



# *Today*

College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences  
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## **Building Relationships** *The Key to Success*

Bison: A Study in Conservation Biology ~ page 12

Three People. Three Stories. One Degree. ~ page 16

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# Responding Today to the Needs of Tomorrow

## DEAN'S Message

As I look over the past 10 years that I have served as Dean of Veterinary Medicine at Texas A&M University, it strikes me how much our profession has changed. At the central core, we still have the mission of improving the quality of life for animals, but it is the increasing role veterinarians are playing in government and in industry that brings us to one of the most exciting and dynamic times in our profession's history.

One of the challenges of living and working in changing times is making sure that we continue to graduate the very best entry level veterinarian possible. The question becomes how we equip our students today to succeed in the profession of the future. To address future needs, we continually review our professional curriculum, our undergraduate and graduate programs, and even our laboratories. This ensures that we are providing the broadest scope of opportunities for our students, faculty, and staff, while still remaining true to our mission.

Our strategic plan has been designed around the concept of signature programs, those areas where the expertise that is located here and the work that is conducted here position us as one of the top programs in a given area. As the profession continues to evolve, opportunities to add to our list of signature programs often arise. The state of Texas is home to a growing number of exotic and native game ranches—places where whitetail deer and nilgai are raised for hunting purposes. With millions of dollars invested in these animals and their habitats, the need has arisen for veterinary medical professionals with expertise in reproductive biology, genetics, and overall healthcare of these species. The college was invited to a meeting recently with other agencies interested in wildlife to discuss the future of the game ranch industry. In particular, we were asked to consider a possible signature program in conservation medicine. This is a growing area that we will continue to monitor.

Another demand is the escalating need for large animal practitioners in both equine and food animal medicine. We are very proud of the teams



*Dean H. Richard Adams*

that we have assembled to address these needs. They have a great deal of expertise and clinical experience, and have energetically embraced the task of introducing our students to this traditional side of veterinary medicine by building strategic alliances that further enhance our students' experience. We continue to partner with groups such as the Association of Rural Veterinarians, the American Association of Bovine Practitioners, the American Association of Equine Practitioners, many producer groups, and the Texas Veterinary Medical Association to come up with solutions and opportunities in response to the changing demands of our profession.

Our success over the last ten years is witnessed in the relationships we've built. Our faculty and staff have worked diligently to stay on top of emerging trends in the veterinary medical profession, and to adapt our

methods to keep our students at the forefront of graduating veterinarians.

My term as dean of this esteemed college is winding down, and a new dean should be in place by the end of this year. Until then, there is plenty of work to be done to ensure that as a college, we are firmly planted to meet the future. There's also time to revisit the relationships we've built.

If you find yourself back in Aggie-land, be sure to stop by and see how we've grown. The door is always open, and the coffee is hot!

**H. Richard Adams**  
*Carl B. King Dean*  
**of Veterinary Medicine**

# Dairy Cattle Rotation immerses students in large animal practice

Classroom instruction is great, observing is better, and actually getting your hands dirty is best. The Dairy Cattle Rotation partnership between the CVM Large Animal Hospital and the Animal Health and Medical Center in Stephenville, TX is offering veterinary students a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in clinical large animal practice, gaining invaluable experience during their fourth year.

The program was started by Dr. Kathy Bretzlaff as she searched for a way to increase the opportunities for veterinary students to learn about dairy cattle reproduction. After receiving a grant, she enlisted the aid of several practices including the Animal Health and Medical Center, which is one of the premier dairy practices in Texas. As time passed, only the Stephenville practice remained involved. Dr. Allen Roussel, professor and associate department head for Large

Animal Clinical Sciences, is now coordinating the program. The rotation consists of two weeks of complete immersion in the busy practice owned by Dr. Bob Waldron.

"When I first arrived, I was introduced to one of the veterinarians and just five minutes later we were in the truck and on our way to look at a cow with a prolapsed cervix," said Lindsay Syler, a fourth year veterinary student of her Dairy Cattle Rotation experience. "We stayed constantly busy. I was able to help with cattle surgeries, do routine cattle vaccinations, help with dystocias and even saw some horse cases as well." Syler will be starting her career with a rural mixed-animal practice in southeast Texas upon graduation.

Animal Health and Medical Center is a mixed practice clinic with four large animal veterinarians and two small animal veterinarians. The clinic

has been working with the CVM since 1997 to educate tomorrow's veterinarians.

Fourth year students are sent to Stephenville for the Dairy Cattle Rotation because there are no dairies in the College Station area, nor a university-owned dairy. This comes as no surprise as the dairy industry has been undergoing many changes since the late 20th century. Dairy operations have seen two major trends: a steady increase in production per cow while the number of cows producing milk has declined, and a steady decline in the number of operations with an increase in the number of cows in each operation.

Since 1970, the number of dairy operations dropped from approximately 650,000 to almost 90,000 during the start of the 21st century. During this same transition, the average number of cows in each of these operations increased almost five hundred percent, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. These trends have greatly affected the dairy industry and the veterinarians it relies on.

Veterinary colleges have also been forced to change the way they educate their students. As the number of dairy operations dwindled, so have the farms used for educational purposes. The Dairy Cattle Rotation allows veterinary students the opportunity to work intimately with numerous dairy operations through the clinic.

"Students are expected to learn technical skills, improve their diagnostic and therapeutic capabilities, witness practicing veterinarians actively engage in complete dairy cattle health management programs, and understand how a multi-practitioner large animal practice functions," explained Roussel. "Not to mention, the veterinarians with the clinic offer students



*James Morton, fourth-year veterinary student, palpates a cow at the Animal Health and Medical Center.*



excellent expertise and role models for their careers.”

The program gives students the opportunity to see firsthand what veterinarians experience on a daily basis, exposes students to common dairy disease and disorders, develops their palpation skills (particularly by increasing the number of palpations), and increases their knowledge of the dairy industry and its role in society.

Accurate palpation is a tool dairy operations can use to time many important aspects of the cow's lactation. The use of artificial insemination helps accuracy, but veterinarians and herdsmen need to carry that accuracy into the bull-bred herd as well. Knowing where a cow is in her gestation allows proper timing of the dry period (her time off from milking) and to plan when she will calve.

“After two weeks of palpating numerous cattle almost every morning on the rotation, my personal confidence and knowledge base has grown,” explained Syler. “With palpating, the key to getting better is sheer numbers...you have to palpate a lot.”

According to the course guideline, although rectal palpation comprises a large part of the rotation, the emphasis is on learning to evaluate and integrate all the different components of management of a dairy operation. Students are expected to complete



written assignments that help them focus on the learning objectives of this rotation.

“Students do whatever we may be doing that day,” explained Dr. Jeff Gaiser, associate veterinarian at the

Animal Health and Medical Center.

“Palpations, sick cows and calves, delivering calves, surgeries—they are taking part in everything we do. They get exposure to discussions with herdsmen and owners as we plan their operations, and we also get plenty of emergency work as well.”

By immersing students in everyday practice, students see an abundance of large animal practice cases that they will see in their own professional experiences. This is extremely helpful as the VMTH is primarily a referral clinic.

“I think we learn a little from them, too.” Gaiser went on to say, “These students want to be here rather than have to be here and are putting forth more effort into their education. This rotation is a useful tool for their career, especially for large animal medicine.”

With the dairy industry's unique atmosphere and even more distinctive geographical layout, educating large animal veterinary students can be challenging. Large Animal Clinical Sciences has found a way to give students an exclusive opportunity to experience dairy cattle medicine from within the industry and get their hands plenty dirty. 🌿



*Students experience all aspects of dairy cattle operations during the rotation.*



# Gastrointestinal (GI) Laboratory focuses on research and service

Nestled in the basement of the Small Animal Hospital, the Gastrointestinal Lab is buzzing. The only one like it in the world, Texas A&M University is at the forefront of combating gastrointestinal diseases in animals.

The topic of gastrointestinal (GI) problems is not exactly appetizing, and is often seen as “taboo” in our modern society, but that doesn’t reduce the importance of the matter as a health issue. Often the outward unpleasant symptoms are just an expression of this very important health problem.

“If a person has Crohn’s disease, it can really affect their health and quality of life,” said Kathleen Aicher, the GI Lab supervisor. “Pets are just the same.”

The GI Lab started at the University of Florida in 1985, under the direction of Dr. David Williams who introduced

an assay for canine serum trypsin-like immunoreactivity (TLI) to the United States. The lab was moved to Kansas State University, and later Purdue University, before finding its home with the CVM in 1997.

The lab focuses on two main objectives: research and service. On the service side, they process about 80,000 samples a year. Veterinarians from around the globe send samples from pet patients that are suspected of suffering from GI diseases such as pancreatitis, liver disease, colitis, inflammatory bowel diseases and many others. Samples are tested in the GI Lab, often using tests created through research conducted in the very same laboratory.

Predominantly, the lab serves companion animals. The samples received comprise an almost 50/50 mix of cats and dogs. GI and skin problems are



*Dr. Jörg Steiner*

actually the two most common causes for taking a companion animal to a veterinarian, explained Dr. Jörg Steiner, associate professor and director of the GI Lab. While the main focus is on companion animal diseases, samples from all varieties of animals including horses, cattle, swine, birds, and many exotic animal species are tested.

The GI Lab has six technicians and numerous student workers who work to increase the lab’s efficiency. With an approximate 24 hour turn-around, results are communicated quickly to veterinarians so ailing pets can be treated as soon as possible. The technicians also help advise veterinarians on general issues with sample submission. For complex cases, some very specialized and experienced veterinarians are on hand for consultations and patient management.

Dr. Steiner and Dr. Jan Suchodolski, research assistant professor and associate director, offer their expertise from the Texas A&M University campus. Dr. David Williams, head of the department of Veterinary Clinical Medicine at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and previous director of the GI Lab, also takes part in consultations via telephone. Thus, veterinarians not only receive their



*Kathy Aicher and Dr. Suchodolski discuss measurements of analytes used to help diagnose gastrointestinal diseases.*



patient's test result, but also expert consultations to more precisely treat GI disease.

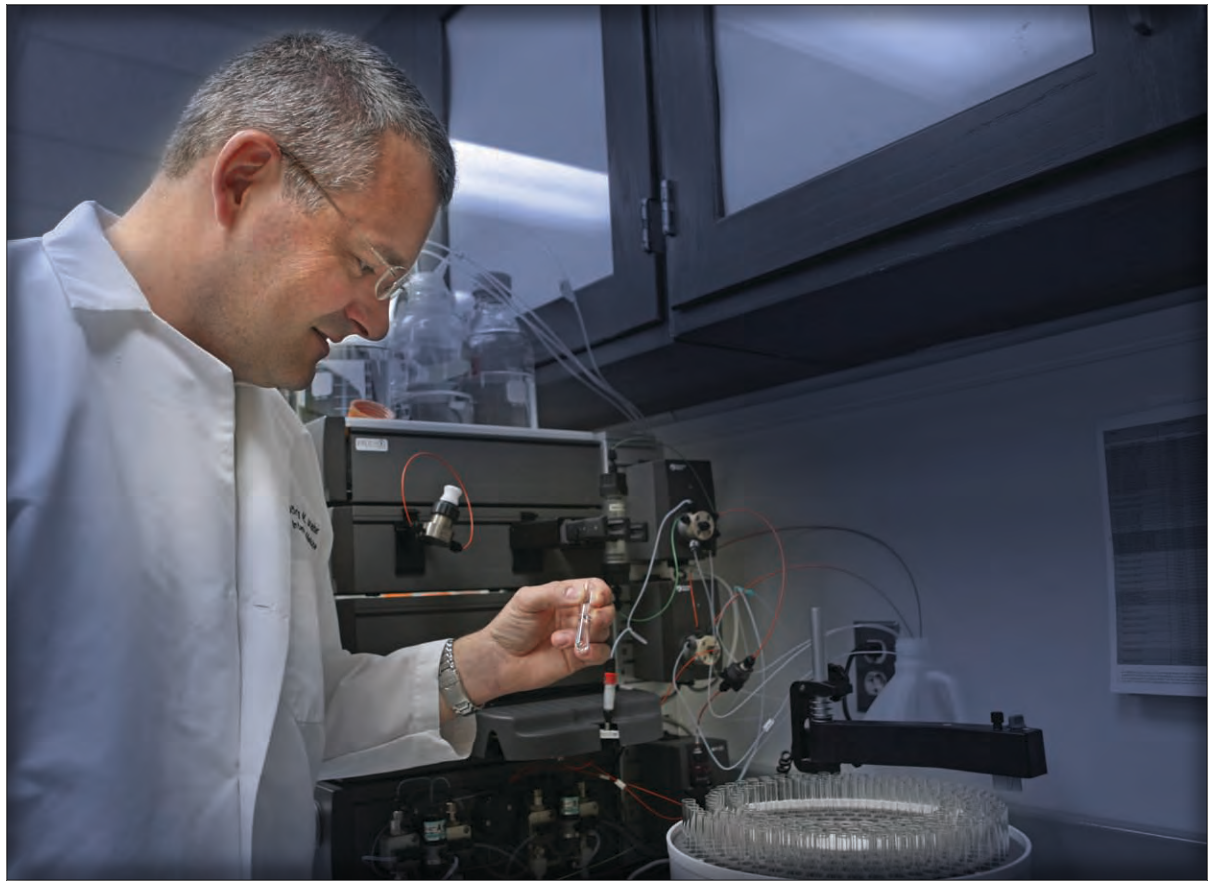
Numerous graduate students are also members of the lab. Recently, the lab filled its first residency/Ph.D. training program with Dr. Jonathan Lidbury who graduated from the Glasgow Veterinary College.

