

Florida VETERINARIAN

ADVANCING ANIMAL HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

UF | College of Veterinary Medicine

Troubleshooting West Nile Virus

By Cindy Spence

“*Infection in horses is important because it’s an indication of what people might face with the virus. Immunity in horses provides a proxy for understanding the virus in humans especially children and the elderly.*”

In 2001, University of Florida veterinarian Maureen Long became an expert on West Nile virus by accident. That year, in clinics at UF’s College of Veterinary Medicine, Long and other Large Animal Medicine clinicians saw some of the first Florida horses breaking with the mosquito-borne disease.

Prior to its arrival in Florida, there had been fewer than 100 cases of the disease diagnosed in the United States. That year over 500 horses would break with the disease in Florida and the clinic admitted over 10 percent of these reported cases. Intrigued, Long and her colleagues put together a proposal that was funded by the Pari-Mutuel Wagering Trust Fund in Florida to study the disease outbreak. The next year, 14,000 cases of West Nile virus were



Photo by Sarah Kewell

Dr. Maureen Long with one of the horses being monitored as part of a UF research project.

diagnosed in horses and the demand for Long’s clinical expertise kept her crisscrossing the country, making her a national expert by the end of the year. This initial grant led to several more successfully funded projects. In just a few short years, UF has become a leader in West Nile virus research in horses. Long and her colleague, veterinary virologist Paul Gibbs, had the opportunity to study a new modified West Nile virus vaccine in horses with potential human application.

“Vaccines like the one we studied were developed as the second generation of products for enhanced and long duration of protection,” Long added.

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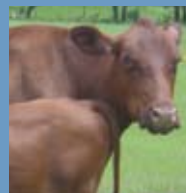
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Message from the Dean

Florida Veterinarian is published by the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine for alumni and friends. Suggestions and comments are welcome and should be emailed to:

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Check out the college web site at:
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Dean Glen Hoffsis

With new students underfoot and Gator football underway, the fall semester and our new academic year are off to their traditional start. Amidst all the activity, we have good news to report at the college.

Ground breaking for our greatly anticipated new small animal hospital will take place Nov. 21 and we are thrilled to finally get construction underway after so many years of wishful planning by the college. Plans are nearing completion and the contractor, PPI Construction, is already beginning site work. When construction starts, our longtime supporters, including donors, clients, state legislators, university officials and others will be able to see the physical evidence of that dream finally reaching fruition. I know all of these groups celebrate with us as we prepare to better serve the animals and pet owners in Florida and throughout the Southeast in our new state-of-the-art facility. There

are still many needs and naming opportunities are still available for gift recognition.

Dr. Jim Thompson, our executive associate dean for the past two years and academic dean for ten years prior to that, has accepted an offer to serve as dean of the University of Tennessee's College of Veterinary Medicine. It is a fantastic opportunity for Jim and an accomplishment for us at the college to have played a significant part in developing his career to this point. While we are sad to lose Jim and his wife, Joan, the college pharmacist, we wish them both well as they head off to Tennessee to begin this exciting new phase of their lives. I'd like to extend my personal best wishes to Jim and Joan.

Dr. John Harvey, longtime chair of our department of physiological sciences, will succeed Jim as executive associate dean and I look forward to utilizing his vast knowledge and experience in leading the college. Dr. Paul Davenport, currently associate chairman, will become the new chairman of our department of physiological sciences.

The college has initiated a new program to address the shortage of veterinarians entering food supply veterinary medicine. We have reached out to faculty at the UF Department of Animal Sciences to help identify approximately four graduates of that department who have a genuine intent to pursue careers in food supply veterinary medicine. These students meet the same criteria for admission as all other students in their class, including the interview process. The class admitted just a few weeks ago had five students who met the criteria. Their basic veterinary education will equal that of their peers, except that these students will be mentored by food animal faculty members and offered a certificate for completion of elective courses and experiences that will provide them with additional skills and knowledge in the area of food supply veterinary medicine.

As always, we greatly appreciate your continuing support. Go Gators!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glen".

Glen Hoffsis
Dean

UF veterinarians receive grant to expand shelter medicine program

By Sarah Carey

The University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine has received a \$1.7 million grant from Maddie's Fund to create a comprehensive shelter medicine program that will enhance support for local animal rescue operations, improve disease control and adoption rates among shelter animals and expand professional training to fill the current shortage of skilled providers in this area.

The three-year grant will establish the Maddie's Shelter Medicine Program at UF and will build upon UF's existing shelter medicine program. Through that program, which was created in 2003, veterinary students gain clinical experience by providing spay/neuter surgeries to animals awaiting adoption at the local animal shelter.

"This is a transitional time for the animal welfare field as growing demand for animal-friendly solutions is challenging traditional sheltering paradigms," said Julie Levy, D.V.M., Ph.D., who was a co-investigator on the grant and who will become the Maddie's professor of shelter medicine at UF.

