

# Veterinary Research News

## From the AVMA Matushek named AVMA editor-in-chief

Dr. Kurt J. Matushek is the new AVMA editor-in-chief and director of the Publications Division.

AVMA CEO W. Ron DeHaven announced Aug. 10 that Dr. Matushek



Dr. Kurt J. Matushek

was chosen to succeed the late Dr. Janis H. Audin as head of the Association's journals and the division. Dr. Matushek had been serving as interim editor-in-chief since March of this year.

"As a former practitioner and board-certified veterinary surgeon, Dr. Matushek will ensure that we continue to bring the practitioners' perspective to *JAVMA*," Dr. DeHaven commented. "Combined with his years of service to AVMA as an associate editor, he will also make sure that both *JAVMA* and *AJVR* maintain their international reputation as the premier veterinary journals."

During his 16 years with the AVMA, Dr. Matushek has not only gained an extensive knowledge of AVMA journal policies and style, but also helped develop and shape them. Dr. Matushek joined the AVMA Publications staff as an assistant editor in 1992 and was promoted to associate editor five years later.

Highlights of his AVMA tenure include developing and implementing the format for abstracts published in the *JAVMA* and *AJVR* and overseeing the writing of the original version of the AVMA style guide. Dr. Matushek wrote or revised many of the journals' documents, such as the copyright transfer form, statement of prior publication, procedures for manuscript publication, and portions

of the instructions for authors. He led the search for an online manuscript tracking system for the journals and recently oversaw a major system upgrade. Dr. Matushek was also part of the team that developed the AVMA online journals Web site.

"Veterinary Medicine and the Law" and "Diagnostic Imaging in Veterinary Dental Practice" are two of the *JAVMA* features Dr. Matushek has been involved in developing over the years.

"I am excited by this tremendous opportunity," Dr. Matushek said about his new role at the AVMA. "The AVMA journals are among the most prestigious and widely known veterinary journals in the world, and I look forward to building on that success."

After earning his DVM degree from the University of Illinois in 1983, Dr. Matushek studied the use of external skeletal fixation in dogs at the Ontario Veterinary College, where he earned a master's degree in veterinary science. Dr. Matushek then spent a year in general small animal practice near Chicago before returning to Ontario to complete an internship in small animal medicine and surgery.

Afterward, he finished a small animal surgical residency in Madison, Wis., followed by a two-year stint as staff surgeon at a small animal practice in Michigan. During this time, Dr. Matushek was certified by the American College of Veterinary Surgeons.

### AVMA Ed undergoing a makeover

This fall when the AVMA re-launches its online continuing education site, users will discover a more compelling speaker format and technical upgrades designed to enhance their CE experience.

AVMA Ed will feature 28 hours of continuing education from this year's AVMA convention when the new

format is introduced in November on the site, [www.avma.org/avmaed/](http://www.avma.org/avmaed/).

A combination of user feedback and planned upgrades is behind substantial upcoming changes to the online continuing education site.

Previous AVMA convention content was recorded as speakers delivered their educational programs to convention audiences, but content from the Seattle convention was captured in studio recording sessions. A new delivery platform for AVMA Ed is intended to improve video loading times. Changes in the interface will allow users to adjust the screen size of videos and quickly move between segments of educational programs.

Veterinarians have used the online program to earn more than 1,200 hours of continuing education credits since its launch Dec. 1, 2008. Dr. Althea A. Jones, AVMA online professional services editor, said AVMA Ed draws content from trusted sources: the *JAVMA* and the AVMA convention.

"The quality of content, ease of use, and excellent value make AVMA Ed hard to beat as a CE source for our members," Dr. Jones said.

### Education council schedules site visits

The AVMA Council on Education has scheduled site visits to schools of veterinary medicine at three institutions for the remainder of 2009.

Comprehensive site visits are planned for Calgary University Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Alberta, Canada, Oct. 25-29; Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México Facultad de Medicina Veterinaria y Zootecnia, Mexico City, Mexico, Nov. 8-12; and the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, Dec. 6-10 (rescheduled from Sept. 13-17).

The council welcomes written comments on these plans or the

programs to be evaluated. Comments should be addressed to Dr. David E. Granstrom, Director, AVMA 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.

## Reports Released

### GAO criticizes plan for mainland research on foot-and-mouth disease

The U.S. Government Accountability Office released a report July 30 criticizing the Department of Homeland Security's analyses that concluded researchers can study foot-and-mouth disease as safely on the mainland as on Plum Island.

The DHS recently chose Manhattan, Kan., as the site for a new National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility to replace the half-century-old Plum Island Animal Disease Center in New York, the only U.S. facility where researchers study live FMD virus (see *AJVR*, January 2009, page 7).