The lab has taken a proactive position on expanding the educational and research advancement of GI diseases. Currently, the GI Lab is involved in approximately 30 research projects that include trying to identify gene defects that lead to gastrointestinal diseases, investigating new diagnostic tests that would simplify the diagnosis of gastrointestinal diseases, and even projects to develop new medications that would treat the most routine gastrointestinal diseases in dogs and cats. The GI Lab also collaborates with investigators around the world.

Fundraising has been a major undertaking for the lab. Maintaining the premier gastrointestinal laboratory in the world is not cheap, neither is advancing the service, research, and outreach that the lab provides, even with celebrity endorsements from Lyle Lovett and Wolfgang Peterson.

Dr. Steiner has five specific and ambitious goals for the fundraising campaign: 1) establish the first Institute of Companion Animal Gastroenterology world-wide; 2) establish the first Chair in Companion Animal Gastroenterology world-wide; 3) establish the first academic training program in Companion Animal Gastroenterology world-wide; 4) establish a fund for collaborative projects in Companion Animal Gastroenterology; and 5) establish a capital equipment fund.

The GI Lab depends heavily on service income from the tests conducted, much of which goes to fund additional research. The GI Lab does not induce diseases in dogs, they strictly use naturally occurring GI diseases. This makes it harder to receive federal monies, as studies which induce diseases are often preferred. Not to mention, the



*Dr. Steiner examines samples from a fast pressure liquid chromatography system utilized to purify proteins from animal tissue used as an antigen for developing immunoassays.*

diseases being researched are “less than glamorous.”

“Many other diseases receive more attention than GI diseases,” explained Steiner. “For instance, cancer receives a great amount of attention because the immediacy of its fatality is easily recognizable and understood. But, with gastrointestinal diseases, it is not seen as such an important problem.”

Steiner also noted when people understand owners are abandoning or euthanizing dogs and cats because they vomit often or have accidents on the carpet repeatedly, they begin to see its importance. All too often owners and vets cannot find the source of the problem, and much more research is needed to help them solve these problems.

“That is what we are trying to get people to do—realize the importance and scope of our research and understand the need for support of our research,” said Suchodolski.

Outreach is an extremely important component of the GI Lab. Educating veterinarians about the latest tests and diagnoses is imperative to combating GI diseases.

“We do a lot of continuing education,” said Steiner. “We do approximately 100 lectures a year all over

the world. All the good we do here doesn’t do anyone any good if we don’t communicate it to veterinarians in the field.”

The ambitious program has set and met the goal of creating and adding two to three GI tests a year to their comprehensive assay line-up. In the past year they have added two polymerase chain reaction (PCR) based tests: *Heterobilharzia americana* and the gene encoding *Clostridium perfringens* enterotoxin, as well as a new assay for measurement of serum gastrin concentration in dogs.

The GI Lab is paving the way for the successful diagnosis and treatment of gastrointestinal diseases. With lofty goals and a stellar track record, the team is promoting gastrointestinal health in companion animals. While the hurdles of funding the project are high, the end result of benefit to veterinary medicine is what the GI Lab is hoping people will see, and that will persuade them to contribute to their campaign. “We are hoping that some wealthy individual will want to name the lab, make a difference in the lives of millions of pets, and endow the lab so that our work can continue for years to come,” says Steiner. 🍀



# CVM explores opportunities with farmed whitetail deer industry



*A young buck looks on from the safety of his enclosure at Triple JJJ Ranch.*

“The buck stops here.” And no where is that saying more true than in the state of Texas, especially if you are talking about the burgeoning farmed deer industry. Nationwide, farmed deer are responsible for an economic impact of between \$3 and \$4 billion annually.

Currently, the farming of specifically whitetail deer in Texas is regulated through permits issued by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). With more than 60,000 registered animals on approximately 1500 permitted premises and an annual economic impact on the state of \$652 million, Texas is the national leader in farmed whitetail deer. As the industry continues to grow, so do the number of challenges that it faces.

Deer disease and health management is probably the largest contributor to the success of a farmed deer operation. One major challenge is the very small number of veterinarians

with experience working with cervids (the family to which deer belong). In addition, many of the pharmaceuticals needed to treat the deer are not labeled specifically for cervids. There are no books, guidelines, or standardized treatment protocols. Most deer farm managers and the veterinarians who assist them are simply learning in the field.

To address these growing concerns, a landmark meeting was held in February 2008, hosted by the Triple JJJ Ranch in Somerville, TX. For the first time, representatives from the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary

Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the Texas Animal Health Commission, the Texas Deer Association, the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory, the Texas Department of Health, and interested veterinarians from around the state convened to discuss the future of the farmed deer industry in Texas.

“We have a vested interest in working with these groups to improve the health of cervids in the state,” said Dr. H. Richard Adams, dean of veterinary medicine. “By cooperating and partnering with these organizations, we can establish



*Deer are tagged for identification to help with the detailed record keeping of the ranch.*



the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences as a national model for cervid medicine.”

Research involving deer is already underway at the college, with projects involving genomics and infectious diseases.

Dr. Chris Seabury, assistant research scientist, has been working on a project funded by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department related to disease monitoring and genetic diversity in whitetail deer. The two year project specifically monitors Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease, a potentially devastating illness to deer populations.

“Not much is known at this time about cervid genomics,” said Seabury. “As the industry continues to grow, it will be increasingly important to understand the genetics underlying disease resistance to support the overall improvement of cervid health and reproductive biology. Representatives from TPWD demonstrated their commitment to free-ranging whitetail deer by funding research which specifically addresses major health concerns for this species.” In addition to cervid health, Dr. Seabury has also moved forward with a whole-genome mapping initiative for whitetail deer that will significantly improve current and future research capabilities.

However, Seabury and his colleague, Dr. Don Davis, associate professor at the CVM, agree that the current level of research is just the tip of the iceberg.

“A need exists to investigate different pharmaceuticals and chemicals such as wormers to get them labeled for cervids,” said Davis. “The industry needs to know which ones are not only safe, but effective. There is also a growing demand for improved diagnostic testing for different cervid-specific diseases. We are really just beginning to define the comprehensive scope of research that will be needed to appropriately support this industry.”

Meanwhile, the North American Deer Farmers Association and the Texas Deer Association collaborated as far back as a year ago to establish a deer disease and applied genetics center. The funding required to establish this center, approximately \$5 million per year over five years has been added to the Farm Bill that is currently being debated in Congress with a decision expected any time. Such a center



*Chris McDaniel, Triple JJJ Ranch manager, explains the process for working with farmed deer and demonstrates the use of a specially designed chute from New Zealand.*

would need to be located within a college of veterinary medicine in a state with a strong deer industry, and Texas A&M would certainly be in the running for such a center.

The CVM has also committed itself to the Texas deer industry by working to establish internships/externships with experienced deer veterinarians, as well as offering an elective for third year DVM students covering cervid health and management.

Chris McDaniel, manager of Triple JJJ Ranch was enthusiastic about Texas A&M's response to the industry's needs, as well as the outcome of the meeting.

“There was a very good dialogue,” said McDaniel. “We were able to talk openly and frankly about where we saw the industry heading, what our current and future needs are, and where the industry needed help from partners like the CVM. As the

industry grows, we'll need more things labeled and more literature for cervids. The end product of the combined efforts from all those who were here is to have genetically improved deer, not just for antlers, but also for disease resistance.”

Attendees at the meeting also realized the need for increased funding in addition to whatever may be decided with the Farm Bill. Discussions included different ways that resources could be committed to the CVM to further their efforts in building a cervid medicine program.

“We are working diligently to establish ourselves as the leader in this arena,” added Davis. “There is still much more to be done, but bringing everyone together in one room to have a conversation about the future of this industry is a tremendous and unprecedented start.”



## PEER: Inspiring the next generation

With wide eyes, seventh-graders wait in anticipation of what Dr. Larry Johnson, professor in Veterinary Integrative Biosciences, is about to pull out of his bag of props. What could it be? Is it moving? The curiosity sparked by such a presentation is exactly the response that the PEER program is looking for—to inspire young minds to explore the scientific world.

The Partnership for Environmental Education and Rural Health, better known as PEER, is an innovative outreach program of the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM). The goal of the program is to light a fire in grade school students about the world of science and discovery.

Two grants from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences started the PEER program. Most recently, two grants from the National Science Foundation have allowed graduate students an excellent opportunity to become involved in

educating the minds of young scientists.

PEER makes science and supplementary scientific education more accessible to students in rural areas. Through a number of programs, PEER has launched an extremely successful and rewarding campaign. With three specific goals, PEER is blazing a trail for future science professionals. Teacher training, curriculum development, and classroom instruction compose the focus of PEER education in public schools.

"We not only want to increase students' interest, but ignite a sincere passion for science," explained Dr. Johnson. "It truly is a wonderful opportunity for youth to gain experience and understanding in science and for our undergrad, graduate, and professional students to hone their



*Dr. Larry Johnson*

communication skills. We hope to see some of these kids return to Texas A&M in a few years to pursue their own collegiate educational paths in science and become the next generation of science professionals."

PEER programs are active throughout the year, with many graduate students, undergraduates, and professional students working together to create a successful program. The graduate and undergraduate students at Texas A&M dedicate at least fifteen hours a week to the PEER program; most of which is spent inside the classroom acting as a role model for young children.

PEER is not only active inside the classroom, it also extends its influence through the internet. The PEER web site provides teachers all over the country with valuable science teaching resources. It offers teachers an opportunity to ask questions over the internet and receive an answer from an expert in the field of science. This communication aids teachers in understanding scientific topics, which may help the teacher



*Dr. Johnson uses students' interest in animals to enhance science education and promotion of biomedical careers.*





*The PEER program interacts with veterinary extension to bring resources to 4-H. Here, 4-H students and parents learn about bits and proper horse shoeing.*

to present information more clearly to students. The PEER program also offers many training workshops for teachers throughout the year which present them with exciting, different ways to teach youth about science.

The CVM will be revealing its newest PEER program this year. The program has been named "The Veterinarian's Black Bag," and will provide veterinarians with an aid to help extend the comprehension of environmental education, rural health, and veterinary medicine to young students. The program provides lesson plans, PowerPoint presentations, and other helpful information that veterinarians can use in their local classrooms. The program helps experts break down complex subjects to better promote student understanding of scientific information. These presentations are prepared by graduate and undergraduate participants in the PEER program and are proofed by veterinarians at the CVM. The PEER program hopes that these materials will encourage veterinarians to spread their knowledge of veterinary medicine and science to local school children by making the process less time consuming.

Another program that the CVM's division of PEER uses to excite young minds is "Aggie Day." Hosted by the CVM and the Texas A&M Animal Science Department, Aggie Day educates youth on equine science and horsemanship through lectures, demonstrations, discussion panels and hands on activities. Aggie Day is hosted every other year by the CVM and provides youth with information that they could not receive anywhere else. (*For more information on Aggie Day, please see story on page 28.*)

The Duke Talent Identification Program (TIP) is another way that the CVM is reaching out and encouraging kids to strive for a career in science. Duke TIP is an educational retreat that happens twice during the summer and lasts for three weeks per session. The retreat is designed for middle school-age children to learn about veterinary medicine and how to become a veterinarian from experts at the CVM. Fifteen faculty members and four DVM students conduct lectures about topics such as the international shipment of animals, roles of modern veterinarians, and diseases of the world that could be used for bioterrorism. The students are expected

to apply the information they have received by writing papers, which are then turned in to the faculty members for inspection. Teenagers must go through an application and selection process to take part in Duke TIP. The teenagers leave the CVM full of applicable knowledge and inspired to learn more about veterinary medicine.