"There is an international desire to shift from a reactive animal control model in which massive numbers of animals are processed through shelters with an overall high euthanasia rate to one in which proactive preventive measures reduce shelter admissions with individualized programs tailored to different types of animals to result in higher save rates," Levy added.



Dr. Julie Levy

The college's existing shelter medicine program was founded by Natalie Isaza, D.V.M., (class of '94) and UF's Merial clinical assistant professor of shelter medicine. The program grown in popularity among veterinary students in recent years.

Cynda Crawford, D.V.M., Ph.D., (class of '89), a UF scientist, will become the Maddie's clinical assistant professor of shelter medicine. A co-discoverer of the canine influenza virus, Crawford will work closely with Isaza and Levy to implement additional clinical and educational programs aimed at educating not only veterinary students but also technicians and others associated with shelter efforts.



Dr. Cynda Crawford

Existing partnerships with Alachua County and local animal rescue groups will also be enhanced through the new grant.

Levy said UF was uniquely positioned to become a center of excellence in shelter medicine in the southeastern United States because of its diverse faculty expertise, its location in a region with a large number

of animal shelters and rescue groups, and a highly supportive administrative structure.

Maddie's Fund has also worked closely with Drs. Levy, Crawford and Isaza on Maddie's Pet Rescue Project in Alachua County.

"We are thrilled to expand our relationship with this incredibly talented team of veterinarians," said Maddie's Fund President, Rich Avanzino. "I'm certain their work in shelter medicine will take this emerging field to a whole new level."

Alameda, Calif.-based Maddie's Fund®, The Pet Rescue Foundation, (www.maddiesfund.org) is a family foundation funded by Workday and PeopleSoft Founder Dave Duffield and his wife, Cheryl. Maddie's Fund is helping to create a no-kill nation where all healthy and treatable shelter dogs and cats are guaranteed a loving home.

To achieve this goal, Maddie's Fund is investing its resources in building community collaborations where animal welfare organizations can come together to develop successful models of lifesaving; in veterinary colleges to help shelter medicine become part of the veterinary curriculum; within private practice veterinarians to encourage greater participation in the animal welfare cause; and through the implementation of national strategies to collect and report shelter statistics.

Maddie's Fund is named after the family's beloved miniature schnauzer, who passed away in 1997.



The Pet Rescue Foundation

New outpatient imaging service available at UF

By Sarah Carey

Private and specialty practice veterinarians now have direct access to the Southeast's most advanced imaging diagnostics at the University of Florida Veterinary Medical Center, without needing to refer cases through the center's traditional clinical services.

The new outpatient imaging service, known as GatorVetImaging, began July 14 and allows veterinarians in Florida and throughout the Southeast the ability to take advantage of the same state-of-the-art imaging technologies used by UF veterinary faculty, specifically magnetic resonance imaging and CT.

"GatorVetImaging brings the best medical technology of the VMC directly to practitioners," said Matthew Winter, D.V.M., a board-certified veterinary radiologist who heads the VMC's radiology service. "We envision this as a way to assist the veterinary community in handling their more challenging and involved cases within the context of their established client/patient relationships."

While many veterinarians will continue to rely on UF as a traditional referral center offering complete patient workup, the new imaging service streamlines the diagnostic process for those veterinarians who desire only the advanced imaging piece of the patient care package at UF and wish to maintain direct primary care responsibility for their patients.

"We truly believe the new outpatient imaging service will meaningfully advance the veterinary profession," said Jim Thompson, D.V.M., Ph.D., the UF College of Veterinary Medicine's executive associate dean. "We're talking about a client-oriented service that is both efficient and cost-effective. It's a win-win for practitioners and for us at UF because we are fortunate enough to have this technology housed at our facility."

The VMC's 1.5 Tesla Toshiba Titan MR unit and the 8-slice Toshiba Aquilion CT unit at UF are the most powerful imaging tools currently available for veterinary diagnostics in the southeastern United States. Both capabilities allow for rapid imaging with exceptional contrast and spatial resolution.

The MR unit allows highly detailed images to be obtained in multiple planes of bone and soft tissue in all species. Foot, fetlock, suspensory joints, carpus, hock and heads are regions capable of being examined through MR in the horse, while spiral CT may be used for 3-dimensional reconstruction in fracture repair planning. In small animals, both modalities are routinely applied to neurologic and orthopedic cases at the VMC, with additional studies performed for radiation planning and metastasis evaluations.

"MR allows for exquisite distinction between normal and abnormal tissues," Winter said. "The use of specialized sequences further increases the ability to distinguish between different types of pathology, ranging from hemorrhagic infarctions to primary brain tumors and inflammatory disorders."

Winter added that MR also reveals bone, tendon and ligament pathology and can show bruising, meniscal damage and ligament tears that go undetected when using traditional radiography.

"All of our radiologists have strong interests in cross-sectional imaging, which gives UF a unique ability to serve the advanced imaging needs of Florida veterinarians," Winter said.



Photo by Mark Hoffenberg

Radiology technician Donna Graden positions a dog to receive an MRI.

To schedule cases, veterinarians will need to contact the GatorVetImaging coordinator to arrange an appointment. Pre-anesthesia and imaging request forms can be faxed from UF to the scheduling veterinarian, or may be downloaded from the GatorVetImaging Web site at www.GatorVetImaging.com.

Horse owners will be asked to bring their animals to UF the day prior to the scheduled procedure, which will take place the following morning. Small animals will be able to be imaged and discharged on the same day.

At the time of discharge, the animal's owner will receive a folder with a CD containing the images, as well as printed photos showing some of the more significant images from the scan. The owner will meet again with the point-of-contact clinician, who will provide instructions to follow up with the attending veterinarian regarding the next step in patient care.

A VMC radiologist will interpret the images within 48 hours of the imaging procedure, and will fax or e-mail a PDF of the results to the veterinarian. A copy of the results, and a CD with all the images, will be mailed as well.

For more information about GatorVetImaging, go to www.GatorVetImaging.com.

Longtime CVM administrator to become dean at University of Tennessee

By Sarah Carey

James P. Thompson, D.V.M., Ph.D., an administrator at the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, will soon leave the college he has been a part of for more than 30 years to become dean at the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine.

Thompson is executive associate dean and a professor in the college's department of small animal clinical sciences. After graduating in 1976 from Purdue University, Thompson was admitted to veterinary school at UF, where he subsequently received his D.V.M. and Ph.D. degrees. He also completed a residency in small animal medicine at UF prior to joining the faculty in 1986.

Board-certified in the specialties of internal medicine, immunology, virology, microbiology and oncology, Thompson has received numerous awards both for his teaching and for his research and has served as academic adviser for dozens of veterinary students, residents and interns over the years. Following his days as a graduate student and resident at UF, Thompson became an assistant professor and director of the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital's Immunology Service before advancing to associate and later full professor and associate dean for students and instruction, a post he held between 1996 and 2006.

In that capacity, Thompson supervised the admissions process and provided academic oversight for all students enrolled in the professional D.V.M. program. He served as interim dean for a year in 2006 after the departure of former dean Joseph A. DiPietro, D.V.M., to the University of Tennessee, where DiPietro now serves as vice president of UT's Institute of Agriculture. Thompson and DiPietro will once again be joined together in leadership positions to advance veterinary medicine and agriculture.

In 2006, the UF veterinary college's present dean, Glen Hoffsis, D.V.M., selected Thompson to serve as his executive associate dean. Thompson's duties have included facilities and budget management and supervising day-to-day operations at the veterinary school and UF's Veterinary Medical Center.

"I have a long history here, and it will be difficult for me to leave my many friends, supporters and colleagues at UF as well as our phenomenal alumni," Thompson said. "However, being selected to serve as dean at UT is an incredible opportunity. I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with many talented people at UF and know the experiences gained here will be extremely valuable as I make this transition."

In an e-mail to faculty, staff and students, Hoffsis acknowledged Thompson's many achievements and contributions to the college, along with those of Thompson's wife, Joan, who serves as the UF VMC head pharmacist.

"Dean Thompson has provided tremendous help to me and great leadership to the college for many years," Hoffsis said. "Although we have suffered a great loss, we should all feel a sense of pride in his accomplishments. A college doesn't produce a dean every day, and Dr. Thompson developed his leadership talent and skill right here at UF. We will miss Jim and Joan but wish them the very best as they embark on this new career journey at Tennessee."

Thompson begins his new job Oct. 1. 🐾



Photo by Sarah Carey

A farewell presentation and party were held in Dr. Jim Thompson's honor on Sept. 23. In photo, Dean Glen Hoffsis is shown with Thompson's wife, Joan, as together they unveil the portrait that will now hang, along with other former college deans and interim deans, in the dean's conference room. Many members of the college's faculty, staff and student body attended the gathering, along with several longtime associates of Thompson's from the UF Health Science Center, the main campus and the Florida Veterinary Medical Association.



Photo by Sarah Carey

Members of the Florida Veterinary Medical Association honored Thompson with a plaque of appreciation. From left to right in photo are Phil Hinkle, FVMA's executive director; Dean Glen Hoffsis; Dr. Steve Shores, representing FVMA; Dr. Jim Thompson; Dr. Ernie Godfrey, representing FVMA; and Richard Wilkes, representing FVMA.

Aquatic Animal Health director honored

Ruth Francis-Floyd, D.V.M., director of the University of Florida Aquatic Animal Health Program, has received the William Medway Award for Excellence in Teaching from the International Association for Aquatic Animal Medicine.



Dr. Francis-Floyd

The award was given via videoconferencing technology from Rome on May 13 in recognition of her contributions to the teaching of the aquatic sciences over the past 10 years.

Francis-Floyd is a professor in UF's College of Veterinary Medicine with a joint appointment in the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences' department of fisheries and aquatic sciences. She is board-certified by the American College of Zoological Medicine. A UF veterinary college alumna, she received the college's Alumni Achievement Award in 2002. She also is a past president of IAAAM.

In her present position, Francis-Floyd oversees campus wide teaching, research and extension efforts in the area of aquatic animal health.

Harvey named executive associate dean

John Harvey, D.V.M., Ph.D., has been named executive associate dean of the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, effective Oct. 1.

Harvey was a founding member of the UF veterinary college's faculty in 1974 and has served as chairman of the college's department of physiological sciences since 1995. As executive associate dean, Harvey will be in charge of internal college operations.



Dr. John Harvey

"Dr. Harvey has a long history with this college and great institutional knowledge," said Glen Hoffsis, D.V.M., the college's dean. "He will be an excellent right-hand person to have in this position and I am delighted that he has agreed to accept the job."

Harvey replaces James Thompson, D.V.M., Ph.D., who held the post of executive associate dean since 2006 and has left the college to become dean at the University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine.

A Kansas native, Harvey earned both his bachelor's and D.V.M. degrees from Kansas State and his Ph.D. from the University of California-Davis. He is board-certified in clinical pathology by the American College of Veterinary Pathologists.

Harvey's research interests are comparative hematology and erythrocyte enzyme deficiencies. He discovered and named the *Anaplasma platys* organism that infects platelets in dogs and, along with co-workers, first recognized and reported four inherited erythrocyte enzyme deficiencies.

Among the honors Harvey has received are the UF Norden Distinguished Teacher Award, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Society for Veterinary Clinical Pathology, the Award for Outstanding Contributions to Animal Clinical Chemistry, Division of Animal Clinical Chemistry, American Association for Clinical Chemistry, and the Alumni Recognition Award from Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine.

A former president of the American Society for Veterinary Clinical Pathology and the International Society for Animal Clinical Pathology, Harvey also served a four-year term on the Morris Animal Foundation's scientific

advisory board. He has published 160 journal articles and book chapters concerning comparative hematology and has presented more than 230 scientific and continuing education talks and seminars.

Scientist honored for mycoplasma research

Meghan May, Ph.D., a scientist in the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, received the Louis Dienes Prize for outstanding research by a postdoctoral fellow during the 17th International Congress of the International Organization for Mycoplasma, held July 6-11 in Tianjin, China.



Dr. Meghan May

May's presentation, co-authored by her academic mentor, Daniel Brown, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the college's department of infectious diseases and pathology, dealt with an infection-producing enzyme known as sialidase, which is produced by the bacteria *Mycoplasma gallisepticum*, the most economically significant mycoplasma pathogen affecting poultry.

"This pathogen causes chronic respiratory disease, reduced feed efficiency, decreased growth and decreased egg production," Brown said. "Meghan's work may lead to a basis for novel treatment and/or vaccination strategies focused on the role of sialidase in diseases associated with this pathogen."

E-mail address updates needed

In order to meet the University of Florida's Green Initiatives, more of the college print publications will become electronic publications or Web-based publications. Communications via e-mail are becoming increasingly important, as well as being the 'green' thing to do. Be sure your e-mail address is up-to-date so you aren't left out.

Information we need from alumni includes name, class year, and e-mail address. All others, we need name and e-mail address and some reference to your affiliation to the college, i.e. you are a donor, a friend, a client, etc.

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Honor Roll of Donors for 2007-2008

THE COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

Honor Roll of Donors for 2007-2008

The 2007-2008 University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine Honor Roll of Donors is a way of recognizing generous gifts to the college. The students, faculty and staff are most appreciative of this support. This year's honor roll includes names of all donors of \$25 or more between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008. Your name should appear in alphabetical order among donors who made gifts of similar amounts. Many alumni choose to make gifts to the college in the name of their veterinary practice and the practice name is listed. We have included a list of Bequest Society members from the College of Veterinary Medicine. These members have included the college in their estate planning at a value of \$10,000 or more. In spite of our efforts, omissions and errors sometimes occur and we want to know to know about them. If you have questions or corrections concerning your listing, please contact the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs, College of Veterinary Medicine, PO Box 100125, Gainesville, FL 32610-0125, (352) 392-2213 ext 5200.

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Paralyzed dog inspires others living active life on wheels

By Sarah Carey

Although he can no longer move his two back legs, a charismatic dachshund named Lance hasn't missed a beat. Far from being an armchair participant in life, Lance, who received treatment at UF's Veterinary Medical Center earlier this year, is a wheelchair participant — actively bringing cheer to the sick and disabled, young and old.

After an unsuccessful operation in South Florida, Lance's owner, Claudia Machado, of Miami, came to UF to see whether UF could correct Lance's problems through additional surgery.

"Unfortunately, the spinal cord at the affected segment was only a cavity with no substance, so surgery was not going to help," said veterinarian Roger Clemmons, a neurologist specializing in small animals who saw Lance in the UF clinic.