According to the GAO report, DHS analyses did not adequately characterize and differentiate the relative risks of a release of FMD virus at Plum Island and five potential mainland sites for the NBAF.

The GAO agreed with the DHS that modern containment technology has reduced the risk of an accidental pathogen release and that the safety of high-containment laboratories has improved, but the report noted evidence showing that accidents continue to result from human error or operational failure in facilities.

"Thus, as DHS has acknowledged, the risk of release of an agent from a modern HCL is not zero, and Plum Island offers a unique advantage—with its water barrier and absence of animals—over the mainland," according to the GAO report.

The DHS does not plan to re-open the site-selection process for the NBAF on the basis of the GAO report, according to a response from DHS with input from the Department of Agriculture—the latter of which conducts much of the research on Plum Island. The DHS noted that five U.S. laboratories in populous areas operate at the highest biosafety level, including

the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, and none has exposed the public to a pathogen. The department added that constructing the NBAF on the mainland also offers advantages.

"Conducting foreign animal, emerging, and zoonotic disease research on the mainland in proximity to nationally recognized research capabilities, programs, and research relevant to the NBAF mission requirements further enhances the nation's capability to protect agriculture, food systems, and public health," according to the DHS.

The AVMA has supported upgrading laboratories where the USDA studies animal health. In March 2006, the AVMA Executive Board approved a policy stating that the Association supports the concept that the DHS should not restrict potential locations for the NBAF to Plum Island.

The GAO report is available at [www.gao.gov](http://www.gao.gov) by searching for the report number, GAO-09-747. The DHS response to the GAO report is at [www.dhs.gov/nbaf](http://www.dhs.gov/nbaf).

## Grant Proposals Invited

### Feds offer research grants on interactions between pets, children

Federal health officials are seeking grant applications for research on the interactions between people and pets.

The National Institutes of Health and Mars Inc. are supporting the research related to the influence of human-animal interactions on child health and development. Researchers can submit grant applications starting Oct. 19, and applications are due by Nov. 19.

The grants will be provided through the NIH Research Project Grant and NIH Small Grant programs. The maximum award is \$500,000 annually, or \$2 million in funding over a four-year period.

The NIH is providing about \$2 million annually for the projects through one division, the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and \$500,000 annually through a second division, the National Institute of Nursing Research. Mars, through

the company's Waltham Centre for Pet Nutrition division, is providing \$2 million for the studies over the next four years.

The NIH and Mars are supporting research regarding the impact of animals on public health, the role of animals in physical and psychological therapeutic treatment, and the impact of human and animal interactions on development and health. A Mars press release states the research could "provide concrete evidence on how children perceive, relate to, and think about animals and how pets in the home impact children's social and emotional development."

"In addition, research is needed on the impact of pets in the home on children's health, eg, allergies, the immune system, asthma, and mitigation of obesity," the Mars release states. "On a practical level, research is needed on such issues as when and how parents select pets for their families/children and how best to prevent injuries from pets."

More information on the grants is available at [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov). Under "Grants," click on "Funding Opportunities," then on "Active RFAs." Scroll down to the listing for "The Role of Human-Animal Interaction in Child Health and Development" on the right-hand side of the page.

Applicants seeking an NIH Small Grant should click on the link for RFA-HD-09-030, and applicants seeking an NIH Research Project Grant, on the link for RFA-HD-09-031.

## Funding Announced

### LSU veterinary school receives \$11.1 million grant

Five years after receiving an NIH grant to establish a research center, the Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine saw funding renewed in the amount of \$11.1 million.

In July 2004, the school received a \$9.9 million grant to establish a Center of Biomedical Research Excellence. This July, the grant was renewed for another five years.

The original grant to LSU created a Center for Experimental Infectious Disease Research, which is an alliance among the school, the LSU College of Basic Sciences, and the Tulane

National Primate Research Center. It allowed for professors to establish research programs that competed for independent funding by the National Institutes of Health.

Now with the grant renewed, researchers can build on the accomplishments made from the previous funding period, and continue efforts toward establishing an independent center.

Ultimately, the participating organizations hope to strengthen existing infectious disease research and enhance collaborative efforts to form a Louisiana-based Center of Excellence that is self-sustaining. In addition, they anticipate research outcomes will be translated to new diagnostics, vaccines, and other treatment modalities for ameliorating infectious diseases in humans and other animals.

### **USDA funding research, laboratory facility care**

The Department of Agriculture will provide \$176 million in funding for repairs, upgrades, and maintenance at 36 laboratories and research facilities, according to a June announcement.

