



Veterinary Research News

From the AVMA

AVMA staff has new second in command; new director of animal welfare

Dr. Lyle P. Vogel was elected by the AVMA Executive Board Nov. 15 as the Association's assistant executive vice president. Dr. Vogel had been serving in an interim capacity since August when Executive Vice President W. Ron DeHaven appointed him to the position after Dr. Janet D. Donlin resigned to work for Hill's Pet Nutrition.

Prior to his appointment, Dr. Vogel had been serving as the first director of the newly formed Animal Welfare Division, since May 2006. After 26 years in the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps as a food safety and public health specialist, Dr. Vogel began his career at the AVMA in 1993 as an assistant director of the Membership and Field Services Division. He was later named the first director of the new Scientific Activities Division, a position he held for a decade.

"Dr. Vogel brings a wealth of knowledge, experience, and common sense to the job," Dr. DeHaven said. "The AVMA is truly fortunate to have Dr. Vogel as assistant executive vice president, and I have no doubt that he will continue to serve the Association and our members well."

Dr. DeHaven announced Nov. 19 that he has named Dr. Gail C. Golab as director of the Animal Welfare Division, succeeding Dr. Vogel. Dr. Golab has been with the division since it became operational, starting out as associate director.

"Dr. Golab is globally recognized for her expertise and experience in animal welfare issues," Dr. DeHaven said. "She has served the AVMA exceptionally well in this area, most recently as the interim division director for the past three months."

Dr. Golab joined the AVMA staff in 1995 as an assistant editor in the Publications Division. Soon, she began serving

as the AVMA staff consultant for issues relevant to human-animal interactions. She moved to the Education and Research Division as an assistant director in 1998, and she transferred to the Communications Division in 2001.

Board enhances AVMA visibility

The AVMA Executive Board met in November at Association headquarters in Schaumburg, Ill., to take action on its fall agenda. Dr. Larry R. Corry, District IV, chaired the meeting.

A number of recommendations approved by the board will boost the Association's visibility to its members and the public.

In one move, the board approved seed funding of \$100,000 to the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service for an exhibit on zoonotic diseases commemorating the AVMA's 150th anniversary in 2013. The exhibit is expected to travel to 10 cities nationwide over four years.

The board also approved an AVMA transparency policy, which will help guide the release of Association professional policies to all audiences.

In addition, three recommendations were approved involving the release of AVMA data from its member records and surveys. On one recommendation, the board approved a policy on the release of data, which addresses more contemporary issues than the 1978 AVMA policy on raw economic data.

The other two recommendations deal with an increase in requests the AVMA has received for data and information related to veterinary economic research.

In one recommendation, the board approved providing economic, anonymous member, and market research data to the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute in conjunction with an economic impact study sponsored by the Cummings School

of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University. The initiative would promote the standing of veterinary medicine as an economic driver in New England.

The board also approved providing nonanonymous member data and e-mail addresses to the National Academy of Sciences to follow up on a study of veterinary workforce issues, a study funded in part by the AVMA.

Another highlight was board approval of a one-day meeting to advance the concept of the Institute for Companion Animal and Equine Research. The meeting will be held at AVMA headquarters, March 26, in conjunction with the spring meeting of the Council on Research.

The meeting will comprise the COR, one board member, and two representatives each from the American Veterinary Medical Foundation, Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, American Animal Hospital Association or its foundation, and American Association of Equine Practitioners or its foundation.

The board acted on a number of recommendations put forward by the Council Selection Task Force. The task force was established in November 2006 to explore means to modify the current process for choosing members of the Council on Education to ensure selection of the best candidates.

On one recommendation, the board approved establishment of a COE Candidate Qualifications Review Committee, subject to input and agreement from the House Advisory Committee. The committee will sunset in three years contingent on an in-depth performance evaluation. Previously, the HAC had reviewed the recommendation to the board and submitted a memorandum supporting the committee.

Members on the committee will include one of the current or past public members of the COE and one

representative each from the Executive Board, House of Delegates, COE, and AAVMC.

Next, the board agreed to request that the HAC revise the Manual of the House of Delegates to accommodate a nominations deadline of Feb. 1 for COE candidates, allowing the committee more time to review the candidates.