"The technology to re-grow spinal cords in dogs does not exist," Clemmons said. "Although advances are being made in using primitive 'stem cells' to help repair the spinal cord in dogs, these cells have not been used in dogs successfully for that purpose so we did not have any options to offer for Lance's treatment at that time."

However, Machado and her family were told how to adapt to life with Lance as a paraplegic.

"We had to come to terms with the news that Lance would never be able to use his back legs again," said Machado. "Dr. Clemmons was emphatic that there was no solution, and his staff, especially Amy Reynolds, gave me and my husband a lot of support to deal with this reality. Needless to say, we were devastated, but we never gave up on our little guy for a second."

Clemmons and Reynolds, a veterinary neurology technician, suggested the wheels and gave Machado tips on how to properly care for a paralyzed dog. They also recommended a diet including natural-vitamin supplements to help boost Lance's immune system and prevent additional damage.



Lance's owners say he is full of energy and loves to fetch his ball and chase his frisbee at the park.

Machado purchased a special custom-made "doggie wheelchair," or cart made for dogs with hind-leg paralysis, to which Lance quickly adapted.

"Even though we didn't come back to Miami with the news we hoped for, we were very optimistic," Machado said. "Words cannot explain how much comfort Amy offered, sharing her own stories with us and reassuring us that Lance being on wheels would just make us love him even more. And today, every time I have a question for Dr. Clemmons because Lance is acting weird, I e-mail Amy with concerns and I hear back from her immediately."

While Lance's paralysis is still tough on Machado and her family emotionally, they have gotten into a fun routine with him and take comfort in the happiness he brings other people.

"Lance is the happiest dog on the wheelchair," Machado said. "He's full of

energy and loves to fetch his ball at the park, run after his Frisbee and swim. Everywhere we take him, people stop and stare at him because he truly is one special little guy."

Lance is now a certified therapy dog and Machado takes him twice a month to visit pediatric patients at Miami Children's Hospital and elderly individuals in wheelchairs at West Gables Hospital.

"He gives them so much hope and joy," Machado said. "I don't think there's anything more fulfilling than walking down the hospital corridor with this little guy. He is a super hero."

Lance even has that "Hollywood effect" on people who see him.

"It's like going out with Britney Spears," Machado said. "Everyone runs over to see him, pet him or play with him."

In fact, "Super Lance," starring as himself, will be the main character in a book Machado is producing for distribution to hospital patients.

"All of the work for this book is pro bono," she said. "I had my friends design the logo, write the story, design the animated characters for the book and finally have it printed. It was a true effort of family and friends coming together for a good cause."



Lance is shown in his customized "wheelchair."

West Nile virus and other mosquito-borne viruses cause encephalitis, both in horses and people, adding a human component to Long's research. The virus affects the central nervous system and symptoms can range from fever to paralysis and death.

"Infection in horses is important because it's an indication of what people might face with the virus," Long said. "Immunity in horses provides a proxy for understanding the virus in humans especially children and the elderly."

Lately, Long's research has continued on a "translational course" with a goal to transform the services the College of Veterinary Medicine offers while developing cutting edge research for new detection methods and treatment options for humans and horses affected by disease. Long offers both standard serum and molecular diagnostic testing for several causes of encephalitis in animals including West Nile virus, Eastern equine encephalitis virus and Herpesviruses. The latter test capability was developed directly as a result of the 2006/2007 outbreak of neurological herpesvirus in horses in Wellington that virtually shut-down the industry.

"The development of new molecular strategies for detection of the

equine encephalitides provides the only Florida based rapid test site for these diseases. We frequently receive samples from horse venues throughout the State that require answers within hours; we have built a program around the latest technology and talent personnel that have the agility to provide rapid answers. This allows these horse activities to continue unhindered; in the past, activities have been halted at peril to the industry, while awaiting results from labs that were out-of-state."

On the research-side, Long and her graduate students are involved in cutting edge projects utilizing research techniques that span the globe from geography to molecular biology. For surveillance, one project collaborates with geographers to use geographical information systems based on satellite images to track emerging disease.

On the cellular side, gene chip technologies are being applied to examine the mechanisms of diseases that specifically affect the equine brain.

"Understanding the complex mechanisms at the cellular level will assist us in developing medications that will directly treat viruses and parasites that infect the brain of horses, and of course people and other animals," Long said.

College News

College alumni council names 2008 Distinguished Award winners

A South Florida equine practitioner, a professor emeritus of small animal neurology, a small animal surgeon and the director of the University of Florida's mobile equine diagnostic service recently were honored for their career accomplishments by the UF College of Veterinary Medicine.

Four awards were given through the 2008 Distinguished Award program, which is sponsored by the college's alumni council and offers recognition to deserving alumni, faculty and others who have contributed meaningfully to UF and/or to the veterinary profession.