The money, which has been allocated through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, is intended for use in improving safety and health aspects of laboratories and research facilities, improving energy efficiency at those facilities, and reducing operating and maintenance costs.

The National Animal Disease Center in Ames, Iowa, for example, will receive about \$10.5 million for deferred maintenance and infrastructure needs, including repair and replacement of deteriorated and obsolete mechanical and electrical devices. Other funding that will be provided includes the following:

- \$40.1 million to the National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research in Peoria, Ill.
- \$20.1 million to the Eastern Regional Research Center in Wyndmoor, Pa.
- \$10 million to the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center in Beltsville, Md.
- \$7.4 million to the National Agricultural Library in Beltsville, Md.

- \$4 million to the Fort Keogh Livestock and Range Research Laboratory in Miles City, Mont.
- \$2.3 million to the Southeast Poultry Research Laboratory in Athens, Ga.
- \$1.8 million to the Poultry Research Unit and Crop Science Research Laboratory at Mississippi State University.
- \$1.3 million to the Roman L. Hruska U.S. Meat Animal Research Center in Clay Center, Neb.
- \$1.3 million to the Southern Plains Agricultural Research Center in College Station, Tex.
- \$1.17 million to the Red River Valley Agricultural Research Center in Fargo, N.D.

### **The Veterinary Community Symposium focuses on inclusivity within the profession**

For the veterinary profession to thrive, a culture of inclusivity must be cultivated, according to speakers at the fifth annual Diversity Symposium, July 13, sponsored by Fort Dodge and Subaru at the AVMA Annual Convention. By doing so, they said, veterinarians will harness greater creative potential and understanding.

Dr. Evan M. Morse, a speaker and moderator for the daylong event, opened the symposium with a talk on how the profession should proceed toward achieving diversity. The Cleveland-based small animal practitioner compared the shift toward inclusion that he recommends for the AVMA to the complexity of redirecting a large supertanker.

To effectuate the Association's goals, methodical planning and careful implementation must be carried out by the entire profession, he said, and it must move beyond simple diversity awareness into competence-based understanding.

"This change in culture necessitates understanding differences that exist in the profession and harnessing the creative potential of them," Dr. Morse said.

Dr. Larry M. Kornegay, AVMA president-elect and past chairman of the AVMA Task Force on Diversity, touched on recent efforts by the AVMA to push forward diversity. He mentioned that five future leaders

from backgrounds underrepresented in veterinary medicine will attend the AVMA Veterinary Leadership Conference, the funding for which was approved by the Executive Board. The American Veterinary Medical Foundation announced recently that it would match funding to sponsor an additional five future leaders. Dr. Kornegay said the AVMA will consult with states and allied groups in selecting who should be sent to the meeting.

In another AVMA diversity initiative, several staff members went to the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry this past May as part of the Science Works! program to reach out to inner-city youth. Staff members from the AVMA and Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges plan to attend the Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans National Conference in October as well.

Finally, AVMA CEO W. Ron DeHaven recently created an AVMA staff working group composed of headquarters and Governmental Relations Division staff, as well as Lisa Greenhill, AAVMC associate executive director for diversity, to review the Task Force on Diversity's final report to incorporate information from it into the AVMA strategic goals.

Greenhill also gave a talk at the symposium titled "Are we discussing that again?" in which she emphasized that diversity is pervasive in everyday life.

"In veterinary medicine and the work we do in our day-to-day lives as well as in organized veterinary medicine, we are constantly dealing with a number of diversity issues," Greenhill said. "We're constantly processing all that information we're taking in. The brain has a lot to sort."

Greenhill exhorted the audience to learn the art of inclusion, which requires intentional behaviors that must be practiced constantly. Failure and disagreement will occur, she said, but these should not be barriers to the pursuit of inclusion.

Steve L. Robbins, PhD, the keynote speaker of the symposium, delivered a similar message in his talk. He explained that new and diverse opinions may be difficult to accept, but they enhance understanding and creativity for those who are open-minded.

Dr. Robbins said that one's reality is constructed through experience, which then influences that person's perspective of the world. Though everyone has personal beliefs, he said, it's important to note that sometimes even if people find they're wrong, or are faced with contradictory information, they may still be inclined to believe they're right. This is called belief perseverance and is one reason people are against change or a difference of opinion.

People who become comfortable with their reality won't notice things that may make others uncomfortable. Dr. Robbins gave the example of right-handed people not realizing right-handed scissors or desks can make left-handed people uncomfortable.

When people do encounter ideas or people inconsistent with their beliefs and attitudes, they experience cognitive dissonance, which they try to avoid. To resolve the dissonance, people can be open or closed to the new idea.

They usually opt to deny, Dr. Robbins said, "because we think if we walk into the realm of new ideas that we have to accept them, so that prevents people from engaging others who are different."

This is unfortunate for those who choose to deny diverse opinions, because listening to others encourages understanding, creativity, and better problem-solving, he said.

"Our perspectives allow us to see certain problems, but those same perspectives blind us from seeing other problems. We would have a better understanding for other people's perspectives if we're exposed to them, and those new perspectives would also allow us to see certain solutions we might not have otherwise," Dr. Robbins said.

### **Golden anniversary for Purdue veterinary school**

When Purdue University School of Veterinary Medicine wanted to celebrate its 50th anniversary this year, it decided to spread the word globally.

The veterinary school sent 19 faculty, students, and alumni to Ethiopia in May to treat production animals and facilitate ongoing relationships with an Ethiopian veterinary college.

The trip was one of two service projects, along with about a dozen other planned events, initiated by the

veterinary school as part of its year-long anniversary celebration.

The Ethiopia group spent several days working with Project Mercy, a U.S.-based nonprofit relief and development agency that seeks to improve cattle and human nutrition through breeding practices. The volunteers calculated animal weight, administered vaccines, and performed pregnancy checks in the Yetebon community.

In addition, the Purdue team traveled to the Addis Ababa University College of Veterinary Medicine in Debre Zeyit, where they gave and listened to presentations and demonstrations. The veterinary school maintains an exchange program with the Ethiopian college.

Another service group of nine Purdue volunteers traveled in June to the Spirit Lake Sioux Indian Reservation in North Dakota, where few if any veterinary services exist. The Spirit Lake project was in cooperation with Rural Area Veterinary Services, a nonprofit program that seeks to improve animal health and well-being in remote rural communities.

The first local anniversary celebrations took place Feb. 6 with a kick-off pep rally at the Indiana VMA's annual meeting in Indianapolis. The event included a 50th anniversary book release.

Other celebratory events included Phi Zeta Day, which featured speaker and poster presentations about current studies on understanding and improving treatment of animal and human diseases; the Dog Days of Summer Continuum Art Project, where 40 painted sculptures of dogs were put on display around Lafayette and West Lafayette, Ind., and the Purdue campus from May through September; an exhibit at the Indiana State Fair showcasing the school's growth since its inception; and the Gala Event on Sept. 24, which recognized key events and personalities in the school's history.

The veterinary school was established in 1959 with a class of 50 students. The DVM program now accepts approximately 70 students annually to study under 115 faculty members. Since its inception, the school has trained nearly 2,800 veterinarians.

### **ACVIM honors researchers**

The American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine honored

several researchers at its annual convention, June 3-6 in Montreal. Dr. Susan L. White, an ACVIM diplomate in the Specialty of Large Animal Internal Medicine, received the Robert W. Kirk Award for Professional Excellence. Dr. White is the Josiah Meigs Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of Georgia.

Individuals receiving Resident Research Awards included the following: Drs. Christina Bradbury, Colorado State University, for "Topical imidacloprid and moxidectin prevents flea transmission of *Bartonella henselae* in cats"; Teresa Burns, The Ohio State University, for "Pro-inflammatory cytokine and chemokine expression profiles of various adipose tissue depots of insulin-resistant and insulin-sensitive light breed horses"; Marcio Costa, Ontario Veterinary College, for "Incidence of *Clostridium difficile* in feces of male Holstein veal calves"; Tekla Lee-Fowler, University of Missouri-Columbia, for "Comparison of intradermal skin testing and allergen-specific serum immunoglobulin E (IgE) in experimental feline asthma"; Allison Haley, University of Georgia, for "Breed specific polymyositis in the Hungarian Vizsla dog"; Andrea Lantis, North Carolina State University, for "The effect of furosemide and pimobendan on the renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system (RAAS) in dogs"; Kelly McCord, Colorado State University, for "A multi-institutional study evaluating diagnostic utility of Spec cPL in the diagnosis of acute pancreatitis in dogs"; Maeva May, University of Pennsylvania, for "Comparison of hematologic and biochemical values obtained via intravenous catheter versus venipuncture in the hospitalized horse"; Lisa Shearer, Ontario Veterinary College, for "Effects of aspirin and clopidogrel on platelet function in normal dogs"; and Dorothy Whelchel, University of Georgia, for "Effects of clopidogrel on platelet function in the horse."

One hundred thirty-nine veterinarians completed the requirements for board certification by the ACVIM in 2009. Of the 139, 10 were certified in cardiology, nine in neurology, 24 in oncology, 29 in internal medicine (large animal), and 67 in internal medicine (small animal). 🐾