Also, the board agreed to request that the HAC give consideration to revising the manual to allow COE members to be elected to fill vacancies by the HOD during the winter session, as necessary. Currently, all COE candidates are voted on at the July meeting.

In another recommendation, the board approved changes to the policy on resignations of AVMA council, committee, and trust members. The task force reviewed the policy with consultation from AVMA legal counsel and determined that the changes would clarify the policy.

The policy now grants the board the "authority and prerogative to take any action it determines to be appropriate, including removal of the member(s) from the entity. Any action taken by the Executive Board shall be final, without further appeal."

Consistent with AVMA policy, the board removed a member from the Council on Education for cause.

Also of note, the board acted on two recommendations related to AVMA policies involving the use of animals in research. The Animal Welfare Committee submitted the recommendations.

The board approved revising the policy on the Use of Animals in Research, Testing, and Education. A revision was made that references the broader scope of individuals and organizations affected by acts of extremists in the animal rights movement. The policy also now specifically recognizes that there are ethical responsibilities (in addition to professional, scientific, and moral obligations) associated with animal use.

The board also approved revisions to the policy on the Use of Random-Source Dogs and Cats for Research, Testing, and Education. The policy was revised to ensure consistency with the

requirements of the Animal Welfare Act and local and state laws pertaining to the acquisition and use of animals.

Both policies are available in full on the AVMA Web site at www.avma.org/issues/policy.

Besides policy changes, the board approved a new liaison with the Federation of Animal Science Societies' Scientific Advisory Committee on Animal Care, Use, and Standards.

Education council schedules site visits

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

Comprehensive site visits are planned for the Western University of Health Sciences College of Veterinary Medicine, Jan. 27-Feb. 3; University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine, April 6-10; Colorado State University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, April 20-24; 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. Elizabeth A. Sabin, Assistant 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.

Global News

Avian influenza continues spreading, but global response improves

Europe could join Asia and Africa as a continent where highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza is endemic,

warns the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

Earlier this year, though, the FAO and World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) stated that global response to H5N1 avian influenza has improved and that countries reported fewer outbreaks in early 2007 than in early 2006—when the virus reached many European countries in wild birds.

The recent FAO warning followed Germany's detection of H5N1 avian influenza in young domestic ducks that did not have clinical signs of infection.

"It seems that a new chapter in the evolution of avian influenza may be unfolding silently in the heart of Europe," said Dr. Joseph Domenech, FAO chief veterinary officer. "If it turns out to be true that the H5N1 virus can persist in apparently healthy domestic duck and geese populations, then countries need to urgently reinforce their monitoring and surveillance schemes in all regions with significant duck and geese production for the presence of H5N1."

The FAO expressed particular concerns about countries bordering the Black Sea. The region has a substantial population of domestic ducks and geese, as well as chickens, and serves as a wintering area for migratory birds. The region also favors traditional open poultry systems with poor separation between domestic and wild birds. All countries bordering the Black Sea have experienced outbreaks of H5N1 avian influenza.

Dr. Domenech stated earlier this year that the overall response to H5N1 avian influenza in poultry has improved substantially during the past three years. Reports of human cases occur only sporadically, apart from a few countries. Nevertheless, the virus continues to spread to new countries.

"Even if bird flu has disappeared from our TV screens, it doesn't mean that the risk is over," Dr. Domenech said.

The OIE stated earlier in the year that most countries have dealt successfully with outbreaks of H5N1 avian influenza. Dr. Bernard Vallat, director general, said countries reported fewer deaths of wild birds from the virus in early 2007.

"Poultry flocks still continue to be infected in some countries," Dr. Vallat said. "That shows the international community needs to keep up its high level of prevention and control measures of the disease in animals."

The OIE stated that the disease remains endemic in at least three countries—Egypt, Indonesia, and Nigeria. The virus spread to Bangladesh, Ghana, Saudi Arabia, and Togo for the first time between February and June of this year. As of Nov. 12, the World Health Organization reported a total of 335 cases of human infection since 2003, with 206 fatalities.

On the subject of vaccination for avian influenza, the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology recently released a special publication and commentary.

