Veterinary Research News

Biosecurity

List narrows for possible homes for research facility

The Department of Homeland Security recently identified several potential sites for the government's National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility. In August, the DHS announced that 18 locations in 11 states had advanced to the next phase in the selection process for the home for the "next-generation" biological and agricultural defense facility. They are:

- Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California
- Georgia Consortium for Health and Agro-Security (two sites)
- Heartland BioAgro Consortium in Kansas (two sites)
- Kentucky and Tennessee NBAF Consortium in Kentucky
- Mid-Atlantic Bio-Ag Defense Consortium in Maryland
- Gulf States Bio and Agro-Defense Consortium in Mississippi (three sites)
- University of Missouri-Columbia
- North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine
- Oklahoma State University
- Texas A&M University
- Brooks Development Authority and Brooks City-Base Foundation in Texas
- Texas Research and Technology Foundation
- Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research in Texas
- University of Wisconsin-Madison site at the Kegonsa Research Facility.

Plans call for equipping the NBAF with numerous laboratories for research in biological threats involving foreign animal, zoonotic, and human diseases. A key part of this will be housing laboratories that will provide high-security spaces for agricultural and animal studies research as well as for training personnel. The DHS expects to narrow the potential sites even further by the end of 2006, with the final facility site named in early 2008.

Even though the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility could eventually replace the Plum Island Animal Disease Center, the 55-year-old center off the coast of Long Island, N.Y., will receive $30 million for much-needed expansion and upgrades this year.

The proposed enhancements would include a new animal-holding wing consisting of 8,000 square feet, an expanded necropsy area, and a biosecurity level 3 laboratory for DHS research programs.

USDA, DOI expand wild bird monitoring for avian influenza

The Department of Agriculture and Department of the Interior will expand wild bird monitoring for highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza virus beyond Alaska through cooperative agreements with the contiguous states, along with Hawaii and other Pacific Islands.

"Because we cannot control wild birds, our best protection is an early warning system, and this move to test thousands more wild birds throughout the country will help us to quickly identify, respond, and control the virus, if it arrives in the United States," said Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns in a prepared statement.

Since mid-2006, the two departments, along with the state of Alaska and University of Alaska, have tested nearly 10,000 wild birds in Alaska. The USDA reported that highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza virus was not detected.

For up-to-date information about wild bird monitoring in the United States, visit the National HPAI Early Detection Data System online at http://wildlifedisease.nbii.gov/ai. The Web site shows the states where samples have been collected and includes the number of samples collected from each state. To learn more about the Department of Agriculture's and Department of the Interior's avian influenza efforts overall, log on to www.usda.gov/birdflu and www.doi.gov/issues/avianflu.

Global News

Global warning system for zoonotic diseases launched

A global early warning system for zoonotic diseases was launched by the Food and Agriculture Organization, World Health Organization, and World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

The Global Early Warning and Response System is the first joint early warning system with the goal of predicting and responding worldwide to animal diseases, including zoonoses. The system will combine and coordinate the tracking, verification, and alerting mechanisms of the FAO, WHO, and OIE.

The information gathered through the tracking and verification channels of the FAO, WHO, and OIE will be shared using the warning system's Web-based electronic platform. The three organizations will jointly analyze the information to decide whether to issue an early warning message. The warning messages will describe the possible implications of disease spread among animals at the national, regional, and international levels and the potential public health impact. If there is a clear indication that a joint on-site assessment or intervention is required, the three organizations will

collaborate and activate their response mechanisms.

More information on the Global Early Warning and Response System can be found at the three organizations' Web sites, www.fao.org, www.who.int, and www.oie.int.

The Veterinary Community

Hundreds attend Veterinary Scholars Symposium

The Merck-Merial Veterinary Scholars Symposium attracted almost 300 students and scientists this year to Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine.

The annual event caps off summer training programs across the United States and Canada that introduce veterinary students to biomedical research.

Opening the 2006 symposium was Dr. William L. Jenkins, LSU system president and former dean of the veterinary school. The event's keynote speakers were Dr. Joan Hendricks, dean of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, and Dr. Ronald Veazey, chair of the Tulane National Primate Research Center's Division of Comparative Pathology.

Students presented more than 200 posters at the event. Faculty from LSU and from the primate research center organized six mini-isymposia on various topics in veterinary medical and biomedical research—including cancer biology, infectious disease, and experimental cardiology.

For the second year, finalists in the Young Investigator Award Competition for veterinary and doctoral students presented their research findings. For the first time, training-grant directors from the National Institutes of Health National Center for Research Resources held their meeting in conjunction with the symposium.

Directors of postdoctoral programs presented information about their institutions to the students and held individual discussions about research training opportunities available after veterinary college.

The students at the event hailed from 23 U.S. veterinary colleges, one Canadian veterinary college, and a research program at the NIH National Cancer Institute.

The 2006 symposium received support from the Merck Foundation, Merial Ltd., AVMA, Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine, American Association for Laboratory Animal Science, Louisiana VMA, and LSU chapter of Phi Zeta.

Next year's symposium will be on the NIH campus.

University of Georgia opens research center

The University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine has opened a $63 million Animal Health Research Center.

The objective of the center is to facilitate research on vaccines, diagnostics, and therapies for emerging infectious diseases of zoonotic origin.

The three-story facility provides office and laboratory space for 50 investigators and staff. Other university researchers as well as federal and industry scientists also will have access to the center's laboratories, some of which meet the requirements for federal biosafety level 3—agricultural.

