



# VIRGINIA MARYLAND

Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine

Winter-Spring 2001



First-year student Jon Collins cradles a newborn lamb in his arms while two young fair-goers deliver an affectionate pet. For the fourth year in a row, the VMRCVM presented a live birthing exhibit at the Virginia State Fair in Richmond.

## AVMA Accredits VMRCVM for Maximum Seven Years

The college has been awarded "full" accreditation from the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) for the maximum seven-year term.

"This positive outcome is a tribute to all the hard work of a large number of people on all three of our campus locations in both Virginia and Maryland over the past 20 years," said VMRCVM Dean Peter Eyre.

The college's successful re-accreditation follows a comprehensive, 18-month process that culminated in an October 2000 visit by an AVMA Council on Education accreditation team.

The AVMA-COE final report did note delays in the construction

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## Virginia Tech Moves to Limit FMD Risks

Virginia Tech has announced that it is limiting access to university herds and flocks in an effort to help U.S. officials keep the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) epidemic now raging in the United Kingdom from surfacing in the United States and infecting U.S. livestock.

Visitors from countries where FMD is active will be banned from the

university's veterinary, agricultural and wildlife facilities on the Blacksburg campus as well as on all university operated facilities around the state for a period of five days following their arrival in the United States.

Additionally, all university faculty, staff and students travelling abroad will be barred from entering any farm or

Please see **FMD Risks:** page 19



## Schurig Named Associate Dean Research and Graduate Studies

A senior researcher and former director of the Center for Molecular Medicine and Infectious Diseases (CMMID) in the college has been appointed associate dean for research and graduate studies.

Dr. Gerhardt Schurig, a veterinary immunologist in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology (DBSP), assumed the post February 1. Schurig, who joined the faculty in 1978, is internationally renowned for his work

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## **Dean's Desk**



Dean Peter Eyre

## **Foot and Mouth: The Human Side of an Animal Disease**

Great Britain's epic struggle with a furious outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) has been well-chronicled by the global news media. Televised reports of dead livestock being bulldozed into mass burial pits and newspaper accounts detailing the financial ruin of British farm families have presented a grim reminder of the human consequences of animal disease.

Responding to the threat posed by the British epidemic, the USDA has enacted import and tourism restrictions, dispatched U.S. experts to assist their European colleagues, and elevated monitoring efforts at our borders and ports. At presstime, those emergency measures seem to be doing the job. While we remain vigilant, we also remain FMD disease-free since 1929. A look at the virus and its consequences suggests the urgency of keeping it out.

FMD is a highly contagious viral disease that infects domestic and wild cloven-hoofed animals like cattle, sheep, swine, deer, elk and others. It is generally not fatal to animals and it does not present a health risk for people. But FMD is a painful, disabling and highly contagious illness that causes its victims to develop blisters on their feet and in their mouths that eventually rupture into painful, raw sores. FMD victims go lame and cannot eat.

The core of the threat posed by FMD is its extremely contagious nature. In the proper environment, FMD virus particles can survive outside of a cellular host for weeks...hitching a ride on a tractor or a shoe and infecting an animal a thousand miles away. As a result, the best approach for disease containment is to establish virus-free perimeters and destroy the infected victims within. Tragic as it is, approximately two million animals have now been slaughtered or condemned for slaughter in Britain and Europe as part of the containment efforts.

We can only imagine how an FMD epidemic would affect Virginia, home of 1.6 million beef cattle, 120,000 dairy cattle, 61,000 sheep and 370,000 hogs. Clearly, it would create a multi-billion dollar economic catastrophe. Should the virus penetrate the state's estimated million animal deer herd, it could become endemic, wafting back and forth between domestic and wild animal populations for the foreseeable future.

Which is precisely why Agricultural Commissioner J. Carlton Courter and State Veterinarian Bill Sims have wisely convened meetings to discuss how state officials and agricultural producers might respond if the FMD virus makes its way into Virginia through international trade and transportation systems.

Here at Virginia Tech, we have taken decisive steps to minimize the risks of importing the disease which are part of the university's many international programs and activities.

We have no way of knowing what the future holds. But while doing the best we can, we should take heart in the fact that the exacting biosecurity measures that have been so successful in keeping us FMD free for the past 72 years have now been very substantially magnified.