The PEER program has been enriching the minds of young children for years and will continue to do so through generous funding from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the National Science Foundation. Through these programs, hundreds of children have been, and will continue to be, exposed to the wonderful world of science, and perhaps advance to become leaders in their fields. Teachers will find the web site to be a valuable resource that can be used to enlighten young minds to the mysteries of science. Local veterinarians can present information in classrooms effortlessly with the use of the Veterinarian's Black Bag program. And the dream of inspiring the next generation will become a reality for the dedicated faculty and students who have worked so hard to make it come true. 🐾



# Bison: A Study in Conservation Biology



Research

*Spotlight*

Bison were one of the first creatures to catch the attention of conservation biologists. Prior to the 19th century, bison roamed North America by the millions. Only one short century later, bison populations were beginning to decline due to increased hide hunting, spread of exotic disease, and competition for grazing and water resources by other growing animal populations. By 1880 it is believed that less than 1,000 bison remained, and the species

was in serious danger of becoming extinct. By the early 1900s several individuals had taken notice of the rapid decrease in bison numbers and began forming captive herds from the few remaining bison on the Great Plains. As few as six bison herds existed in the late 1800s, and these herds were to become the predecessors of the more than 500,000 bison that exist today. This amazing rebirth and recovery of bison populations is one of the greatest



success stories in the history of conservation biology.

Today, around 95 percent of all bison are managed in private “production” herds. The remainder can be found in public and private “conservation” herds, such as those managed by the National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, and various state wildlife departments. Realizing the importance of the federally-managed herds within the U.S. to bison species conservation, the Department of the Interior (DOI) formed a cooperative project with the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM) to help promote the long-term conservation of these herds.

Scientists at the CVM developed the DNA-based biotechnologies necessary to identify and manage the genetic diversity in each of the eleven federal bison herds. Coupled with historical and life history information such as herd size, sex ratios, and culling strategies, genetic information can provide the managers of these herds detailed information that is critical in the development of long-term genetic conservation and herd management plans. To date, nearly 7,000 samples from DOI herds have been collected and sent to the CVM in order to isolate DNA and test for genetic diversity. The genotypic information gained from this study was used to evaluate the levels of genetic diversity within each herd and compare the genetic relationships among the herds. Additional studies have been recently funded through the DOI to evaluate the effects of various management strategies on genetic diversity. Together, these studies provide critical information to field biologists and ecologists so that they can make better-informed management decisions.

Around the apex of the specie’s decline in the late 1800s, ranchers interested in creating more robust cattle breeds began crossing bison with their domesticated relatives. These experiments lead to the production of a large number of hybrids from the two species, and unfortunately most bison surviving today are really hybrids with domestic cattle. However, using information and biotechnology developed from the cattle gene

mapping and genome sequencing projects, CVM researchers have developed powerful new laboratory tools to identify even small amounts of domestic cattle DNA in otherwise normal looking bison (hybrids). These technologies have been applied to over 15,000 bison samples from private and public herds across North America and lead to the discovery that most, but not all, modern bison herds contain some level of domestic cattle DNA. Two notable exceptions are the Yellowstone and Wind Cave National Park lineages. The very limited number of bison sources with little or no domestic cattle DNA contamination complicates long-term species conservation efforts.

Realizing that germplasm conservation must be the foundation for any species-wide conservation effort, researchers are



*Dr. James Derr has led research efforts in the conservation genetics of American bison for 15 years and is shown here with Assistant Research Professor Dr. Natalie Halbert. They share a mutual appreciation for this iconic species with the owners of the local Lucky B Bison Ranch, Donnis Baggett and Beverly Brown. Baggett and Brown are strong supporters of the CVM.*

hoping the publicly owned bison herds will eventually have genomes with as little hybrid DNA as possible. This can be accomplished through the proper management of the public herds. Dr. James N. Derr and Dr. Natalie Halbert, researchers at Texas A&M University, propose a second recovery of the bison species which would focus on the integrity of the bison genome. With ongoing development of genotyping technologies, individual bison can be identified with very little to no contamination to enhance genome conservation efforts.

American bison are one of very few wildlife species for which advanced genomic technologies have been extensively developed. Unfortunately, decimation by disease,

overhunting and habitat loss are not limited to North America wildlife—some African mammals are going through a similar decline in numbers. Using the lessons learned from bison, similar genetic technologies, like those developed by Dr. Joe Templeton (professor emeritus) and Dr. Derr more than 10 years ago, are being developed for endangered and at-risk wildlife species in Africa in order to evaluate conservation opportunities and enhance genome preservation. One major objective of this conservation campaign is to collect, catalogue, and conserve DNA samples from at-risk and endangered species in an attempt to prevent extinction and enhance restoration efforts. This repository of genetic material will then be available for a multitude of conservation genetic, gene discovery, and genetic diversity investigations with a number of hunted species such as lions, rhinos, elephants, cape buffaloes, and other smaller African plains game species. DNA collection efforts have already begun on many of these large animals harvested on safari in Africa, and this international conservation effort will continue into the future.

The spectacular recovery of American bison is truly one of the best success stories in conservation biology. Through the efforts of researchers at Texas A&M University and conservation groups across North America, the recovery of this species will continue using genomic technologies to ensure the genetic preservation of exist-

ing populations while establishing new bison populations that are free of domestic cattle genes. Hopefully these researchers will have the opportunities to build on this bison conservation model and further develop these powerful biotechnologies for many African species that are currently facing population challenges very similar to those historically faced by American bison. This research is not possible without generous funding from individuals, organizations, and agencies. If you would like to learn more about species conservation efforts using genomic technologies for iconic North American or African species, please contact Dr. James N. Derr or Dr. Natalie Halbert at the CVM. 🌿



Leadership

Lab

# LEADING



Stephanie Hampe, DVM/MBA student, is pursuing her MBA degree at Mays Business School this academic year. Here she discusses a class assignment with her Cost Management Accounting professor, Dr. Michael R. Kinney, associate professor of accounting and Carol Phillips Fellow. In the fall, Stephanie will return to her third year of the DVM program.

While the Center for Executive Leadership in Veterinary Medicine at Texas A&M University has multiple goals and objectives, the absolute and primary goal is to educate and train our students to become the leaders of the future for our profession. We have taken a broad and comprehensive approach to achieve this goal through a continuum process starting at "New Student Orientation" and progressing through graduation. This leadership and communication process includes didactic courses beginning in the first semester, laboratory exercises, clinical decision making and client communications, leadership modeling by the faculty, career counseling, dual degree programs, species tracking in the third and fourth years of the curriculum, summer employment and externships, career alternative tracks, student professional organizations, TVMA committee assignments, and professional ethics. This continuous process focuses on leadership, communications, teamwork, interpersonal relationships, career preparation, and professional responsibilities. Outcome assessments have confirmed to us for years that our students get one of the very best, if not the

best, overall DVM educations in the world. However, we can provide this superior education and still not meet our goals if our graduates cannot successfully and effectively work with people. The ability to work with people will often determine success or failure, and this ability is a learned process which makes leaders. Yes, leaders are made, not born, and it takes time and experience.

Students who enter the DVM curriculum come from diverse educational, work experience, leadership, cultural, and career goal backgrounds. However, the principles of leadership, teamwork, and communication training apply to all students and career goals. Our training begins with a client communications segment and an ethics session in the "New Student Orientation" prior to the first year. In the first year of the curriculum, all students take a course in "Professional and Leadership Development for the Veterinarian" which teaches the basic principles in leadership and communications.



# OPPORTUNITIES

Much of this course is now taught by our CVM Bayer faculty who have completed faculty professional development in teaching communication skills at the Bayer Institute for Animal Health Communications. By September 2008, the CVM will have fourteen faculty who will have completed this incredible program. In both semesters of the first year, additional training in communication skills is now provided in the Clinical Correlates courses where small group exercises and practical application provide experiential opportunities for the students. In gross anatomy, students are now assigned leadership and communications roles in their work teams and are required to make oral presentations and team member evaluations. These experiences are provided under the premise that success in the future will depend on both leadership and teamwork.

In the second and third years of the DVM curriculum, this training is expanded and elevated to higher levels in course work, laboratories and time in the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital with client interactions. One example is that students must use their communication and leadership skills to obtain permission for surgery on their junior surgery animal from a faculty member playing the role of owner. We are also developing elective courses in the third year for more advanced leadership and communications training. The making of leaders and developing competency in communication skills is no different than developing competencies in clinical skills. Both require supervision, training, time, experience, and repetition.

The fourth year of the DVM curriculum provides a full year of concentrated experience for students to interact with team members, faculty, support staff, clients, and referring veterinarians. Leadership decisions must be made and defended. Teamwork and accountability are built into the student evaluation system. Students also have the opportunity to take four different career tracks, depending on their career goals. These are mixed-practice (which the majority takes), large animal, small animal, and career alternative. The career alternative track allows students with a specific and usually non-practice or very specialized clinical interest to take the core clinical rotations and then take sixteen weeks of education and experience in a selected field. These have included laboratory animal medicine, pathology, practice management, exotic animal medicine, poultry medicine, specific food animal and population medicine, and many others.

In the past five years, the Center for Executive Leadership has provided career counseling for students to make career choices and guide them in strategies to best prepare them to become leaders in their career selections. We have also helped arrange student summer work programs, international veterinary medical experiences, summer research projects, species specific clinical practice work experiences, employment with industry, and many other career

opportunities. Students are now given counsel, opportunity, and financial support to pursue dual degree programs such as the DVM/PhD, DVM/MBA, DVM/MS, and in the near future a DVM/MS in Homeland Security. The DVM/PhD program can be completed in a minimum of seven years. The other dual degree programs can be completed in a total of five years. We have had fourteen students complete the DVM/MBA program in the first five years. The DVM/MBA can be completed between the second and third years of the DVM curriculum or immediately following the DVM degree. This program is now open to graduate veterinarians and can be completed in one calendar year at the nationally recognized Mays Business School at Texas A&M University.

Implementation of many of these programs has been aided through support from corporate and professional organization members of the External Advisory Council for the center. These

executives, who are the movers and shakers in the profession and decision makers who impact the future, come to campus annually to provide counsel and direction for the center and these programs. Council members are all presidents, vice presidents and directors of national prominence. They have also provided huge financial support for us to implement many of these programs such as the DVM/PhD, DVM/MBA, Bayer Animal Health Communications Faculty Development Program, student summer research program, ethics sessions with practitioners,

summer international program, and many others. The Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA) has been a strong partner and helped support the DVM/MBA Business Consulting Project on "The Economic Impact of Veterinary Medicine in the State of Texas," the summer research program, TVMA committee assignments for students, student/practitioner ethics sessions twice a year, the "New Student Orientation Program," and legislative involvement.

Our students are told from the first day of class that they are leaders whether they want to be or not. They are also told that they will make leadership decisions every day for the rest of their careers, and they will lead a team of professionals, regardless of their career path. They are further told that they can become strong, successful leaders and make an impact in the profession and the communities in which they live. How? "Leaders are made, not born." It is our goal and our responsibility to make our DVM graduates into leaders who will make a difference and have a lasting impact on our profession and the society which we serve. 🌿

"Leaders are made, not born! I have read the obituaries of leaders, but never have I read a birth announcement for a leader. I can only deduct that somewhere between birth and death, by training, by choice, and by strength of character, people become leaders."

~ Author Unknown

~ Dr. E. Dean Gage

Executive Director and Bridges Chair  
Center for Executive Leadership in Veterinary Medicine



Jessica Rivera



DeRyl Glenn



Laura Persky

Biomedical Sciences  
*Spotlight*

# Three People. Three Stories. *One Degree.*

Each fall they arrive. They come from all around the state, all over the country, and even overseas. They come from big cities and small towns. Some want to be human doctors, some veterinarians. Still others will move on to one of the many other health professions, but they all have one thing in common—they are all Aggie Biomedical Science majors.

An academically demanding curriculum grounded in the sciences and a talented team of academic advisors who have all been through rigorous degree programs have made the Biomedical Sciences program one of the most popular degree programs for students wanting to move on to pro-

fessional school or one of the health professions.

DeRyl Glenn grew up in the fast-paced city of Houston, and his love of science and math brought him to College Station and the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences.