Robert Boswell, D.V.M., of Wellington, a 1985 graduate of the UF veterinary college and owner of Palm Beach Equine Clinic, received the Alumni Achievement Award. Boswell also serves as director of imaging at the clinic, and is a founding member of the Florida Association of Equine Practitioners, an organization that provides continuing education and gives a voice to equine clinicians from all over the state. He served as president of FAEP from 2004-05.

The Outstanding Young Alumnus Award was given to **Michael Porter, D.V.M., Ph.D.**, a clinical assistant professor at the UF veterinary college. Porter received his D.V.M. and Ph.D. degrees from the UF veterinary college in 1998 and 2001, respectively. He also completed a residency in large animal medicine at UF in 2004.



Drs. Cheryl Chrisman, Michael Porter, Gary Ellison and Robert Boswell are shown left to right during 2008 commencement activities, where they were honored as this year's CVM Alumni Council Distinguished Award winners.

As director of the college's Mobile Equine Diagnostic Service, Porter takes state-of-the-art imaging technology on the road to be more widely available to horse owners and veterinarians.

Cheryl Chrisman, D.V.M., Ed.D., a longtime faculty member and a professor of small animal neurology at UF until her retirement in 2007, has received the college's Distinguished Service Award. She has received multiple Teacher of the Year awards from UF veterinary students and has a long list of both clinical and research accomplishments.

A board-certified veterinary neurologist, Chrisman served as the small animal

neurology service chief for many years and has written two textbooks as well as many articles in prestigious journals in her field. Chrisman has mentored countless students as well as residents in small animal neurology during her academic career at UF and also has been active in organized veterinary medicine. She served as president of the American College of Veterinary Neurologists and has chaired the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine's board of regents.

The award for special service to the veterinary profession went to **Gary Ellison, D.V.M.**, a professor and chief of small animal surgery at UF. A UF faculty member since 1983, Ellison is a highly respected and internationally recognized authority in soft tissue surgery. Through his leadership, the UF veterinary surgery team has progressed into the microsurgery and renal transplantation arena.

Ellison is also a very popular and successful continuing education speaker, having given more than 120 presentations to various groups seeking to enhance their awareness of small animal surgery.

The awards were presented May 24 at the Phillips Center for the Performing Arts during college commencement exercises.

New programs at UF veterinary college target food supply veterinarian shortage

By Sarah Carey

To help address a critical shortage of food supply veterinarians at the local, state and national levels, the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine has initiated two new programs aimed at tempting more veterinary students to pursue careers in the field.

For the first time this year, the college made four admission slots available to pre-veterinary undergraduates with a strong interest in food animal veterinary medicine. These students, identified with the help of faculty from the UF Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences' animal sciences department, were required to have met all prerequisite requirements for veterinary school.

"Beyond these four individuals, there were two other animal sciences majors who were on the alternate list for admission and they also wound up being admitted through the standard admissions process," said Owen Rae, D.V.M., chief of the college's Food Animal Reproduction and Medicine Service, or FARMS.

Each year, four more students will be admitted.

The admissions initiative was created through a joint collaboration involving IFAS; the veterinary college's dean, Glen Hoffsis, D.V.M.; Eleanor Green, D.V.M., chairwoman of the college's department of large animal clinical sciences; members of the Florida Cattleman's Association; and FARMS faculty members.

UF also is launching a 16-credit food animal certificate program for students who complete requirements aimed at preparing them for careers in food animal practice or the food systems profession.

"The certificate provides a template for mastering basic skills associated with food animal veterinary medicine, including food animal/systems-oriented courses taught within the UF veterinary college as well as targeted extracurricular experiences," Rae said.

Students will be expected to participate actively in the Food Animal Club within the college, and to take part in weekend wet labs that will provide hands-on learning opportunities as well as the chance to interact more frequently with faculty mentors and other students with similar interests.

In addition, students will be required to become members of the American Association of Bovine Practitioners and will be encouraged to participate in the Society for Theriogenology. Both associations strongly advocate student development within those respective disciplines.



Photo by Sarah Carey

Dr. Carlos Risco is shown at the University of Florida's Dairy Research Unit in Hague looking at the total mixed ration fed to cows in accordance with their specific nutritional needs. The ration consists of silage, hay, commodity feed ingredients, vitamins and minerals.

Hoffsis said the certificate program will not only enhance students' interest in the food animal specialty early in their veterinary curriculum, but also will position participants as more attractive job candidates in all areas of food supply veterinary medicine.

"Participants in this program will likely be extremely sought after for the very best jobs, due to the cross-disciplinary exposure they will be getting to all aspects of the field, including both practice and industry," Hoffsis said.

However, Green added that ideally, recruitment efforts would start well before veterinary school.

"In local communities, talented young people must be encouraged by local producers, veterinarians, school counselors and others to pursue careers in food supply veterinary medicine," she said. "They must then be mentored well in their pre-veterinary curriculum in order to retain their interest and strengthen their credentials to optimize their chance for admission to and success during veterinary school."