# VIRGINIA MARYLAND NEWS BRIEFS



## Ehrich Tapped to Lead Society of Toxicology

Dr. Marion Ehrich, a professor in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, has been elected to the office of Vice-President Elect in the Society of Toxicology (SOT), a scientific organization of over 5000 members in 44 countries.

She will serve one year as Vice-President Elect, then a year as Vice-President, then President, and then Immediate Past President.

Ehrich, who co-directs the college's Laboratory for Neurotoxicity Studies, has held prior leadership posts in the Society for Toxicology and the Board of Toxicology.

"As anyone who has ever held leadership roles in a professional society knows, these organizations do not run themselves," said Dr. Lud Eng, head, Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology.

"However, Marion has previously served in other leadership capacities and is well prepared for the challenges ahead."

## Equine University Presented

An innovative equine education program for horse-owners, breeders, riders and enthusiasts was presented at six locations across the state this Spring.

Sponsored by the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, the VMRCVM, the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, the Equine Medical Center, the Virginia Horse Council and the Virginia Horse Industry Board, the "Equine Science University" featured presentations on a variety of topics designed to educate horse enthusiasts about new equine health and management issues.

Presentations on lameness, mare care, West Nile

virus, ulcers and equine nutrition were a few of the topics covered during the series, which was presented in six different geographical regions of the state.



## Lee Returns to Teaching, Research

Dr. John C. Lee, former associate dean for research and graduate studies, has assumed teaching and research responsibilities in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology.

During a recent ceremony honoring Lee, VMRCVM Dean Peter Eyre praised Lee as a leader who played a historic role in the development of the college's research and graduate programs.

Lee, who led the office for more than ten years, transformed a fledgling graduate program into a major educational center that now enrolls almost 100 students.



## Sponenberg Named Director of Student Affairs

Dr. D. Phillip Sponenberg, professor, Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, has been named director of student affairs in the Office of Academic Affairs.

As director of student affairs, he will chair the college's Scholarships and Awards Committee, chair the college's Diversity Committee and work closely with the Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association (SCAVMA), class officers, and student clubs and organizations on a variety of non-curricular matters.



## Robertson elected President of Society of Toxicologic Pathology

Dr. John Robertson, professor, Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, has been elected President-elect of the 1100-member Society of Toxicologic Pathology.

The STP is a non-profit association of pathologists whose principal aim is the advancement of pathology as it pertains to changes elicited by pharmacological, chemical and environmental agents and factors that modify these responses.

Robertson's election puts him on a three-year management tenure with the organization which concludes in 2004.

## Veterinarians Among Most Trusted, Gallup Says

Veterinarians may not make the highest salaries in the medical and helping professions, but they certainly rank high in the trust department, according to a recent Gallup poll.

Veterinarians ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>, lagging only nurses and pharmacists, out of 10 professions and occupations considered most honest by the American people.

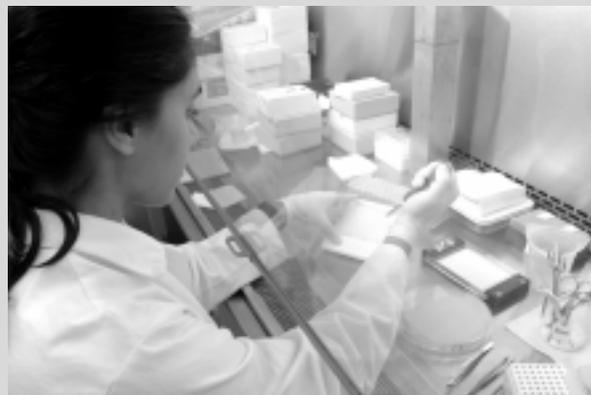
Veterinarians were termed more honest than medical doctors, teachers, clergy, judges, police and dentists, according to Gallup's Honesty and Ethics Poll.

## New Anesthesiologist

Dr. Yong-Hoon Lee has joined the college as an assistant professor in the Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences.

An anesthesiologist, Dr. Lee earned his DVM at the Seoul National University in Seoul, Korea.

Prior to joining the college, Lee worked in several Korean equine veterinary practices and completed a Ph.D. at the Royal Veterinary College, University of London. He also completed a residency at the University of Illinois.