"I always knew that I wanted to do something that involved math and science," remembers Glenn. "At first, I wanted to be a veterinarian. I attended the Michael E. DeBakey High School for Health Professions, and then came to Texas A&M intent on going into veterinary medicine. As a Biomedical Sciences major, I took a course that exposed me to a number of different health careers. I realized

just how flexible a degree plan the BIMS program offered, and all of a sudden, there were opportunities to explore a number of different options."

While a BIMS student, Glenn worked closely with the academic advising staff, serving as president of the Biomedical Science Association. He now works with Merck as a pharmaceutical sales representative. As a part of his job, he talks to physicians every day and has found that he and his clients took many of the same courses and have a similar foundation in the sciences.

"My BIMS experience has made me better at what I do," said Glenn. "I have a better foundation for contin-



ued learning, and I'm a more effective communicator with my clients. I use my degree much more than I thought I would. The relationships with the BIMS staff that I established while at Texas A&M were a major influence on getting me where I'm at today."

Across the street, another former BIMS student is taking her degree in a slightly different direction.

Laura Persky, from Aledo, TX is a second year medical student at the Texas A&M Health Science Center who wants to go into family practice when she graduates.

"I knew a friend in the BIMS program, and I pretty much knew that I wanted to go into medical school," said Persky. "My friend told me that this program would prepare me very well for professional school. The BIMS program courses are applicable to medical school, dental school, or really just about any of the professional schools."

Persky credits the advising team for her success as well.

"The advisors helped me immensely," said Persky. "While in BIMS, I also served as a vice-president in the Biomedical Science Association in the human medicine sub-branch. This experience helped me get to know the advisors better. They have been through science programs, and when times get tough with the heavy course load and the difficult classes, it's nice to be able to go in and talk to someone who has been there. I have really loved all my classes and feel much better prepared for what I'm going through in medical school than I think I would have been entering from another major. I'm glad I stuck with BIMS because it has given me great rewards and opportunities that I might not have had otherwise."

In her spare time, Persky has been shadowing family practice physicians here in the Brazos Valley. Before entering medical school, she completed a Masters in Veterinary Medical Sciences.

Jessica Rivera from Bay City, TX has known she wanted to be a veterinarian since she was 12 years old.

"I witnessed the birth of a baby goat while I was on my uncle's ranch," recalls Rivera. "It was so amazing. It was then that I knew what I wanted to be."


Rivera began her college career at Wharton County Community College. Her counselor there suggested she look into the BIMS program because of her desire to become a veterinarian and her love of science.

"After researching the program, I decided to enroll in BIMS because of its reputation," said Rivera. "Some of the classes are taught by the same professors that teach in the professional program, and I knew the rigor of the program would prepare me for what I would be facing in veterinary school. Many of the pre-requisites for veterinary school matched well with the BIMS curriculum, so I knew that by the time I was through, I would feel very prepared for professional school."

Rivera noted that many of her friends from the BIMS program have gone on to different professional programs, but the basic science behind many of the health professions remains the same.

"Medicine is medicine—just different species, or a different viewpoint, adds Rivera. "It is really hard to satisfy everyone's academic needs, but no department or college does it better than BIMS. The advisors are amazing, and the fact that they have been through science programs instills confidence in the students that they can finish."

Whether it is in medical school, veterinary school, or in industry, the BIMS program is graduating successful students. Currently, the BIMS program puts more students in seats at professional schools than any other program in the state of Texas.

Each of these former BIMS students has taken their degree in a different direction, but they share a common foundation. A challenging curriculum, a strong academic advising team, and a passion for science have helped launch their careers, just as it has done for others over the last 35 years, and just as it will for future generations. 

## Dennis wins Texas A&M academic advising award



Any college student or alumnus can assert the importance of a good advisor while planning an education. The Biomedical Sciences Department houses four excellent advisors, including Brady Dennis who is a recent recipient of the President's Award for Academic Advising for 2008.

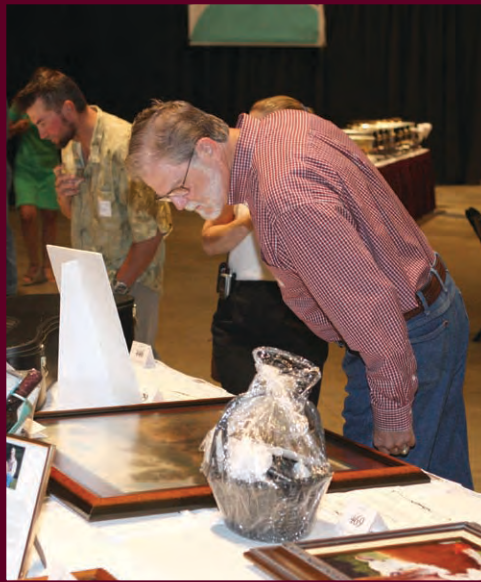
Dennis, senior academic advisor I, was one of only five advisors recognized campus-wide for his role in academic advising. Award winners were selected by a committee of three students and two advisors (including one previous recipient of the award). Each recipient received a plaque and \$2,000, presented by Dr. Jerry Strawser, Interim Executive Vice President and Provost.

Dennis is no stranger to the challenge of obtaining a Biomedical Sciences Degree from Texas A&M University—he graduated with his B.S. in Biomedical Sciences in 2000. He completed a master's degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science in 2004 and went directly into a PhD program in Education Administration with a Sport Management support field. His personal experience from going through the BIMS program allows him to effectively advise students through their degrees.

"As a student, I experienced the close-knit family of Texas A&M, and I can verify that this close-knit family extends to my current job," said Dennis. "The BIMS office helped me complete my degree. I feel like I'm trying to return the favor now to many of the students."

"I am extremely honored to receive such an award," explained Dennis. "I am humbled by the determination of the students that I work with daily, and I'm proud that they take my advice to heart. I hope it is to the betterment of their future goals."





# 2008 Gentle Doctor

## BENEFIT ★ AUCTION

*Dr. Dickson Varner and the "Spur of the Moment Band" entertain the crowd. Dean H... of the auction items. Items up for bid in the silent auction. The "Diamond Dig" is a f... Adams and Gentle Doctor Benefit Auction Director Sherry Adams put their heads toget... for scholarships. The auction floor comes to life. It wouldn't be possible without the v... last minute bids in the silent auction. Guests revie...*







# OR CTION

*Clockwise from upper left:  
Richard Adams peruses some  
favorite among the guests. Dean  
her. It's all about raising funds  
volunteer staff! Rushing to get in  
the items in the live auction.*



## 2008 Schedule

July 11–13, 2008  
Practical Veterinary Dentistry  
Chair: Dr. Bert Dodd

August 8–10, 2008  
2nd Annual Dermatology  
Conference  
Chair: Dr. Christine Rees

October 24–26, 2008  
Annual Equine Conference  
Chair: Dr. Keith Chaffin

November 14–16, 2008  
Small Animal Emergency  
Medicine & Critical Care  
Chair: Dr. David Nelson

November 21–23, 2008  
Clinical Neurology Conference  
Chair: Dr. Jonathan Levine

December 5–6, 2008  
Annual Exotic Pets Conference  
Chair: Dr. Sharman Hoppes

## 2009 Schedule

February 6–8, 2009  
16th Annual Veterinary  
Technician Seminar  
Chairs: Lori Atkins  
& Candise McKay

February 20–22, 2009  
Pain and Physical  
Rehabilitation Seminar  
Chair: Dr. Gwendolyn Carroll

*All dates are subject  
to change.*

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Continuing Education**  
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# CONTINUING EDUCATION Calendar





## **Building Relationships** *The Key to Success*





Relationships are an important key to success in veterinary medicine. They have also been an integral part of achieving the mission of the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. As veterinary medicine continues to change, existing relationships and new ones yet to be forged will play a critical role in responding to the needs of a dynamic profession.

"Our mission has always been to graduate the highest quality entry-level veterinarian," said Dr. H. Richard Adams, Carl B. King Dean of Veterinary Medicine. "In addition to the basic skill set required of all veterinarians, we have worked to address the needs of our students to experience different aspects of the profession. The diversity of opportunities available to our students is important to their success after graduation. We have been very fortunate to have established relationships with different organizations and groups that facilitate the enhanced experience available to our students."

Demographically, most students enrolled in the professional program at Texas A&M come from the "Golden Triangle" of Texas, that area that is bounded by Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio. Anecdotal evidence suggests the majority of

tion they took. Others will be reaffirmed with their career choice.

"As educators, we not only develop skill sets," said Dr. Dan Posey, clinical associate professor and chief of food animal medicine, "we are also helping our students to extend beyond what they know of themselves and discover something new. That's what we're supposed to do. We are building experiences and the skill sets necessary to fully explore opportunities in veterinary medicine."

The CVM faculty realize the importance of graduating veterinarians with a diverse skill set that covers multiple species. They also understand that after working with the students for four years, they are often the students' best resource in those early practice years.

"We have a very experienced and diverse faculty," said Posey. "They represent the best of not only academic-based veterinary medicine, but also a wealth of private clinical practice experience. We always tell our students they should have a directory of people with special skills they might need that they can call on once they leave. We want to make sure we give our students what they are going to need to survive and thrive in the profession."

Cumulatively, the veterinarians on faculty have amassed a total of almost 378 years of clinical experience with the shortest time in clinical practice at

6 months and the longest at 30 years.

More importantly, the faculty represent

small towns and

larger cities across the nation and around the world. They have worked in small, mixed, and exotic practices. When a

student wants to know what life is like outside the "Golden Triangle," they have someone to talk to. The experience of faculty opens doors within the profession that entering students may not have even been aware were there.

In addition to the faculty, many strategic relationships have been formed between the CVM and outside organizations to provide additional insight into the veterinary medical profession.

One such organization is the Association of Rural Veterinarians.

The mission of this group is to show veterinary

medical students what life

is like

in rural

America and what

the rural lifestyle

can offer them. Initially, the

group approached the CVM

want-

ing to find a forum

to reach students

tracking large animal.

Eventually these talks

were opened up to the

Student Chapter of the

American Veterinary Medical Association (SCAMVA). The annual presenta-

tion by ARV has grown steadily larger

each year, and the Office of the Dean

has added money to help fund extern-

ships with rural veterinarians. The

relationship between the CVM and

ARV continues to grow stronger, as

this opportunity adds to the CVM's

ability to teach students and help them

to find their place.

Another such relationship is with

the Texas Veterinary Medical As-

sociation (TVMA). The efforts of Dr.

Deborah Kochevar, former associate

dean for professional programs, Dr.

Kenita Rogers, current associate dean

for professional programs, and Dean

Adams have created a dynamic part-

nership that has never been stronger.

Currently the CVM and the TVMA are

working together to build an extern-

ship database that will pair Texas

practitioners with current students

seeking experience or an opportu-

nity to explore a facet of veterinary

medicine they didn't know much

about. The CVM also works with the

TVMA to support job fairs and other

new initiatives. As part of the prac-

tice management class at the CVM,

representative practitioners from the

TVMA come to the college for 'Night



these students will return to their hometowns or an area close by to begin practice.

It is also estimated that 60 percent of entering veterinarians expect to enter small animal practice. Showing students the full scope of the profession really fulfills the needs of the student. Some will change their minds about what they want to do upon graduation because of a particular class or rota-





# Service, Scholarship, Success

The Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences' relationship with the United States Army dates back to 1974 with the establishment of the Army Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP). To date, Texas A&M has more Aggie veterinarians on active duty than any other veterinary medical school.

"Texas A&M has a unique military tradition," said Dr. Murl Bailey, professor at the CVM, "that makes a relationship with the Veterinary Corps a natural fit. I have been involved as a liaison from the beginning and have seen how the funds from the scholarship program have really helped students achieve great things. Each year we see several students willing to make the commitment to the armed services and their country by participating in this program."

Students receiving scholarships through the Army's scholarship program are required to go through the Officer Basic Course, as well as meet active duty requirements. This is often accomplished by fulfilling military obligations during the summers. In return, these students receive much needed financial assistance with books, tuition, and instruments.

## Veterinary Corps Chiefs from Texas A&M University

BG Michael Cates '79 (current chief)  
Gen. Charles Elia. '43  
Gen. Tom Murnane '47  
Gen. Frank Ramsey '51

## Current HPSP Participants

Joseph Anderson  
William Baskerville  
Alberto Bonfiglio  
Phillip Bowling  
Rebecca Cardine  
Catherine Cook  
April Everet  
Sarah Luciano  
Emily Matz  
Erin Morris  
Miriam Smith

with the Practitioners' where they present interesting cases or practice management problems and discuss them in small groups.

"The key to relationships like the ones we have built with ARV and with the TVMA is that we were able to find common ground," said Posey. "Our students are going to be veterinarians who eventually will be members in these organizations. They represent the future for these groups, and these groups represent experiential opportunities for us. It really is a win-win for both sides."