Incoming freshman veterinary student Jason DeLaPaz will complete his master's degree at UF in August. Mentored by Art Donovan, D.V.M., of the FARMS group, DeLaPaz studied how to determine the immune response potential of individual Holstein dairy cows. He plans to participate in the food animal certificate program and considers it a useful tool to help get him "up and

running" in a meaningful career after graduation.

"I believe it will serve an important role in increasing students' awareness and that this may trigger interest in food animal medicine for the very same reasons I have chosen this career path," DeLaPaz said. "I was not raised on or near a farm, but was attracted to the greater purpose involved in food animal production. The food supply is very important, and food animal practitioners help to ensure that it is safe.

"Such a small portion of the population has ever been on a farm and are largely oblivious to the research, concerns and practices involved in food production," DeLaPaz added.

"Due to the present as well as the projected shortage in food animal practitioners, I believe it was the right decision for the UF veterinary school to proactively address this issue."

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, of its 77,237 member veterinarians, only 1,703 are in practices that exclusively focus on food animals. Another 4,459 are in practices that predominantly treat food animals. 🐄



Dog recuperating from kidney transplant surgery thanks to UF, Penn veterinarians

By Sarah Carey

Thanks to a unique collaboration between the University of Florida and the University of Pennsylvania, a 14-month-old bull terrier named Zansi is recuperating well at her home in St. Petersburg after successful kidney transplant surgery Sept. 4.

The case represented the first time a patient has received hemodialysis at the UF Veterinary Medical Center and the second time a dog has received a kidney transplant at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. Zansi's litter mate, Toni, provided the donor kidney, said their owner, Jennifer O'Brien. The dogs were imported from a South African breeder.

"Zansi and Toni are both doing wonderfully," O'Brien said Sept. 14. "As far as I can tell, everything is going great."

Soon after Zansi arrived from South Africa, O'Brien noticed she was not eating well and was drinking large amounts of water. Eventually she found an internal medicine specialist in Clearwater who diagnosed kidney disease.

"I began pounding the pavement, doing a lot of research on the Internet to see what our options were," O'Brien said. Although a few other veterinary hospitals in the United States can provide canine kidney transplants, she determined that Penn Vet was logistically her best option for the procedure. There was one problem, however — after the rigorous work-up process Zansi underwent at Penn Vet, she was not medically stable enough for surgery.

While equipped to perform the transplant operation, Penn Vet's hemodialysis program is on hold. Hemodialysis is a procedure through which kidney function is mechanically taken over until the patient is stable enough to receive a donor kidney.

The roles of both veterinary colleges were critical in Zansi's care, which led to a first-of-its-kind collaboration between the two institutions.

"We were lucky enough to come across Dr. (Carsten) Bandt and the University of Florida," O'Brien said.

Bandt, D.V.M., an assistant professor of critical care and emergency medicine at UF, has a background in hemodialysis and nephrology.

Through hemodialysis, symptoms known as uremic syndrome — witnessed through clinical signs such as loss of appetite, weakness, seizures and vomiting — can be greatly reduced or eliminated.

"There are only a few veterinary centers capable of doing intermittent hemodialysis," Bandt said. Because of Bandt's expertise, UF joined that elite group and Zansi became the first patient ever to receive the procedure at UF veterinary hospital.

Hemodialysis treatments typically last between five and six hours and most dogs need three treatments per week, Bandt said. Zansi, who still had some kidney function, was able to get by with two weekly treatments.

"She was a rare exception, but she did very well," Bandt said.

Following her treatments, Zansi was deemed stable enough for surgery after gaining weight and displaying an improved appetite and attitude. On Aug. 31, Zansi and Toni headed to Pennsylvania for the transplant operation.



Dr. Carsten Bandt, a specialist in emergency medicine and critical care, monitors Zansi's vital signs during one of several hemodialysis treatments the 14-month-old bull terrier received at UF this past summer.

Photo by Sarah Carey

Lillian Aronson, V.M.D., and Heidi Phillips, V.M.D., performed the surgery. Phillips said transplants are not recommended for all dogs with kidney disease. Animals with infections or recurring infections or that have cancer are not good candidates for kidney transplants, she said. Aronson initiated Penn Vet's feline renal transplantation program, which recently celebrated its 100th surgery.

"It is a rare procedure in dogs," Phillips said. "We can only use dogs that are related to each other at this time. In cats we can use unrelated donors, because they are able to suppress their immune system with

medication. They respond to the immune suppression medication better than dogs do."

O'Brien called Penn's veterinary team "very gracious and professional."

"I also feel very strongly about UF, as I come from a family of Gators," she said. "We have had such a positive experience and I am so impressed with all of the people in the dog nephrology world. They are some of the nicest people I have ever come across."

The message O'Brien would most like to convey, however, is for people with dogs in need of such treatments to know there are options for them to receive help.

"I would like to see these options more accessible and more available to the pets that need them," she said.

