and with many gaps. Veterinary research has the potential to impact such fields as animal health, human medicine, and bioterrorism, it added. The study will provide a blueprint for veterinary research.

The Council on Research and AVMA/AAVMC task force believe that this study will enhance the visibility and importance of veterinary research in the United States, and promote the AVMA's leadership role in support of veterinary research.

BANR is seeking sponsors so that the study can begin. Funding from five primary stakeholders is initially being sought from the AVMA, AAVMC, National Institutes of Health, Food and Drug Administration, and the Department of Agriculture.

The proposed budget is \$500,000 for April 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004, with each of the primary sponsors being asked to initially contribute \$100,000.

The board also approved a recommendation to support the current phase of the Foundation for Biomedical Research's "Survivors" public education campaign promoting the role that biomedical research plays in advancing animal health.

One element of the campaign features portraits of four animals that have survived feline and canine diseases. The foundation plans to expand the campaign to food animals, horses, endangered species, and pocket pets.

The Council on Research, which recommended the AVMA support, called the campaign "highly commendable and eagerly awaited by the veterinary medical research community."

Fellows bring science to Capitol Hill

The AVMF Congressional Science Fellowship Selection Committee is pleased to announce the AVMA/AVMF Congressional Science Fellows for 2003-2004. Dr. Roger Mahr, chairman of the selection committee and member of the AVMF Board of Directors, said, "This expert-

ise these three fellows bring is relevant to the Hill today—we are finding that sometimes the veterinarian fellow is the only scientist in a Congressman's office."

Dr. Michael Q. Bailey is a professor of veterinary clinical sciences and the director of diagnostic imaging at Tuskegee University's School of Veterinary Medicine, where he received the Norden Distinguished Teaching Award in 2001. He earned his DVM degree at Tuskegee in 1982 and is board certified by the American College of Veterinary Radiology. Dr. Bailey hopes to influence policy to help create programs with a focus on the motivational needs of underrepresented populations.

Also a professor, Dr. Derek A. Mosier joins the fellowship program from the Department of Diagnostic Medicine/Pathobiology at the Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Mosier received his DVM degree from Kansas State in 1978 and a PhD degree in veterinary pathology from Oklahoma State. A diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Pathologists, Dr. Mosier sought out the fellowship as a venue to address the many issues that revolve around animal health and well-being.

Dr. Rebecca Walton has practiced for 18 years in Washington, D.C., most recently as executive director and veterinarian of Relief Veterinary Services Inc. She will start her fellowship with a newly earned Master of Public Policy from Georgetown University. Her focus is on international health policy and international peace building. Dr. Walton, who has worked in such diverse populations as Mexico, Africa, and the Navajo Nation, hopes the fellowship will introduce her to the practicalities of the policy-making process.

"We are establishing a strong tradi-

tion of bringing veterinary intelligence to the policy-making table in Washington, D.C.," said Dr. William Van Dresser, AVMF chair and former director of the AVMA Governmental Relations Division. "For the second year now, the generosity and continued support of the AVMA, allied groups, and member donors has enabled us to put three veterinarians on the Hill."

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.

Candidates invited for four council vacancies

Although the Feb. 1 deadline for nominating AVMA members to serve on councils has passed, no nominations have yet been received for four vacancies.

Council on Research: one seat representing veterinary medical colleges; two seats are available, but only one nomination has been received—that of Dr. Jeffrey S. Klausner, St. Paul, Minn.; the positions are open to deans or associate deans/directors of research at an AVMA-accredited school or college (terms ending July 2009)

Council on Biologic and Therapeutic Agents: a newly created position representing clinical pharmacology (term ending July 2009)

Council on Education: a seat representing nonprivate practice, nonacademic veterinary medicine (term ending July 2009)

Council on Education: position representing small animal clinical science (an unexpired term ending July 2008)

Besides Dr. Klausner, there are 30 other council nominees. AVMA members can access the list of nominees and positions at www.avma.org/noah/members/councils/03coun-vac.pdf.

Nominations for any of the open positions—including additional nominations for seats that already have nominees, can still be made from the floor of the House of Delegates during its annual session July 18 in Denver. The HOD will fill them July 19. Individuals intending to nominate a candidate at the HOD session should submit written notification as soon as possible to Dr. Bruce W. Little, AVMA executive vice president.

Global News

Researchers identify wild animal reservoirs for SARS

The World Health Organization announced May 23 that researchers have identified two species—the masked palm civet and the raccoon dog—that harbor a coronavirus nearly identical to the severe acute respiratory syndrome virus.

Research teams in Hong Kong and Shenzhen, China, took samples of wild animals being sold for human consumption at markets in southern China, where many species of wild animals—including masked palm civets and raccoon dogs—are considered delicacies.

The researchers identified a virus identical to SARS, except for one additional small genetic sequence, in masked palm civets and raccoon dogs. All six civets that were tested seroconverted in the presence of the SARS coronavirus isolated from humans, and their sera inhibited the growth of the SARS virus. Reciprocally, human serum from SARS patients

inhibited the growth of the coronavirus isolated from these animals.

Officials from the World Health Organization were cautious about interpreting the results of the study.