Building relationships is not a new thing for the CVM. There are relationships that have been around for decades that have grown with the CVM and continue to provide positive experience for the students.

For more than 40 years, students at the CVM have been working with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to care for the animals housed on the prison farm units. The TDCJ farms are a large bio-diverse agricultural operation with cattle, swine, horses, and dogs. They also represent a big demand for veterinary care. Between 60 and 80 senior veterinary medical students work on a rotation basis with faculty to provide a number of veterinary services, including breeding soundness exams, palpation, equine dentistry, and deworming. While this partnership is not unique to the CVM at Texas A&M, the scale of the program is unequalled. The rewards of this relationship have been in helping students experience population medicine, mixed animal practice, and client interaction.

Equally as important has been the long-term relationship that the CVM has built with the United States Army. For decades, the Army has routinely put on programs at the CVM to share with students the veterinary medical opportunities that are available in military service. In addition, the Army

has programs in place to help students with the cost of their veterinary medical education. This relationship continues to grow stronger each year, with the Texas A&M CVM responsible for supplying more veterinarians in the military than any other school.

Relationships built in the past, such as with the Army and TDCJ have created opportunities for the future. The veterinarians of tomorrow will face new challenges and have new opportunities for success.

"As the role of veterinarians as protectors of our nation's food supply continues to grow," said Posey,

"we have begun to seek out relationships with key industry partners that will eventually help our students explore this

area of veterinary medicine. One such relationship is with H.E.B. They are a large supplier of groceries, and they are a feeder of our nation. Through the establishment of externships and possibly rotations, we are able to show our students how veterinarians work in a corporate/industry setting to protect the food Americans

eat. Most of our students may never have thought of serving in that capacity as a veterinarian before, and they may really develop an interest in pursuing that career path."

Experience is the key to success for future veterinarians and the future of the profession. By building on the experience and expertise of the CVM faculty, the college has been able to establish proactive and productive relationships that are enhancing the educational experience at the CVM.

"At no other time in our profession, and our existence as a college of veterinary medicine, has there been a greater need to work together towards the future," said Adams. "By building bridges between organizations and establishing partnerships for the education of our students, we open the doors to our profession and create a brighter future for everyone."





# Open House

March 29, 2008



# Parents Weekend

April 5-6, 2008





## White Coat Ceremony April 4, 2008



## Honors Convocation April 4, 2008





# Cancer treatment center gets green light from Regents

The Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH) at Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences received a significant boost in their ability to bring the latest in cancer treatment to veterinary medicine when the Board of Regents voted to approve the construction of a veterinary imaging and cancer treatment center at its March meeting.

"The College of Veterinary Medicine is dedicated to maintain state-of-the-art instrumentation that improves the clinical services we provide our patients, their owners, and our referring veterinarians," said Dr. H. Richard Adams, dean of veterinary medicine. "Many of the spontaneous cancers that appear in animals are very similar to those in humans, and the technology needed to treat them is the same. The things that we learn from the treatment of our patients may well impact how humans are treated for cancer in the future."

The cancer center will house a linear accelerator which utilizes high energy x-ray and electron beams to treat cancerous tumors in both large and small animals. The new technology is expected to greatly enhance the educational experience for veterinary medical students and increase the quality of medical care available for patients at the VMTH.

"Our radiologists and oncology faculty using that equipment will keep us on the leading edge of cancer treatment," said W. Terry Stiles, hospital director. "This is going to be a valuable resource not only to our clients, but to our students and our research faculty."

The addition of MRI capabilities improves the ability of veterinarians to image and diagnose many conditions and diseases, especially those of the brain and spinal cord.

"The MRI unit will enhance our ability to diagnose problems with soft tissues," said Adams. "While it will be heavily utilized by our neurology/neurosurgery service, it will also be a key diagnostic tool for our equine specialists in the diagnosis and treatment of lamenesses. This technology will be integral to our establishment of a regional center for lameness."

At a projected cost of \$4.5 million, the imaging and cancer building will have approximately 8000 square feet, including space for support personnel, and is designed for both small animals

and horses. It will be located adjacent to the Large Animal Hospital and within 100 yards of the Small Animal Hospital. 🐾

## Governor Perry helps break ground at new TIPS facility

Texas Governor Rick Perry joined Texas A&M President Elsa A. Murano, Texas A&M University System Chancellor Michael D. McKinney, and Texas A&M University System Board of Regents Chairman Bill Jones, among others, in breaking ground at the new Texas A&M University Institute for Preclinical Studies (TIPS) facility, located near the CVM, on March 28.

"The knowledge and technology that is produced here will change our state and nation," Perry said in his address.

"Through these collaborations, Texas A&M will help bolster our state's high-tech sector," said Murano. "Through this facility, we can work to find cures for diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's, heart disease, and even AIDS."

"The innovations and treatments discovered in these labs will one day improve the quality of life for millions of our fellow citizens," McKinney said.

"Our goal with this facility is not only to discover knowledge, but to apply it," Jones said.

The TIPS facility will total about 104,000 square feet and should be completed by June of 2009. Dr. Theresa Fossum, professor of veterinary medicine and surgery in Small Animal Clinical Sciences, will serve as TIPS director.



*Governor Rick Perry and Dr. Theresa Fossum at the TIPS Facility groundbreaking.*



# Carter inducted into International Equine Veterinarians Hall of Fame

G. Kent Carter, DVM, MS, was inducted into the International Equine Veterinarians Hall of Fame as the 2008 college and industry veterinarian. The honor recognizes his accomplishments, achievements, and contributions in the advancement of equine hoof-care.

"I am very honored and humbled by receiving this award," said Dr. Carter. "To be honored beside such talent and expertise is truly an amazing experience, and I look forward to continuing the advancement of veterinary medicine."

The International Equine Veterinarians Hall Of Fame was established in 1997 by the American Farriers Journal to honor veterinarians who have contributed to the knowledge and recognition of proper equine hoof-care. Nominations for the Hall of Fame are made in two classes: practicing equine veterinarian (involved with veterinarians in the field) and college and industry veterinarians (involved with teaching, research, or other important

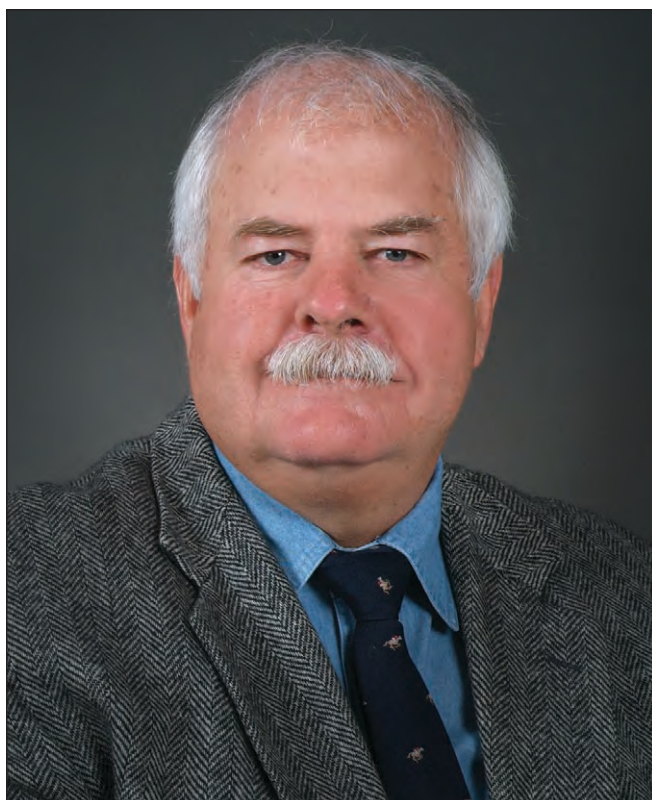
components of hoof-care education).

Current Hall of Fame members select new inductees, and the Hall is sponsored by the American Farriers Journal and The Kentucky Derby Museum. A mere 33 members compose the Equine Veterinarians Hall Of Fame.

A Utah native, Dr. Carter attended Colorado State Veterinary School, and then went into private practice in Reno, Nev. He completed a residency in large animal medicine at Texas

"I am very honored and humbled by receiving this award. To be honored beside such talent and expertise is truly an amazing experience, and I look forward to continuing the advancement of veterinary medicine."

*—Dr. Kent Carter, professor,  
Large Animal Clinical Sciences*



Dr. Kent Carter


A&M University and then moved to Purdue University. After two years at Purdue, he became board certified in internal medicine. Dr. Carter then moved to Texas A&M University in 1984, where he is currently Chief of Medicine. Working in conjunction with farriers for over two decades, he has been instrumental in helping promote a healthy relationship between the two professions.

Dr. Carter has launched an innovative instructional rotation at Texas A&M University dedicated

to equine lameness, which includes hoof-care and its relationship to many lameness problems.

"The Equine Lameness rotation is designed to give veterinary students a focused experience in equine lameness," said Dr. Carter. "Working with a farrier and hoof-related lamenesses is an integral part of this service."

The future is bright for the Texas A&M equine program. In addition to graduating high caliber equine veterinarians, Dr. Carter and the rest of the equine veterinary staff are working to build a covered arena with a state-of-the-art surface and a new imaging center dedicated to the diagnosis and treatment of lamenesses.

"We want to create a regional lameness center here at Texas A&M," said Dr. Carter, "where we can utilize the tremendous expertise and technology here to comprehensively treat our clients. The arena will also enhance the quality of education we provide for our students by exposing them to the most current diagnostic and treatment techniques that are not seen elsewhere." 



# Davidson brings big ideas to Large Animal Clinical Staff

It's been called the toughest job you will ever love, and yet in spite of the many rewards, there remains a national shortage of rural veterinarians.

Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM) is committed to spreading the word to current and prospective veterinary medical students about the opportunities that can be found in this challenging line of work.

The first step was hiring Dr. John Davidson, an Aggie and former practicing veterinarian, to join the Food Animal Section of the Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences at the CVM.

"Today's students need to be told about the best kept secret in all of veterinary medicine—mixed animal practitioners have more fun," says Davidson. "The variety of opportunities (both medical and surgical) available to today's progressive mixed animal practitioner are beyond compare. If more graduates would just give it a try, many would find these opportunities and lifestyles very inviting. There are tremendous practice opportunities in these communities, and the clientele are so appreciative."

And Davidson should know. He returns to A&M, where he received both his undergraduate and veterinary medical degrees, from a successful mixed animal practice that boasted two clinics in Caldwell County. Leaving his practice and the strong relationships he had with his business partner and very talented associate

veterinarians was a difficult choice, but Davidson realized that he had a calling to work with students—perhaps making a small impact on the rural practitioner shortage by being able to share his experience and passion for the job with them.

"One of my many goals while here at Texas A&M is improving the awareness and correcting some of the negative stigmas that are often times incorrectly applied to rural/mixed or 'general' veterinary medical practice," said Davidson. "A key advantage, that often goes unnoticed, of entering mixed practice, even if for a short time, is the solidification of the broad, vast, general knowledge that all veterinary students get. Because of the foundation and implementation of my education as a mixed or general practice veterinarian, I know that after spending significant time away from my practice, I feel confident that I could successfully return to private practice at any point in the future."

Davidson acknowledges that some of the biggest challenges mixed animal veterinarians face are the different level of management intensity and sophistication among today's cattle producers. This poses a challenge to all charged with providing a wholesome product to an increasingly conscious beef consuming public.



*Dr. John Davidson*

"Cattle producers and veterinarians still need to have a close and productive relationship, and the consumers want to know that the product is safe and wholesome," said Davidson. "In this way, veterinarians, working closely with the producers, play a significant role in the safety of our food supply. We also need to let producers know that when they make a choice to use Texas A&M for their veterinary medical services, they are having a profound effect on the future of veterinary medicine by creating positive exposures and experiences for our students. The more this happens, the more likely we are to increase the number of students who would choose to go into mixed or general practice."

Davidson's enthusiasm for working with cattle and cattle producers began at an early age, and that passion was nurtured by his hometown veterinarians.

"Dr. Davidson has a lot of energy, and has already begun to outline a very ambitious set of goals for the program," said Dr. Dan Posey, chief of food animal medicine at Texas A&M. "We couldn't have found a more dynamic individual to introduce our students to mixed animal practice. We're very excited he's on board and we expect great things to come." 🌿

"Today's students need to be told about the best kept secret in all of veterinary medicine—mixed animal practitioners have more fun!"

*~ Dr. John Davidson, clinical assistant professor,  
Large Animal Clinical Sciences*



# 'Aggie Day' educates youth about equine science

On January 12 the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM) and the Department of Animal Science hosted "Aggie Day" to educate youngsters about equine science and horsemanship through lectures, demonstrations, discussion panels, and hands-on activities.

Aggie Day encompassed 26 equine education stations, and included topics such as internal parasites, laminitis, anatomy, horse shoeing, and nutritional requirements, and is hosted every other year by the CVM and Texas A&M University Animal Science Department. The education from Aggie Day helps members of the Pony

Club meet knowledge standards set by the club, as well as increase their own personal understanding of equine practices.

Approximately 350 youth and parents from the Rio Grande Region of the United States Pony Club and area 4-H clubs were in attendance for this year's program. Not only do the day's activities provide indispensable veterinary knowledge, but also an opportunity to learn about Texas A&M University, the veterinary school and what it takes to become a veterinarian. Mutually beneficial, youngsters spoke with current veterinary students to learn about what steps to take to become a veterinary student,

and current veterinary students gain experience interacting with youth in the community and potential clients as they hone their communication skills.

Dr. Larry Johnson, professor of Veterinary Integrative Biosciences and coordinator for the event said, "Aggie Day is a great way to get these kids exposed to science, veterinary medicine, and good animal husbandry. This helps them get a full understanding of the science involved in taking care of their horses. As the only veterinary school in the state, we can offer them an experience they can't gain anywhere else." 🐾

## CVM well represented at annual SAVMA symposium

The Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association (SAVMA) held its annual symposium March 19-23, and Texas A&M was well represented at the symposium with many awards brought home to Aggieland.

This symposium represented a first for SAVMA because it was hosted by two schools: the Tuskegee and Auburn Veterinary Student Chapters. Each year a different chapter, or in this case two chapters, hosts the annual symposium for veterinary students across the United States. Thanks to Hill's Pet Food Nutrition, 60 Texas A&M University veterinary students were able to attend the conference, participate in events, and meet future colleagues.

As part of the American Veterinary Medical Association, SAVMA upholds the same mission to improve animal and human health and advance the veterinary medical profession and is dedicated to the same objectives to advance the science and art of veterinary medicine, including its relationship to public health, biological science, and agriculture. Student members from each school chapter converge on the campus of a veterinary school each year to participate in meetings, competitions, wet laboratories, presentations, social events, and lectures.

Dayna Garneau and Joanna Horany represented the Texas A&M University chapter as the current and incoming A&M student chapter presidents. Kira Ramdas and Susan Land served as SAVMA delegates and took part in the House of Delegates. Ramdas served on the Animal Welfare Human Bond Committee and was elected as a liaison to the American Veterinary Medical Association Committee on the Human Animal Bond. Land is now a member of the Governmental Affairs Committee.

"We are very proud of our active and enthusiastic chapter members.

They pave the way for incoming students and help to uphold the reputation of this great college," said Garneau.

Numerous Texas A&M University veterinary students participated in various competitions throughout the symposium. In fact, students brought over \$3000 in awards and prizes back to Texas A&M.

Next year's symposium will be held at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Ohio State University. Incoming Texas A&M Chapter SAVMA president, Joanna Horany will lead the chapter to Ohio next March. 🐾

### Texas A&M SAVMA Winners of Clinical Competitions

- 4th place in Radiology - Kira Ramdas and Susan Land
- 1st in Team Parasitology Challenge – Tyler Foremena and Lauren Smith
- 2nd Place Individual Parasitology Challenge – Lauren Smith
- 1st Place in Individual Bovine Palpation – Mark Birkenfeld
- 1st Place Team Bovine Palpation – Mark Birkenfeld, Gerald Johnson, Charles Collins, and Rebecca Carden
- 1st Place for Education and Licensure SAVMA committee "Best Advice" essay – Brent Polansky
- 1st Place in Banfield Suture Challenge – Kira Ramdas, Susan Land, Joanna Horany and Dayna Garneau
- Sarah Churgin received a \$500 Multicultural Student Outreach Award for creating a medical Spanish course
- Holly Bennett received \$300 from the Emerging Issues SAVMA Committee for her essay on Food Safety
- Jamie Botts received a \$500 scholarship from Hills
- Beth Jenkins received a fully paid VCA externship anywhere in the US



# Adams named to DOD Biodefense Committee

Dr. Garry Adams of the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM) has been named to the National Research Council's Biodefense Standing Committee for the Department of Defense (DOD). This committee is charged with overseeing the science performed on behalf of homeland security by analyzing and reviewing current, ongoing biodefense research and making recommendations for new science.

"The veterinary profession brings a rich background and experience in the role of animals in public health," said Adams. "Many of the emerging diseases today are zoonotic, meaning they affect both humans and animals, and then there are threats from diseases that are still unknown or could even be engineered. My role with this committee will be to help with the understanding of biothreats and the creation of new and novel biodefense mechanisms."

In addition to his role on the National Research Council's Biodefense Committee, Adams has also been named as the new Associate Dean for Homeland Security at the Texas A&M University CVM, the first associate deanship dedicated to homeland security housed within a school of veterinary medicine.

Adams, as were the other members of the NRC committee, was selected for his expertise in the biological sciences. The committee mandate of serving as a point of integration and convergence for research and transitioning the results into application will enable him to open doors and build relationships that will benefit Texas A&M researchers through his new associate deanship.

"We are going to be working in the realm of 'discovery science,'" said Adams. "Our goals will be to work with scientists and researchers around the world, building collaborations, resulting in the development of the next generation of surveillance, recovery, and mitigation tools for biodefense and homeland security. As one of the few veterinarians on the committee, I hope to bring a different perspective in public health and biosecurity to the discussion for us to be able to make a

broader and more complete analysis of our biodefense efforts."

The main focus for Adams in his new position at the CVM will be to integrate the CVM faculty internally and with colleagues from the Texas A&M University colleges of science, agriculture, engineering, and public policy and the Texas A&M Health Science Center to

formulate an integrated approach for biodefense and homeland security.

"Across the spectrum of Texas A&M University and the Health Science Center, there is already a great deal of work underway through federal agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security National Center of Excellence for Foreign Animal and Zoonotic Disease Defense, the National Institutes of Health Western Regional Center of Excellence, and five Department of Energy National Laboratories," said Adams. "We can act as a conduit, coordinating and supporting a network between researchers at Texas A&M, federal agencies, and other scientists around the world, hereby making a significant impact on the discovery of novel approaches to homeland security against infectious agents and toxins."

Adams also wants to address the need for human resource development through educational program development in the homeland security arena as emerging threats continuously change society's ability to respond.


"This is a unique opportunity," said Adams, "to interconnect people across multiple scientific disciplines,



*Dr. Garry Adams*

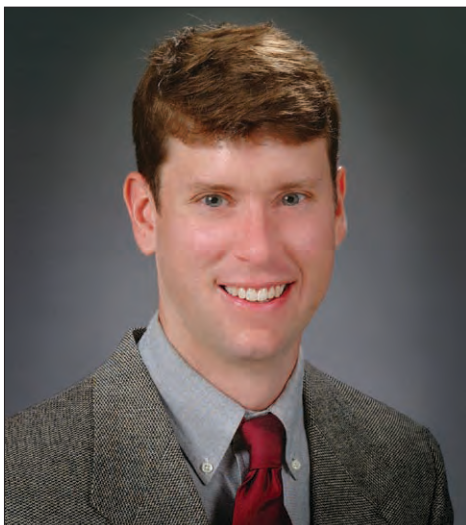
to expand horizons for the veterinary profession, and to begin developing science-based policy by which decisions can be made for animal and human health in our society."

Adams will also be working to support the new Integrated Center for Homeland Security (ICHS) at Texas A&M. The ICHS is led by Dr. David McIntyre and has been approved to offer a bachelor's and master's degree. Initially, Adams will work with CVM faculty to develop the biological course structure for these degree programs within the CVM and across the university in the ICHS.

"Dr. Garry Adams has a wealth of experience in research and scientific collaborations," said Dr. H. Richard Adams, dean of veterinary medicine. "His background and expertise in infection biology, as well as his ability to establish relationships with both governmental agencies and academic institutions, will serve to solidify the lead role that Texas A&M University is already playing in homeland security. It is an honor for Texas A&M to have him accept this new role within the college of veterinary medicine." 



## Link between Down Syndrome and breast cancer found



Dr. Weston Porter

There's new hope for breast cancer research, and it's coming from a very unlikely place.

Researchers at the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences recently published articles in the journals *Molecular and Cellular Biology* and *Carcinogenesis* which indicate that a protein long suspected to play a role in Down Syndrome may also contribute to treating breast cancer.

It has long been known that Down Syndrome is caused when an individual has an extra copy of the 21st chromosome, giving them a total of three instead of the normal chromosome pair. With improved medical care, people with Down Syndrome are now living

longer, healthier lives. With this advance came the observation that individuals with Down Syndrome have a significant decrease in risk for several types of tumors. Most striking is the observation that women with Down Syndrome are 10-25 times less likely to develop breast cancer. This effect is thought to be due to the presence of one or more "tumor suppressor" genes on chromosome 21. However, the identity of such genes has not been known, until now.

"Years of research into the genetics of Down Syndrome has helped us to discover a very important gene on chromosome 21," said Dr. Weston Porter, associate professor in the Veterinary Integrative Biosciences Department. "This gene, called Single-minded 2 or SIM2, is thought to play an important role in Down Syndrome by regulating neuron growth in the developing brain. Based on its developmental role, we hypothesized that SIM2 may also be involved in breast cancer, which is essentially a disease of uncontrolled growth."


For the last five years, Porter and his colleagues, Richard Metz, Brian Laffin, and Elizabeth Wellberg, have been using human breast cells and mouse models as part of a research grant from the National Institutes of Health to validate this hypothesis, and what they have found is very promis-

ing. SIM2 is lost or suppressed in a majority of human breast tumors, and deletion of the SIM2 gene triggers rapid tumor growth in mice.

"As we move forward," said Porter, "it will be important for us to understand the circuit of SIM2 and how it is turned on and off. In light of the available data on breast cancer incidence in the Down Syndrome population and our experimental data, knowing how to turn SIM2 expression on and off and identification of down-stream targets should have great therapeutic value."

While still in the early stages, this research represents a promising weapon in the fight against breast cancer as it sheds light on a previously unknown target.

"What we are seeing now is a paradigm shift in breast cancer research," said Porter. "For years we have gone after the wrong kinds of cells. It was all about getting rid of the tumor itself. This has led to a dandelion effect where we didn't get to the root and the cancers kept coming back and spreading. Now we're looking at ways to get to the root of breast cancer, and not simply shrinking the tumor to come back another day."

While it may be years before their research results in a definitive treatment or cure, it is impacting our approach towards understanding breast cancer today. 

## Communicators honored with Brazos Bravo Awards

The annual Brazos Bravo Awards are hosted by the Brazos Valley Chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) and are open to entries from all communicators in the area. The CVM brought home several awards in this year's competition.

"Our support staff is such an integral part of the CVM," said Dr. H. Richard Adams, dean of veterinary medicine. "We are very proud of these individuals and their achievements."


Larry Wadsworth, photographer in the department of Media Resources, was recognized with an Award of Merit in Feature Photography for his

"Candid Photo of Dean H. Richard Adams and Dr. John Albers," which ran in the Winter 2007 edition of *CVM Today*.

Jennie L. Lamb, a graphic designer in the department of Media Resources, was recognized with an Award of Merit in Brochure Design for the Heart Trust brochure. Heart Trust is a new cardiology development initiative of the CVM and the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH).

VeLisa Ward Bayer, a graphic designer in the department of Media Resources, was recognized with an Award of Merit in Design for her Feature Layout "VMTH: Striving to meet Client Expectations" which ran in the

Winter 2007 edition of *CVM Today*. She also received an Award of Excellence and a coveted "Brazos Bravo" trophy for her Logo Design for the Heart Trust initiative.

Angela Clendenin, director of Communications and Public Relations, was recognized for her work in External Communications Campaigns with an Award of Excellence for "Pet Talk—Branding the College of Veterinary Medicine." She also received an Award of Excellence in Feature Writing for "Journey to Excellence: Milestones and Memorable Moments," which ran in the Summer 2007 edition of *CVM Today*. 



# Crouch named Director of BIMS program

It's the largest undergraduate degree-granting program at one of Texas' largest universities, and now the Biomedical Sciences (BIMS) program at Texas A&M University will be led by a woman for the first time in its 30-year history.