New Comparative Orthopaedics and Biomechanics Laboratory dedicated

By Sarah Carey

In the first formal recognition of a collaboration that has spanned more than 30 years, University of Florida doctors who treat both humans and animals came together on campus recently to dedicate the new Comparative Orthopaedics and Biomechanics Laboratory in memory of the late Dr. Rob Parker, a former UF small animal orthopedic surgeon who was killed in a car accident this past year.

The UF College of Medicine's department of orthopaedics and rehabilitation's biomechanics laboratory, formerly housed in the UF Health Science Center, has been renamed to reflect the physician/veterinarian collaboration and is now located in the UF College of Veterinary Medicine's academic building.

More than 60 people from both colleges gathered there on the evening of Sept. 10 to hear brief presentations about the benefits of the intercollegiate collaboration and tour the new lab.

"We needed to expand our laboratory space for gene therapy and stem cell research, so we decided to move our biomechanics laboratory," said Dr. MaryBeth Horodyski, an associate professor and director of the department's research program. "The department looked at several options, including renting space in town and building another facility."



Photo by Sarah Carey

Mieko Dunn, assistant director of research; Dr. MaryBeth Horodyski, associate professor and research director with the College of Medicine's department of orthopaedics and rehabilitation; and Dr. Peter Gearen, chairman of the College of Medicine's department of orthopaedics and rehabilitation, holding a device known as a fixator, which is used to stabilize joints as they heal after surgery.

At some point, Horodyski and Dr. Anthony Pozzi, an assistant professor of surgery at the UF College of Veterinary Medicine, began communicating and discussion soon emerged between faculty members from both colleges about space possibilities within the veterinary school.

"Once space was identified, several renovations needed to be made," Horodyski said. "Once those were complete, we moved our entire laboratory from the medical science building over to the veterinary academic building."

A major piece of equipment that needed to be accommodated was a multiaxial mechanical testing system (also known as an MTS), used for testing joints in cadaver specimens and which can be used for both animal and human species.

Administrators from both colleges all said that one key advantage of the formal collaboration will be the ability to submit stronger grant proposals.

"Many funding organizations clearly like to see translational research across a university and this new laboratory will clearly align the researchers from both colleges to be better positioned to apply for certain grants," Horodyski said.

Parker, whose name is on the plaque hanging outside of the laboratory, had been a charter member of the veterinary college faculty when the college opened its doors in 1977.

"For 20 years, the name Rob Parker was synonymous with small animal orthopedics in the state of Florida," said Dr. Dan Lewis, a professor of small animal surgery at UF and longtime friend and colleague of Parker's. "It only seemed fitting as we brought this joint venture together that we dedicate the new lab in his memory."



Photo by Sarah Carey

Dr. John Harvey, executive associate dean; Dr. Dan Lewis, professor of surgery in the College of Veterinary Medicine's department of small animal clinical sciences; Dr. Antonio Pozzi, assistant professor of surgery in the department of small animal clinical sciences; and Dean Glen Hoffsis gather in the new laboratory following the dedication ceremony Sept. 10.



Photo by Sarah Carey

Dr. Dan Lewis, professor of surgery in the College of Veterinary Medicine's department of small animal surgery, is shown with special guest Elizabeth Parker Griseck, daughter of the late Dr. Robert B. Parker. Lewis holds the plaque that will be displayed in the new laboratory.



Photo by Sarah Carey

College of Medicine Interim Dean Michael Good and Dr. Tom Wright, a professor of orthopedic surgery with the College of Medicine's department of orthopaedics and rehabilitation, were among the guests.

Nov 15 Distinguished Awards Nomination deadline. Now is the time to nominate alumni, faculty and special CVM friends for the college Alumni Council-sponsored Distinguished Awards. Nomination forms are available on the alumni affairs Web site: www.vetmed.ufl.edu/college/alumni

Nov 21 Groundbreaking for the new Small Animal Hospital, formally known as the Veterinary Education and Research Center, will take place at the college, 2015 SW 16th Ave., Gainesville, 32608, at 10 a.m. Everyone is invited to attend. For more information, e-mail Rachel McGriff at mcgriff@vetmed.ufl.edu

Jan 19-23 The North American Veterinary Conference will be held in Orlando at the Marriott World Center and the Gaylord Palms Resort. The college's annual alumni reception will be held at 7 p.m. Jan. 20 at the Marriott, room to be determined. For more information, e-mail Jo Ann Winn at winnj@vetmed.ufl.edu or call (352) 392-2213, ext. 5013.

Apr 18 The Class of 1984 will celebrate its Silver Society Weekend sponsored by the UF Alumni Association. Go to: www.ufalumni.ufl.edu and look for Silver Society. For more information, e-mail winnj@vetmed.ufl.edu or call (352) 392-2213, ext. 5013.



At right, Dr. Tonya Clauss, chief clinician at the Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta and a member of the UF CVM's class of 2003, performs a physical exam on Dylan, a loggerhead sea turtle. Dylan was a straggler hatchling that spent several years in education and public facilities in preparation for his release into the wild as a sub-adult animal on Sept. 3.



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