The publication, "Avian influenza vaccines: Focusing on H5N1 high pathogenicity avian influenza," covers the science of vaccines for avian influenza, art of controlling avian influenza, and analysis of previous vaccine campaigns.

The full text of CAST Special Publication No. 26 is available by visiting www.cast-science.org or calling (515) 292-2125. A hard copy costs \$18 plus shipping, and an electronic download costs \$10. The commentary, an excerpt from the publication, is available free on the Web site.

Funding Announced

Penn receives \$1 million gift for laminitis research

The University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine recently received a gift of \$1 million from philanthropists Marianne and John K. Castle to support its laminitis research.

The gift will also help launch a laminitis institute at Penn. Once fully funded, the institute will include new research laboratories and support for research projects at the veterinary school. Also, in collaboration with other institutions, the institute will offer a home care treatment model, support for student research opportunities, and improved clinical facilities.

In addition, the gift will support the institute directorship, which will be held by Dr. James Orsini, associate professor of surgery at

Penn's New Bolton Center. In 2001, Dr. Orsini founded the First International Conference on Laminitis and Diseases of the Foot. The biennial conference is funded in large part by the Castles, in memory of their horse Spot, who died from laminitis.

The Veterinary Community

University of Wisconsin selects associate dean for research

The University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine has selected Mary Behan, PhD, as the new associate dean for research and graduate training, effective Nov. 19, 2007.

Dr. Behan joined the faculty of the Department of Comparative Biosciences in 1981. Her current research investigates the influence of gender and age on respiratory function. She teaches veterinary neuroanatomy and neurophysiology.

Veterinary student scholar proposals being accepted

The Morris Animal Foundation has issued a call for 2008 Veterinary Student Scholar applications.

The program will award stipends of up to \$4,000 to students who wish to participate in clinical or basic veterinary research. The program provides veterinary students with an opportunity to become involved in veterinary research targeted at enhancing the health and welfare of companion animals and wildlife.

Grants are not limited to U.S. colleges. Awards are open to all first-through third-year veterinary students from a college or school of veterinary medicine that is accredited by the AVMA or an equivalent agency in another country.

The National Research Council of the National Academies has determined a critical need for increased veterinary science research. At the same time, the number of veterinary students going into research is declining. The MAF program is designed to give veterinary students exposure to research in hopes that they will consider this career path.

Applications for the program are due Feb. 1. For guidelines, visit www.morrisanimalfoundation.org/scientists.

Research awards conferred

Following are winners of the 2007 Pfizer Animal Health Award for Research Excellence at 25 veterinary schools. The Pfizer award recognizes researchers whose innovative studies have advanced the scientific standing of veterinary medicine.

Pfizer Animal Health Award for Research Excellence

Haroldo Toro, DVM, PhD, Auburn University
Susan M. Stover, DVM, PhD, University of California-Davis
Douglas Thamm, VMD, Colorado State University
John S. Parker, BVMS, PhD, Cornell University
Liliana Jaso-Friedman, PhD, University of Georgia
Humphrey Hung-Chang Yao, PhD, University of Illinois
Qijing Zhang, BVSc, PhD, Iowa State University
Raymond R.R. Rowland, PhD, Kansas State University
Kevin Macaluso, PhD, Louisiana State University
Norbert E. Kaminski, PhD, Michigan State University
Scott A. Dee, DVM, PhD, University of Minnesota
Patricia Gaunt, DVM, PhD, Mississippi State University
Kristina Narfström, DVM, PhD, University of Missouri-Columbia
Matthew Breen, PhD, North Carolina State University
C.A. Tony Buffington, DVM, PhD, The Ohio State University
Mahfuzur R. Sarker, PhD, Oregon State University
Anna S. Kashina, PhD, University of Pennsylvania
Laurent Couëtil, DVM, PhD, Purdue University
Seung Joon Baek, PhD, University of Tennessee
William Murphy, PhD, Texas A&M University
Patrick Skelly, PhD, Tufts University
Xiang-Jin Meng, PhD, Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine
Thomas E. Besser, DVM, PhD, Washington State University
Ellen W. Collisson, PhD, Western University of Health Sciences
Gordon S. Mitchell, PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison