

JAVMA NEWS DIGEST

JAVMA NEWS DIGEST provides a selection of articles, mostly condensed from *JAVMA News*. The complete articles are available at avma.org/JAVMANews.



At left is an aerial view of the Oro Valley Campus of the University of Arizona College of Veterinary Medicine. (Photo by David Sanders/University of Arizona) At right, Texas Tech University's Amarillo campus has traditional Spanish Renaissance architecture and serves as the School of Veterinary Medicine's academic headquarters. (Courtesy of Texas Tech)

Campus tours

Two of the newest U.S. veterinary colleges, located at the University of Arizona and Texas Tech University, have actually been a long time in the making. Formal conversations about a second veterinary school in Texas first started in the 1970s. The earliest reference to establishing a veterinary college at the University of Arizona occurred about nearly 50 years ago.

Each veterinary program is working to build a competency-based curriculum and train future veterinarians in its own ways while in the process of receiving accreditation from the AVMA Council on Education.

Dr. Guy Loneragan, dean of Texas Tech University School of Veterinary Medicine, has been part of discussions about how Texas Tech could be involved in veterinary medicine since 2014, and he is excited. The state hasn't seen a new veterinary college built in more than 100 years, when Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences in College Station, Texas, was founded in 1916.

Dr. Julie Funk, dean of the University of Arizona College of Veterinary Medicine, said Arizona has been working on a second veterinary school for years. The first veterinary program came to the state not too long ago. Midwestern University College of Veterinary Medicine in Glendale, Arizona, a private, nonprofit institution specializing in health care education, received COE accreditation in 2018.

"It has been a long journey for a lot of people," Dr. Funk said.

The University of Arizona, founded in 1885, is a land-grant institution with two medical schools—one in Tucson and the other in Phoenix. The veterinary college in Oro Valley, near Tucson, is a year-round, three-year program that will have a distributive model of clinical teaching, placing students at various veterinary practices throughout the Southwest for clinical training.

The Arizona veterinary college welcomed its inaugural class in the fall of 2020, about five months into the pandemic.

Dr. Funk said despite the challenges, the veterinary college was not in a unique situation as academic institutions across the United States all faced dilemmas.

“In a startup, there is always uncertainty, and it was just only amplified,” Dr. Funk said. “It was challenging to build community. We have hired people who have hardly ever been on campus. I think last year was more challenging because we are a new college with new employees. But there are some things that being a startup made easier, like we had the luxury of only having one class to manage through pandemic challenges.”

Texas Tech University, which is based in Lubbock, Texas, is a public research university that was established in 1923 and is the main institution of the five-institution Texas Tech University System. The university first announced plans on Dec. 4, 2015, for its College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources to develop a

veterinary school based at its Health Sciences Center in Amarillo.

Dr. Guy Loneragan said the faculty and staff moved into their new facilities in July. The buildings encompass 260,000 square feet total and house the academic headquarters, teaching areas, student support spaces, and laboratories for the veterinary school. The Mariposa Station, a large animal facility, is located about 2 miles from the Amarillo campus and will include laboratories and large animal courses.

“We are fortunate to design a bespoke curriculum and build world-class facilities that enable our curriculum,” Dr. Loneragan said.

The veterinary school will run a distributive clinical model and has agreements with about 55 veterinary practices in rural and regional communities of Texas for fourth-year placements. ●

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PET FOOD SUSTAINABILITY, IN AND OUTSIDE THE BAG

Most pet food companies know that consumers are interested in sustainability. Not surprisingly, then, many have shifted to more environmentally friendly models, and at least some are working to develop more sustainable practices.

The Pet Sustainability Coalition, a nonprofit organization working with companies to employ sustainable practices, reports an estimated 300 million pounds of pet food and treat bags are generated in the U.S. every year, and over 99% of those bags aren't recycled.

20 countries to collect hard-to-recycle materials, is currently partnering with 11 pet food companies to make it easier to recycle packaging through free recycling programs.

Several other pet food companies have sustainable goals in mind too. Mars Petcare, for example, plans to reduce its use of “virgin” plastic—plastic that has never been used or processed before—by 25% and plans for 100% of its plastic packaging to be reusable, recyclable, or compostable by 2025.

Shameless Pets, a dog and cat treat company, has a mission to reduce waste differently. The company uses upcycled ingredients to make its products. Upcycling is the process of creating a new product from something unused, in this case misfit or surplus food, that would normally go to waste. ●



Purina is working to make 100% of its packaging reusable or recyclable by 2025. Currently, the packaging for about 80% of Purina's products is recyclable, and packaging for another 15% is recycle ready or made from materials that are capable of being recycled, although most recycling facilities don't currently have the infrastructure to process those materials.

TerraCycle, a recycling company that operates in

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US SUSPENDS DOG IMPORTATION FROM 100-PLUS COUNTRIES

Federal health officials suspended—for at least one year—importation of dogs from 113 countries considered high risk for rabies transmission.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced the decision in response to a sharp rise in the number of dogs that arrived from those high-risk countries with fraudulent or incomplete documentation of rabies vaccination. The ban took effect July 14.

The suspension applies to dogs that had been in the high-risk countries at any point in the prior six months—even if they arrive in the U.S. from lower-risk countries.

The U.S. has been considered free of the dog-associated rabies variant since 2007.

The ban enacted in July provides some exemptions for immunized pets of U.S. government employees, citizens, and residents as well as dogs being imported for specific scientific or service purposes. But the ban is expected to prevent entry of tens of thousands of dogs that would have been brought to the U.S.

Details about the suspension, exemptions, and the application process for importing dogs from affected countries are available at jav.ma/importsuspension. Until Oct. 14, U.S. citizens traveling abroad can bring back dogs with import



Photo by Nickie Mariager-Lam/Four Paws International

permits through 18 airports, which are listed in documents at that site.

After that transition—with the exception of dogs imported for law enforcement—dogs approved for importation must arrive through John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City, which at press time was the only approved airport for this purpose. ●

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RABBIT, HARE POPULATIONS RECOVERING FROM VIRAL DISEASE

Rabbit and hare populations in the Western U.S. seem to have rebounded quickly after outbreaks of a deadly viral disease.

Dr. Julianna B. Leno, national wildlife disease program coordinator for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's Wildlife Services, said lagomorphs that either survived infections with rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus serotype 2 or avoided infection were quick to reproduce following dips in local populations. As a result, wildlife managers reported they found no signs of broader impacts on food webs.

Animal health authorities first found RHDV2 among U.S. wildlife in March 2020, when laboratory testing

identified the virus in rabbits and hares found dead in New Mexico. The virus had been identified since February 2018 among pets and feral European rabbits in British Columbia, Ohio, Washington state, and New York City, but its impact had been limited before it emerged in the Southwest.



A black-tailed jackrabbit

Since then, RHDV2 has spread to a mix of domestic and wild rabbits and hares in at least 11 states and northern Mexico, causing die-offs among naive populations. The affected animals include species native to North America and European rabbits that live either in captivity or as feral populations.

Bryan Richards, emerging disease coordinator for the U.S. Geological Survey National Wildlife Health Center, said it was unclear why all of the recent RHDV2 infections had occurred to the west of a line running from Mexico City to southern Montana rather than spreading into eastern cottontail habitat. ●

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PRIDEVMC RELEASES DOCUMENT OUTLINING CIVIL RIGHTS EXPECTATIONS FOR TRANSGENDER, NONBINARY PEOPLE

The Pride Veterinary Medical Community is working to support transgender, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming individuals in the veterinary profession.

The PrideVMC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Working Group recently released the Gender Identity Bill of Rights to help address inequality and inequity in veterinary spaces.

“PrideVMC acknowledges the importance of clear and unequivocal commitment to equality, equity, and the human rights of the transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming individuals of our diverse LGBTQ+ family in a time where the acceptance of our brethren by the general public

is uncommon,” a PrideVMC press release states.

Across the U.S., state legislators have introduced over 100 anti-transgender bills in areas such as access to medical care and restroom access.

“It is time to make our profession a safer space for the transgender community,” the press release states. “This Gender Identity Bill of Rights for the veterinary profession is simply a start. We invite you to take this bill of rights to your workplaces and academic institutions and implement it to take an active stand in making the veterinary profession an inclusive space.”

According to the authors, the document may be revised or added to as feedback is received. Currently, the bill outlines civil rights expectations for transgender, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming individuals in veterinary medicine.

The Gender Identity Bill of Rights can be found at jav.ma/BillofRights.

The authors welcome feedback on the Gender Identity Bill of Rights and acknowledge that there are needs likely not addressed in the document. PrideVMC encourages anyone with comments to email GenderIdentity@PrideVMC.org. ●

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EQUINE FEAR FREE CERTIFICATION LAUNCHES

The Fear Free organization has launched an equine certification program for veterinary professionals.

The course consists of eight one-hour modules that cover Fear Free concepts using video clips and slides to show participants how to examine equine patients safely by using gentle techniques, perform routine procedures in a nonthreatening way, recognize signs of stress in equine



Crystal Sharp, a certified veterinary technician, administers a vaccine to a horse being restrained using Fear Free gentle control techniques. (Photo by Dr. Stacie Boswell)

patients, and help owners train their horses to cooperate in medical care, hoof care, and more.

Dr. Stacie Boswell, a board-certified large animal surgeon and one of the authors of the course, said she spoke with Dr. Marty Becker, founder of Fear Free, in 2018 about creating an equine program.

“We do not get enough behavioral training in school,” Dr. Boswell said. “Having a way to communicate and teach these concepts is so important.”

The concepts included in the course are similar to the concepts for other species, Dr. Boswell said. The three most important are considerate approach, touch gradient, and gentle control.

For example, a considerate approach in horses includes knowing how to manage the interaction within the environment. If a client brings two horses in together, they’re not separated, Dr. Boswell said.

The course also includes advice on how equine veterinarians can help owners in training their horses for care.

The Fear Free certification programs are available at fearfreepets.com. Students and faculty and staff members at veterinary colleges and veterinary technology programs are able to receive free access to the certification programs. The membership application is at jav.ma/FearFree. ●

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BACK-TO-WORK PET ANXIETY

General practitioners may notice an increase in behavioral issues in pets as more people migrate from working from home to returning to the office as the COVID-19 pandemic slows down in the U.S.

Dr. Leslie Sinn, a veterinary behaviorist who practices in Virginia, said research prior to the pandemic estimated that 14-20% of the dog population suffered from separation anxiety, but it likely wasn't severe.

"In many situations, people have been with their pets 24/7, basically for a year, a year and a half," Dr. Sinn said. "It appears that as people start to go back to work, we're seeing an increase in problems."



Dr. Meghan Herron, senior director of behavioral medicine, research education, and outreach at Gigis, an organization dedicated to helping shelter dogs, said pets adopted during the pandemic likely haven't been left alone much, and it's probably time to do so.

Proactive strategies to suggest to clients about pets' separation anxiety:

- Start by leaving for short periods.
- Create a safe space.
- If crate training, do it slowly and with many treats.
- Play classical or soft music when you are away.
- Use long-lasting treats so your departure is associated with good things. Consider trying pheromones, slow feeders, or food puzzles.
- Practice teaching animals to go to their comfy place, and reward them. It will act as a physical cue for them to relax.

The AVMA has resources on socializing dogs, including a handout on how to help clients prepare pets for a potential return to work, at jav.ma/SocialTips. ●

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HOW'S YOUR 'WEBSITE' MANNER?

Veterinarians offering telehealth services will want to ensure they're showing their best side when interacting with clients during online visits.

It's called "websiteside manner," the virtual equivalent to a doctor's bedside manner or demeanor during in-person interactions with a patient or client.

"We're talking about those verbal and nonverbal cues you give when talking with a client," explained Dr. Lori Teller, clinical associate professor of telehealth at Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences.

Dr. Teller offered tips for fostering an effective websiteside manner during a June 3 presentation about telehealth on AVMA Axon. "When you start a visit, you really want to greet the client warmly, perhaps wave or something like that," she said. "If it's the client's first telemedicine appointment, acknowledge that."

"Always start and end appointments with a smile," Dr. Teller added.

Make sure the client can hear and see you, and find out if there's something you can do to make the experience easier. You may need to adjust your camera or microphone or talk louder.

Eye contact is especially important during virtual visits.

"When you're in an exam room, if you look away to take notes or speak with a technician, the client can see why you're doing that," Dr. Teller said.

During a telehealth visit, however, all the client sees is you're no longer visually engaging them. Dr. Teller recommends informing clients at the start of the visit that you may look away to consult records or to take notes. "It's important that clients understand that you're not bored or distracted," she said. ●

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VETERINARY DEANS ON THE MOVE

Four veterinary colleges recently announced changes in their leadership.

Dr. Dana N. Zimmel was appointed the permanent dean of the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine in June. She had served as interim dean since December 2019. She was previously the lead administrator of the UF Veterinary Hospitals and served as associate dean for clinical services.

Dr. Oliver Garden was announced as the new dean of the Louisiana State University School of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Garden was the chair of the Department of Clinical Sciences & Advanced Medicine at the

University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine.

Dr. Garden will succeed Dr. Joel Baines, who has served as dean since 2014 and is moving into a full-time faculty position at the veterinary school. Dr. Baines has overseen an accelerated program of research funding for the veterinary school and landed an \$11 million grant to create the Center for Pre-Clinical Cancer Research.

The University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine has named Dr. Laura K. Molgaard as dean. She has served as interim dean at the

veterinary college since August 2019. She has occupied other leadership roles and has been as a faculty member since 1997.

Dr. Paul Lunn, dean of North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine, will step down in January 2022. Dr. Lunn, who has led the veterinary college since 2012, is leaving to be dean at the University of Liverpool School of Veterinary Science. He is the current president of the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges. ●

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VETERINARIAN HOSPITALIZED 104 DAYS BECAUSE OF COVID-19, COMPLICATIONS

On Nov. 10, 2020, Dr. David Fell started to have symptoms of vomiting, diarrhea, and fever. So, the 74-year-old went to the local hospital in Jackson, Minnesota, and got tested for SARS-CoV-2.

Following testing and radiography at the emergency room, he was transferred from Sanford Jackson Medical Center to Sanford USD Medical Center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, a teaching hospital affiliated with the University of South



Dr. David Fell (far right) poses for a photo with his family at a Minnesota VMA conference. He and his wife, Barb (second from right), became sick with COVID-19 in mid-November last year. At one point, the staff at the Sanford USD Medical Center told Dr. Fell's son, Brian (far left), and daughter, Liz (second from left), that they didn't think he'd make it. (Courtesy of Dr. Fell)

Dakota. Little did Dr. Fell know that he wouldn't get out of the hospital for about 3 1/2 months, with most of that time spent recuperating.

Dr. Fell vividly recalls that on Dec. 1, 2020, the doctors told him to make a decision.

"I had two choices. They could take me to the intensive care unit and sedate and intubate me, with a 40% chance of saving me. Or they could continue what they were doing, and I was probably going to die that day," he said.

He agreed to go to the intensive care unit, where he was sedated and intubated for a week. When he woke up, Dr. Fell didn't know where he was or what was happening.

Rehabilitation proved difficult. He was transferred to the rehabilitation unit in Sioux Falls to recover. His two big hurdles were getting off oxygen and being able to sit and stand up.

After 72 days in Sioux Falls, he was transferred back to Sanford Jackson Medical Center. Dr. Fell finally went home on March 1.

"You just have to take one thing at a time," he said. "But I feel good. I can't do much more than walk across the house before I have to sit and rest, but it's like I have a new life." ●

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