Ralph Tripp, PhD, will lead the vaccine development laboratory. His team is studying potential vaccines for emerging infectious diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome and avian influenza.

Hoffsis to head Florida veterinary college


Dr. Glen F. Hoffsis

The University of Florida has appointed Dr. Glen F. Hoffsis as dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, effective Oct. 1. He succeeds Dr. Joseph DiPietro, who was dean for nine years. Dr. James P. Thompson has served as interim dean.

Most recently, Dr. Hoffsis was the associate director of veterinary services at the Iams Co. Previously, he had a long career at The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine culminating with 11 years as dean.

During Dr. Hoffsis' term, Ohio State moved from limited to full accreditation. The budget grew, research expanded, and the college added three buildings as well as nine endowed chairs and professorships—including the endowed deanship.

Dr. Hoffsis also is a past president of the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, past president of the American Association of Bovine Practitioners, and former chairman of the Food and Drug Administration's Veterinary Medicine Advisory Committee.

He is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine and graduated from Ohio State in 1966.

Wisconsin names first director of new laboratory

Charles Czuprynski, PhD, recently became the first director of the Walter and Martha Renk Endowed Laboratory in Food Safety at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine.

Dr. Czuprynski's laboratory will receive about $75,000 annually for five years, with an option for renewal following a review. He plans to use the endowment to expand his laboratory's work on listeriosis.

Funding Announced

Donations support a plethora of programs at colleges

Veterinary colleges have recently received funding benefiting a teaching hospital, shelter medicine, equine research, and wildlife health.

Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine received $1 million from Robert Lowder, a university trustee, and his wife, Charlotte. The funds will support the Small Animal Teaching Hospital, which has treated two of their Boxers.

The University of California-Davis School of Veterinary Medicine accepted $1 million from Koret Foundation Funds of San Francisco for the Koret Shelter Medicine Program—as the school will call the pro-

gram during a five-year funding commitment.

Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences accepted $1 million from horse enthusiasts Jon and Abby Winkelried. The gift will go to the Gail Holmes Equine Orthopaedic Research Center and the Equine Reproduction Laboratory.

Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine received $1.45 million from Janet Swanson, wife of a university alumnus. The gift will endow a residency at Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program and fund relocation of the Wildlife Health Clinic.

The University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine received the first Equine Consortium for Genetic Research grant through the Morris Animal Foundation. The foundation will raise $2.5 million for the grant.

Cornell to build diagnostic center

Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine plans to build an $80 million Animal Health Diagnostic Center.

The college recently received a $50 million grant from the state of New York toward construction of the 126,000-square-foot center. The university and other sources will contribute an additional $30 million.

The center should be complete in 2010, when it will replace existing facilities dating to 1978. The new facilities will incorporate laboratories at biosafety level 3 to enable the safe and reliable handling of highly pathogenic organisms.

Research Results

Researchers study noise, human contact in shelters

Recent research has examined the effect of noise and of human contact on dogs at animal shelters.

Crista Coppola, PhD, an adjunct instructor at the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine and a behavior fellow at the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, authored articles about the studies with two faculty members from Colorado State University's Department of Animal Sciences—R. Mark Enns, PhD, assistant professor, and Temple Grandin, PhD, associate professor.

"Noise in the animal shelter environment: Building design and the effects of daily noise exposure" appeared in this year's first issue of the quarterly Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science.

The paper describes noise measurements at a shelter dating to 1999. Peak noise regularly exceeded the measuring capacity of the dosimeter, which was 118.9 decibels.

The authors assert that shelter design often fails to address noise abatement, despite evidence that noise causes physical and physiologic stress in dogs.

The paper "Human interaction and cortisol: Can human contact reduce stress for shelter dogs?" appeared in the March 30 edition of the journal Physiology and Behavior. The article describes a study of dogs that engaged in a 45-minute human contact session during the second day in a shelter.

Researchers examined cortisol concentrations in salivary fluids from each dog on the second, third, fourth, and ninth days. Dogs that engaged in a human contact session had lower cortisol concentrations on the third day than dogs in a control group.

The researchers concluded that human contact might be an effective means of reducing the cortisol response of shelter dogs. The sessions also served as a resource for information about the dogs' temperament and personalities that could facilitate adoptions.

Grant Proposals Invited

Grants for feline health research available

The nonprofit Winn Feline Foundation is calling for grant proposals for 2007. Studies applicable to all cats are encouraged. The Winn Feline Foundation is also interested in projects that address problems in individual breeds. This year, the foundation is particularly interested in research into mediastinal lymphoma, mammary adenocarcinoma, and inherited hypertrophic cardiomyopathy.

The application deadline is Dec. 4, 2006. The maximum grant amount is $15,000, and awards will be announced in March 2007. Multiyear proposals totaling more than $15,000 will not be considered. Additional funds may be available for breed-related studies. For more information about grant requirements, contact the Winn Feline Foundation at (856) 447-9787 or visit www.WinnFelineHealth.org.

From the AVMA

Education council schedules site visits

The AVMA Council on Education has scheduled site visits to two colleges or schools of veterinary medicine for the remainder of 2006.

Site visits are planned for The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine, Oct. 22-26; and Tuskegee University School of Veterinary Medicine, Nov. 5-9.

The council welcomes written comments on these plans or the programs to be evaluated. Comments should be addressed to Dr. Donald G. Simmons, 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.