Dr. Elizabeth Merriam Crouch has been promoted to be the fourth Director of Biomedical Sciences at Texas A&M. Crouch previously served as assistant director of the BIMS program, where she was also the first woman to hold that title.

For Crouch, the new role will come with added oversight responsibility for academic appeals and many of the processes required to administer the growing program.

"I hope to maintain our status as educating the best and brightest students for professional programs," said Crouch. "We're looking at the future of the program and growing it by increasing opportunities for

students which could include international programs and a Spanish language certificate. It's also important that we continue the success of our 2+2 programs and the diversity efforts that were implemented under the leadership of Dr. Skip Landis, assistant dean of biomedical sciences. These will help us make great strides in achieving our Vision 2020 goals."

Crouch is no stranger to the BIMS program, having completed her undergraduate BIMS degree in 1991. She then went on to earn a PhD in genetics in 1996, also from the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. Crouch signed on as an administrator in the BIMS program in September of 2001.

"We have tremendous confidence in Dr. Crouch's ability to lead this program," said Landis. "She understands the needs of the program having graduated from it, and has a strong vision for where this program needs



*Dr. Elizabeth Merriam Crouch*

to go in order to continue graduating students who are extremely competitive in professional schools."

The Biomedical Sciences program is the only undergraduate degree-granting program housed in a professional school (medical, dental, veterinary, etc.) in the state of Texas, and one of 12 in the United States. 🌿

# Russell receives national AAVMC recognition

The Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) recognized Dr. Leon Russell, professor in Veterinary Integrative Biosciences, with the prestigious Senator John Melcher, DVM Leadership in Public Policy Award.

The award is given for leadership in public policy and for advancing veterinary medical education. Russell was honored with the award at the president's reception at the annual meeting of the AAVMC.

"Dr. Russell's outstanding years of leadership and service to the profession, and to veterinary medical education locally, nationally, and globally make it very fitting for him to receive this honor," said Dr. Marguerite Papaioanou, executive director of the AAVMC. "His work truly reflects the tremendous efforts of Dr. Melcher."

Dr. Russell has been involved in leadership roles at the national and international level in veterinary medi-



*Dr. Leon Russell*

cine. In 2005, he began a 3-year term as president of the World Veterinary Association. He has been recognized for his achievements in veterinary public health with awards for teaching

and service from Texas A&M University, the University of Missouri, the Texas Veterinary Medical Association, the American Veterinary Medical Association, and the American Veterinary Epidemiology Society.

"It is truly an honor to have someone on our faculty the caliber of Dr. Russell, whose efforts through teaching, research, and leadership not only impact the veterinary medical profession today, but also in the future," said Dr. H. Richard Adams, dean of veterinary medicine. "His vast knowledge of epidemiology and public health has built bridges between animal and

human medicine on a global scale, and laid the groundwork for future generations to collaborate for the benefit of animals and humans everywhere." 🌿



## Cohen recognized with Animal Health Applied Equine Research Award

Dr. Noah Cohen, professor of Large Animal Clinical Sciences at Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (CVM), has been recognized as the recipient of the 2008 Schering-Plough Animal Health Applied Equine Research Award at the 10th World Equine Veterinary Association (WEVA) congress in Moscow, Russia.

Cohen received his award Jan. 28 in recognition of his extensive research in the field of equine neonatology and perinatology. Most recently, Cohen has focused his efforts in collaboration with Drs. Ronald Martens and Keith Chaffin (and others from the CVM and other institutions and practices) to study *Rhodococcus equi* foal pneumonia—a major cause of disease and death in foals.

"Dr. Cohen's selection recognizes the quality of his research and its clinical relevance to the health of foals," said Dr. Warwick Bayley, past president of WEVA.

WEVA was founded in 1985 and has a principal mission of advancing the health and welfare of horses everywhere by promoting and offering continuing education for equine practitioners from less developed countries.

"Our research in this area is a team effort aimed at controlling and preventing pneumonia caused by *R. equi*," said Cohen. "It is my belief and hope that by examining risk factors for this illness and novel approaches to treating it, we will provide information to help control and prevent this devastating form of pneumonia that is of considerable importance to the equine industry."

Cohen has been involved in epidemiology and infectious disease research since receiving his PhD in epidemiology from Johns Hopkins University in 1988. He received his VMD from the University of Pennsylvania in 1983 and spent two years in private equine practice. After completing a residency at Texas A&M in 1991, Cohen was offered a position as Assistant Professor in equine internal medicine.

"Dr. Cohen has made significant contributions to our equine medicine program," said Dr. H. Richard Adams, dean of veterinary medicine. "We are proud of his accomplishments and are pleased that he has received this distinctive recognition for his efforts."

In addition to an honorarium that covered his expenses for attending the congress, Dr. Cohen also gave a lecture on his latest research. Although he was the individual recognized with the award, Cohen is quick to point out that it was far from an individual effort.



Dr. Noah Cohen

"No one does research alone," Cohen said. "Good ideas come from sharing expertise; creativity generally requires crossing disciplines. I've been blessed to have wonderful collaborators, both within my department and others in the college. There is an atmosphere of collegiality among veterinary researchers here at Texas A&M that is exceptional."

Cohen also expressed thanks to Large Animal Clinical Sciences department head, Dr. William Moyer, for his support.

"Awards don't just happen," said Cohen. "Dr. Moyer championed my cause, and without his efforts, I'd be reading about who won this prize. This award reflects his selfless generosity in helping his faculty succeed and earn recognition." 🌿

## Westhusin participates in Discovery Channel documentary

Movies like Jurassic Park have encouraged people everywhere to dream about recreating dinosaurs. The recent discovery of soft tissue in dinosaur bones have many scientists asking if dreams may become reality.

Dr. Mark Westhusin, associate professor at the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, participated in a documentary entitled *Dinosaurs: Return to Life?* which aired on the Discovery Channel on Feb. 17. As a leading expert in cloning, Westhusin was invited to share his thoughts regarding the feasibility of resurrecting a dinosaur from recovered DNA.



Dr. Mark Westhusin

"While we have been able to clone many animals representing different species, the process is extremely complex, and numerous factors affect the outcome," said Westhusin. "It is likely that a few extinct species could be cloned using the technology available today. However, the technology to clone dinosaurs is currently not available. Given the progress that has been made in the past 10 years it is reasonable to imagine this possibility of cloning dinosaurs in the future, depending on the advancement of science and research." 🌿



## Varner honored as Milne Lecturer at AAEP conference

Dr. Dickson Varner DVM, MS, DACT, was honored as the presenter of the 2007 Frank J. Milne State-of-the-Art Lecture at the 53rd Annual Convention of the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) in Orlando, FL, on December 3.

The Frank J. Milne State-of-the-Art Lecture showcases and honors a member of the AAEP who has dedicated themselves to a specific area of equine study. Dr. Varner was chosen as the expert regarding stallion reproduction. His four-hour lecture entitled "From a Sperm's Eye View—Revisiting Our Perception of This Intriguing Cell" focused on the equine male gamete, including spermatozoal structure, function, and events that accompany a spermatozoan's sojourn through the male and female reproductive tracts. The lecture was directed toward practical applications and advancements in stallion reproduction, and the accompanying manuscript detailed the cellular and molecular mechanisms relating to spermatozoal function.

"We are extremely proud to have Dr. Varner as one of our five theriogenologists on faculty. Texas A&M has become a pioneer in equine reproduc-

tion, and we are continuing the level of excellence that Dr. Varner has helped us reach," said Dr. Moyer, Texas A&M University Large Animal Clinical Sciences department head and professor of sports medicine. "The Milne lecture is often seen to showcase the world expert on a given subject, and Dr. Varner is more than deserving of this distinguished recognition."

Named for past president and distinguished member Frank J. Milne, this lecture series focuses on equine subjects deemed "state-of-the-art" by members of the equine veterinary profession. Nominees are chosen by a group within the Education Program Committee of the AAEP and approved by the executive board of the AAEP.

"Dr. Varner embodies all that this award is meant to convey," said Dr. Stuart Brown II, partner in the world-renowned equine practice, Hagyard



Dr. Dickson Varner

Equine Medical Institute, in Lexington, KY. "He is the first to be recognized for stallion expertise with this award, and we were proud to recognize him as a pioneer. His presentation was incredible."

Dr. Varner received his veterinary degree from the University of Missouri in 1978. He also has a master's of science in veterinary anatomy from Texas A&M

University. Following graduation from veterinary school, Dr. Varner completed an internship at Castleton Farm in Lexington, KY. In the early 1980s, Dr. Varner relocated to New Bolton Center at the University of Pennsylvania College of Veterinary Medicine to enter a residency in Theriogenology under the tutelage of Dr. Robert M. Kenney. After completing his residency in 1983, he served as a lecturer in large animal reproduction, as well as director of the Hoffman Center for Reproductive Studies and director of the Endometrial Biopsy Service.

In 1984, he received Diplomate status from the American College of Theriogenologists (ACT). He has been on the faculty of Texas A&M University since 1986, where he is presently Professor of Theriogenology and Pin Oak Stud Chair of Stallion Reproductive Studies.

"Indeed, it was a real honor to have the opportunity to share my understanding of the trials and tribulations of a spermatozoan with so many distinguished members of the veterinary community. I sincerely hope that the lecture reached out to young veterinarians and scientists, in order that they may have the incentive to receive advanced training and focus their professional efforts to further our understanding of this fascinating cell," said Dr. Varner. 🍷

"Dr. Varner embodies all that this award is meant to convey. He is the first to be recognized for stallion expertise with this award, and we were proud to recognize him as a pioneer. His presentation was incredible."

*—Dr. Stuart Brown II, partner in the world-renowned equine practice, Hagyard Equine Medical Institute, in Lexington, KY*



## Dr. Guy Sheppard to join development team

It is with great excitement and anticipation that I await the arrival of Dr. Guy Sheppard. He will join us on July 1st as Director of Development here at the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. Dr. Sheppard's impressive career and accomplishments will truly be a tremendous asset as he represents our students, faculty, and college programs.

Our college development unit has been very successful in reaching our goals in previous capital campaigns. However, as state funds diminish and educational costs increase, private funding will continue to become more and more crucial as the college pursues its goals of academic excellence. All of us here in the development office look forward to supporting Dr. Sheppard as he begins this new phase of his career.

Our Mark Francis Recognition program, Walk of Honor program, scholarship programs, homecoming, outstanding alumni, and alumni receptions (both state and national) are just a few of the events that the Development Office supports. One thing I can assure Dr. Sheppard of is that there will never be a dull moment! Everyday offers a new opportunity to help our college be the very best it can be.

Welcome back to Aggieland and the CVM, Dr. Sheppard!

*O. J. "Bubba" Woytek*

**O. J. "Bubba" Woytek**  
Senior Director, Development  
and Alumni Relations



*Dr. O.J. "Bubba" Woytek*



*Dr. Guy Sheppard*

Dr. Guy Sheppard grew up on a small livestock farm outside of Abilene, Texas. After graduation from Cooper High School in Abilene in 1972, he entered Texas A&M University and joined the Corps of Cadets where he served as a Company Commander, a Ross Volunteer, and a Ross Volunteer Firing Squad member.

He received his BS (Summa Cum Laude) and DVM (Magna Cum Laude) degrees from Texas A&M University in 1977 and 1978. He entered the United States Army immediately following graduation, and his service allowed him to treat military owned horses, dogs, and wildlife as well as providing food inspection and public health services for the troops.

Dr. Sheppard entered a private mixed animal practice in San Angelo in 1980 and purchased it in 1982. He began his service on the Board of Directors of the TVMA in 1987 and received the Food Animal Practitioner of the Year Award in 1988. He was appointed to the Texas Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners by Governor Bill Clements in 1989 and served until 1995, serving as its President in 1993. He also served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the TVMA in 2002 and 2004, and held the position of President in 2006. His many other involvements in religious and civic organizations have helped him be extraordinarily successful in building bridges between the CVM and its students with the TVMA.

He met his wife, Valerie, class of '76, while at Texas A&M, and their family is now full of Aggies, including their daughter, Audrey Bose, class of '03, and her husband, Andrew, class of '02, and their son Clayton, class of '05, and his wife Lindsey, class of '05, and TAMU Nursing School, class of '09.

# CVM is a 'Labor of Love' for co-chairs

Dr. Fred A. and Vola Palmer have been serving as co-chairs of the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences Development Council for the past year. Dr. Palmer, a graduate of Texas A&M University and the CVM, and his wife are looking forward to their position and to helping bring further support to the college.