"At present, no evidence exists to suggest that these wild animal species play a significant role in the epidemiology of SARS outbreaks," according to a statement from the WHO. "However, it cannot be ruled out that these animals might have been a source of human infection."

The study provides the first evidence of a nonhuman host of the disease.

Many fundamental questions remain about the role of animals in the SARS epidemic, according to the WHO. Studies must be conducted to determine how widespread the SARS virus might be in animals in southern China, whether these animals can excrete virus in an amount sufficient to infect humans, and whether the virus can be transmitted from animal to animal.

At press time in late May, there were more than 8,221 reported cases—65 in the United States—of SARS in humans, with 735 deaths—none in the United States, according to the WHO.

(See June *Veterinary Research News*, page 658, for more information on SARS.)

Informational Resources

ILAR Journal devotes issue to behavioral research outside the laboratory

Volume 44(3) of the *ILAR Journal* discusses the complexities concerning the use of companion and agricultural animals in research.

The Institute for Laboratory Animal Research, a division of the National Research Council, is a source for science-based guidelines for animal research.

Topics in the dedicated issue include a review of regulations and guidelines for the use of companion animals in clinical veterinary research, a review of the regulations and guidelines for the use of animals in agricultural research outside the laboratory, behavioral evaluations of the psycho-

logic welfare and environmental requirements of agricultural research animals, and methods of observational and automated behavioral assessment of pain in dogs.

Recommendations of a workshop panel on "Demands for rhesus monkeys in biomedical research, held in April 2002, are also published in this issue. The National Centres of Competence in Research and the Office of Animal Resources sponsored the workshop.

To order the ILAR Journal, log on to www.national-academies.org/ilarjournal, call (202) 334-2590, or e-mail ILAR@nas.edu. Each issue is \$30, or \$25 if ordered online.

Regulatory, legislative actions

Genetic engineering reminder

The Food and Drug Administration reminds universities conducting genetic engineering research that involves animals that they may need to perform this research under the authority of an investigational new animal drug exemption or a similar provision. As part of the new animal drugs for investigational use submissions, those conducting this type of research must document their plans regarding the disposition of all investigational animals after their participation in the study is completed.

The FDA is issuing the reminder now to help prevent situations similar to one that occurred at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. In late 2002, the agency determined that pigs involved in certain genetic engineering studies at this university might have entered the food supply because of improper disposal.

To date, the FDA has not permitted genetically engineered animals to enter the human food supply, and only in certain circumstances has the agency allowed these animals to be rendered and incorporated into animal feed.

Individuals can find the INAD regulations in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 21, Part 511.1(b), www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_02/21cfr511_02.html. Researchers

who have questions about their responsibilities may contact John Matheson at jmatheso@cvm.fda.gov or (301) 827-6649.

Abstracts Invited

Biosafety/biosecurity and other abstracts sought by CRWAD

The Conference of Research Workers in Animal Diseases invites the submission of abstracts for its 2003 meeting in Chicago, Nov. 9-11. The organization asks that prospective authors consider submitting abstracts for the new Biosafety/Biosecurity Section.

Instructions for submitting abstracts can be printed from the CRWAD Web site at www.cvmbs.colostate.edu/microbiology/crwad/crwad.htm.

The deadline for receipt of electronic abstracts is Aug. 14. Prospective authors must submit the online form and e-mail one copy of the abstract as a PC Word document attachment to Robert P. Ellis, PhD, CRWAD executive director, at robert.ellis@colostate.edu.

The Veterinary Community

OSU researcher elected to the NAS

Linda Saif, PhD, a virologist and professor in the Department of Veterinary Preventive Medicine at The Ohio State University, was elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

"The College of Veterinary Medicine is deeply honored to have one of its distinguished faculty receive one of the highest honors that any scientist can achieve," said Dr. Glen Hoffsis, dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, in a statement. "Dr. Saif is a world authority on viral infections and the immune response to these infections. Her contributions have improved the health of man and animals worldwide."

Dr. Saif is an expert on digestive diseases in animals. She works primarily on rotaviruses, calicivirus, and coronaviruses, and was recently invited to help the national Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention better understand the coronavirus believed to cause severe acute respiratory syndrome.

"This is a true honor, as it reflects the advances, dedication, and achievements of science," Dr. Saif said in a statement.

Veterinarian appointed to USDA biotechnology committee

Secretary of Agriculture Ann M. Veneman appointed Dr. Daryl D. Buss, the dean of the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, to the new Advisory Committee on Biotechnology and 21st Century Agriculture.

The committee will examine the long-term impact of biotechnology on the U.S. food and agriculture system and provide guidance to the Department of Agriculture on these issues.

"This committee will take a forward look at agriculture biotechnology and will serve as an important resource as the USDA addresses emerging issues related to this field," Veneman said.

The committee is composed of 18 members from 14 states, the District of Columbia, and Mexico. The members represent the biotechnology industry, the seed industry, farmers, environmental and consumer organizations, academia, international plant research centers, the food industry, and product shippers and traders.

Dr. Buss was nominated by the AVMA (Dr. James H. Brandt, Executive Board chair) and the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (Dr. Lester M. Crawford).

A full list of committee members can be viewed at www.usda.gov/news/releases/2003/04/0114.doc.

We invite you to send news items for this feature.

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