The Development Council is composed of approximately 45 members who serve in an advisory capacity for the development program of the CVM. The Development Council, many of whom generously support the college through personal donations, help identify individuals, companies, and foundations willing to support the college.

In addition to serving as co-chairs, the Palmers recently made a \$150,000 personal donation to the college and plan to continue financial support of the college. They have directed one-third of this gift to be used specifically for a need-based scholarship for veterinary medical students. Dr. Palmer expressed his intentions with the scholarship and the importance of its being based on financial need. "Many capable people in veterinary school have financial constraints that can hinder or even postpone their education. If you can alleviate some of the stress of the financial aspect, you can enhance their experience," said Dr. Palmer.

Dr. Palmer received both his Bachelor of Wildlife Science and DVM degrees from Texas A&M University. The Palmers married in 1965, and Dr. Palmer was owner of Brown Trail Animal Clinic in Bedford, TX from 1973 to 1994. Prior to serving as co-chair of the Development Council, Dr. Palmer was President of the Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA) and President of The Association of Former Students. He has just completed a term on the 12th Man Board of Trustees and is presently serving on the Texas A&M President's Board of Advisors. Following his retirement from clinical veterinary medicine, the Palmers enjoy whitetail deer ranching near Granbury, TX.

"Because of the amazing current and potential projects, interest has



*Dr. Fred and Vola Palmer*

increased for us," said Vola. "We want to cast a shining light on what is going on at the college because we appreciate and respect the veterinary profession and Texas A&M University." The Palmers are dedicated to increasing the awareness of veterinary medi-

cine and expanding the scope of the Development Council. From soliciting funding to advancing the reputation of the college, the Palmers are enthusiastic about their new positions. "We are so excited to be a part of the college!" both remarked. 🌿

DEVELOPMENT  
News

## Special Development!

Donations to the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences may now be made via credit card. For more information, go to the Texas A&M Foundation's web site at: [www.giving.tamu.edu](http://www.giving.tamu.edu).





## Capper & Chris lifesaving fund benefits both clients and students of the VMTH

Pets today are considered an integral part of the family. Euthanasia should not have to be an option for those who cannot pay for veterinary medical care.

The Capper & Chris Save the Animals Fund was established in 1997 to bridge the gap between a pet owner's ability to pay for lifesaving medical treatment and the costs of the procedure.

Created by Capper Thompson, the fund was established as a memorial to Chris Stehouwer, a Texas A&M University student and animal lover who was killed in a tragic accident.

Thompson envisioned the fund as a way to both help sick animals in need and to provide valuable training for veterinary students. She realized there was little educational value in euthanizing pets that could otherwise

be treated, so she established this remarkable tribute.

The College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences has some of the finest veterinarians in the world coupled with the most advanced diagnostic and lifesaving procedures available for the care of sick and injured animals. However, these state-of-the-art procedures can be very expensive.

The Capper & Chris Save the Animals Fund provides financial assistance to pet owners who could not otherwise afford a lifesaving procedure for their animal, especially those pets that might have to be euthanized due to prohibitive financial hardship to the family.

Some eligibility criteria have been established for the fund: the animal must have a treatable disease or injury; the fund may contribute up to

50% of the total cost, with a maximum of \$1,000 per case; and the treatment must be performed at the college's Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH).

Since its inception, the Capper & Chris Save the Animals Fund has given many animals a second chance through lifesaving treatments at the VMTH. One such story is that of a puppy named Phoenix.

At five weeks of age, Phoenix was cruelly taken by two teenage boys, doused with rubbing alcohol and set on fire. While the puppy was on fire, they proceeded to kick her in the air and spray her with "Off" to make the flames bigger. Fortunately, two teenage girls came along and rescued Phoenix and then called the police.

A Department of Public Safety Trooper brought Phoenix to Texas A&M University's VMTH for emergency treatment. Phoenix was singed all over, with most of the bad burns located in her abdominal area. During her stay at the VMTH, her burns continued to damage the tissue in her abdomen. Clinicians decided surgery was needed.

With financial assistance from the Capper & Chris Save the Animals Fund, in conjunction with complimentary services provided by local plastic surgeon Dr. Neal Hoganson, Phoenix's surgery was a success and her wounds healed. Phoenix was adopted by Kim Hensarling soon after her tragic story was aired on the news, and today she is doing great and is very, very spoiled.

Phoenix is but one of the animals that have been helped by the Capper & Chris Save the Animals Fund.

To read other success stories and to make a contribution, please visit the fund's web site at [www.cvm.tamu.edu/capperchris](http://www.cvm.tamu.edu/capperchris).



Phoenix, Kim Hensarling, and Capper Thompson



## **Class of 1943**

Robert Frazier Lapham, of Shingletown and Redding, CA, died February 18, 2008.

## **Class of 1945**

Edmond Alexander Henderson, of Galveston TX, died May 18, 2008.

## **Class of 1948**

Mason Longmire Matthews, of San Antonio, TX, died February 5, 2008.

## **Class of 1951**

Royal Perry, of Liberty, TX, died March 12, 2008.

Calvin Wallace, of Corpus Christi, TX, died March 2, 2008.

## **Class of 1953**

William "Dub" Anderson, of Addison, TX, died April 25, 2008.

*A memorial scholarship has been established at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. A preference is requested for a student(s) who has demonstrated exceptional interest and outstanding skills in equine medicine. Contributions to this memorial in honor of Dr. Anderson may be made payable to the Texas A&M Foundation for the "Dr. William 'Dub' Anderson Veterinary Scholarship" and should be mailed to the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences Development Office, 4461 TAMU, College Station, TX, 77843-4461.*

Harold Holcomb, of Forney, TX, died November 2006.

## **Class of 1956**

Jean Ray Pavelka, of Houston, TX died March 26, 2008.

## **Class of 1958**

William A. "Bill" Hill, of Fort Worth, TX, died December 18, 2007.

## **Class of 1975**

Richard O. Willingham, of Sulphur Springs, TX, died February 8, 2008.

*A memorial scholarship has been established at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences. A preference is requested for veterinary medical students interested in food animal medicine with large animal interest. Contributions to this memorial in honor of Dr. Willingham may be made payable to the Texas A&M Foundation for the "Dr. Richard O. Willingham, '75, Endowed Scholarship for Large Animal Medicine" and should be mailed to the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences Development Office, 4461 TAMU, College Station, TX, 77843-4461.*

## **Class of 1979**

James Edward Cook of Beaumont, TX, died December 28, 2007.

## **Class of 1983**

Mary E. Flori-Behnke, of Waco, TX, died January 29, 2008.

## **Class of 1987**

Jean Weishuhn, of Smithville, TX, died March 19, 2008.

## **Class of 2000**

Elizabeth Kasey Needham, of Madisonville, TX, died June 6, 2007.



## CVM honors 2008 Outstanding Alumni

The College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences proudly honored five Outstanding Alumni at a special reception at Miramont Country Club on Friday evening, April 4.

"This year's Outstanding Alumni represent a breadth of knowledge and service to the profession of which the faculty, staff, former and current students should be proud," said H. Richard Adams, dean of veterinary medicine.

The 2008 honored alumni are: Dr. Gary C. Brantley, Class of 1971, of Richardson, TX; Dr. J. Michael Heitmann, Class of 1972, of Katy, TX; Dr. James B. Henson, Class of 1958, of Enterprise, OR; Dr. Roland Lenarduzzi, Class of 1970, of Manvel, TX; and Dr. Clifford R. Roberts, Class of 1964, of San Francisco, CA.



*Dr. Gary C. Brantley*

Gary Brantley, '71, assumed ownership of the Richardson Veterinary Clinic after graduation and continues practice there to this day. An active member of the Texas Veterinary Medical Association (TVMA) since 1970, he was a member of the Board of Directors from 1976 through 1986, in addition to serving on several commit-

tees, including the Peer Assistance Committee. In 1996, Dr. Brantley was honored by the TVMA with the President's Award for his service in the development and implementation of the association's Peer Assistance Program. Brantley was appointed to a six-year term on the Texas Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners by Governor George W. Bush, where his contributions made a significant impact on veterinary medicine. He is currently a member of the CVM's Development Council.

Michael Heitmann, '72, made a name for himself on and off the court during his student years at Texas A&M

University. He attended Texas A&M on a full athletic scholarship for basketball and was named Most Valuable Player in the SWC Championships in 1969 and 1970. He later graduated from the College of Veterinary Medicine, with honors, and was inducted into the Texas A&M University Athletic Hall of Fame. After graduation and a surgical internship at Colorado State University, he became a large animal clinical assistant professor at the CVM from 1973 to 1978. He then moved to Katy, TX and developed a well-respected equine practice, establishing the Katy Equine Clinic in 1982. Heitmann

is an active member of the TVMA, and has served as a chairman of the Equine Practice Committee. In 1981, the TVMA honored him with the Equine Practitioner of the Year Award.

James Henson, '58, has achieved many milestones in his career. He has held numer-



*Dr. J. Michael Heitmann*

ous teaching and administrative posts at Texas A&M University and Washington State University. Currently, he is a Professor Emeritus of International Research and Development and Professor Emeritus of Veterinary Microbiology and Pathology at Washington State University. He is the former Director of International Programs at Washington State University, and has taught at the undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education levels in the United States and has worked



*Dr. James B. Henson*





*Dr. Roland Lenarduzzi*


in 27 other countries. He has served as a member or lead of various teams which have established programs such as the Environmental Planning and Management Master's of Science program at the University of Chile. He has worked with the World Health Organization in Special Programs for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases in Switzerland, as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development in a number of capacities, including serving on the Advisory Committee for Voluntary Foreign Aid.

After graduating valedictorian, Roland Lenarduzzi, '70, continued his education with an ambulatory internship at the University of California-Davis from 1970 to 1971. In 1973, he designed and built his own clinic in Manvel, TX, where he continues to practice, caring for both large and small animals. In 1980, he helped found an animal emergency clinic for companion animals in the Alvin-Friendswood-Clear Lake area. Lenarduzzi is an active member of the TVMA and has held many offices in the organization, including President in 2005. In 2006 and 2007, he chaired the TVMA Task Force on Workforce Issues in Mixed Practice-

Large Animal Practice-Rural Practice. He currently serves on the Selections Committee for the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences as an ex-officio member representing TVMA. He is also the chairman of the TVMA-CVM Liaison Committee.

Clifford Roberts, '64, has made significant contributions to the field of veterinary medicine through his distinguished military, research, teaching, and administrative service. In 1987, he was assigned to the U.S.A. Medical Research Unit in Kenya and served as the organization's Director/Commander for five years. While working in the military, he was honored

with the Defense Meritorious Service Medal (1981), the US Army General's 'A' Designation in Laboratory Animal Medicine (1985), the Army Medical Department Medical Order of Merit (1989), and the Legion of Merit (1994). After his military career, Roberts began working in university research at the University of California, Irvine, and the University of California, San Francisco. At both institutions, he served as Director of Laboratory

Animal Resources. He was promoted to the high office of Interim Associate Vice Chancellor of Research, a post he has held since 2006. He is active in several professional organizations, including the American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Society of Laboratory Animal Practitioners, and the California Laboratory Animal Medical Society. 



*Dr. Clifford R. Roberts*

## 2009 Outstanding Alumni: Call for Nominations

The Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences Outstanding Alumni Awards have been presented since 1980 to recognize graduates of the college who have reached a level of success in their professional careers that brings credit to both the individual and the CVM. Outstanding alumni exemplify the ideals, character strengths and principles of conduct that make the veterinary medical profession one of the highest callings.

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2009 College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences Outstanding Alumni. Graduates from Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences may be nominated for this honor. Nominations are welcome through January 9, 2009. For each nominee, a resume or curriculum vitae that summarizes major career accomplishments, and two letters of support are required, as well as any additional information or letters that may be helpful to the selection committee. Awards will be presented at the annual reception and dinner to be held during Homecoming Weekend at Miramont Country Club in Bryan, TX.

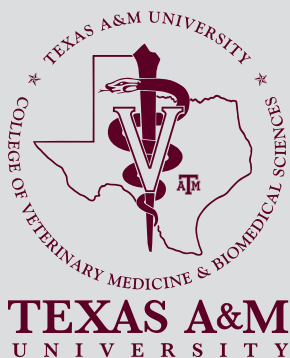
*Nomination packets can be found on our web site at <http://www.cvm.tamu.edu/alumni> or you may call Noell Vance at (979) 845-9043 to receive one by mail.*



# PARTING *Shot*



**Teddy Bear Surgery  
at the 2008 CVM Open House**



**CVM** Today  
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