National Research Council Fellow Brandy Cowing works in a laboratory of the William E. Lavery Animal Health Research Center on the college's Blacksburg Campus. Working with veterinary nutritionist Dr. Korinn Saker in the college's Nutritional Immunology Laboratory and funded by the Ford Foundation, Cowing is investigating the molecular mechanisms of nutrient metabolism in the progression of mammary cancer in humans and companion animals like cats and dogs. By elucidating certain pathways in cancer cells that drive their growth and then studying how specific nutrients can influence those pathways to prevent or stop that growth, Cowing and colleagues hope to discover new methods for the nutritional management of cancer. Data generated from this research may lead to new progress in treating cancer in both people and animals.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Virginia Tech Farm and Family Showcase Scheduled

Planning is underway for the first annual Virginia Tech Farm and Family Showcase which will be presented September 5-6 at Kentland Farm.

Sponsored by Virginia Tech's Colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Natural Resources, Human Resources and Education, and the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, the showcase will feature programs designed to appeal to families, homeowners, landowners, as well as to those with natural resources, environmental, and agricultural interests.

Displays, tours, seminars, demonstrations, and panel discussions will explore a broad range of topics, including lawn, garden, landscaping, home care, wildlife and forestry, human health and nutrition, family life, livestock, poultry, horses, agronomic field crops, forages, nutrient management, biotechnology, riparian corridors, water quality, and many others.

Other featured events include sheep dog trials, a corn maze, hand milking of dairy cows, horse-drawn farm equipment demonstrations, feeding the pleasure horse, packing for a trail ride, sheep and cattle birthing, fun with foods, grandma's yellow pie plate, e-commerce, sawmilling, wood magic, Master Gardeners Program, apple trees for home use, soil testing, agricultural education for fourth graders, silent auction, and alumni activities.

A "Family Night" which includes a barbecue meal and bluegrass music will be presented on September 5<sup>th</sup> from four until eight p.m.

Kentland Farm, located along New River, is Virginia Tech's newest and largest agricultural research and teaching unit. For more information, contact College Farm Coordinator Dwight Paulette at kentland@vt.edu or call 731-1289.



Karen Whitt (second from right), a veterinary diet technician in the VMRCVM partially funded by a grant from Ralston Purina, is pictured with colleagues at Ohio State University during a training program in which she studied dietary calculations, critical care nutrition, organizational of a diet kitchen, and nutrition consultations. Ralston Purina recently provided partial funding for the position in the college as part of their efforts to help university veterinary hospitals provide optimal nutrition recommendations for dogs and cats.

## New Technology Platform Enhances Infectious Disease Course

An innovative distance learning course on "Emerging Infectious Diseases" that links students and faculty on the Blacksburg and College Park campuses, as well as Salisbury, Maryland, is being taught in Spring 2001.

Veterinary Virologist Dr. Thomas Toth, professor, Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, led a team of

14 Blacksburg and College Park based faculty members who worked with the Institute for Distance and Distributed Learning on the development of a 15-lecture internet based course.

The course technology was ideal for delivering information on infectious diseases because of its timeliness and flexibility, according to Toth.

## Extension Advisory Committed Created

An "Advisory Committee for Veterinary Extension" designed to foster improved communication and program effectiveness has been created in the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine.

The committee creates a formal mechanism for information exchange between the clientele of the veterinary project of Virginia Cooperative Extension and the veterinary extension faculty in the VMRCVM.

Fourteen leaders representing different agricultural and companion animal organizations and producer groups have agreed to serve on the committee, according to Dr. W. Dee Whittier, Director and Project Leader-Veterinary Extension in the VMRCVM.

"We're very grateful these folks have agreed to work with us in this capacity," said Whittier. "Our goal is to increase the responsiveness of veterinary extension to the changing needs of animal owners in Virginia."

Members of the committee will help evaluate extension programs, suggest areas of needed emphasis and keep extension faculty apprised of major issues that are affecting the various areas of agricultural and companion animal husbandry in Virginia. The advisory committee will meet annually in Blacksburg.

During their inaugural meeting in 2001, the committee heard remarks concerning its founding from Dr. Peter Eyre, dean of the VMRCVM; Dr. Bob Martin, director of Veterinary Teaching Hospital; and Whittier.

The group also heard presentations from Dr. Ernest Hovingh on dairy veterinary extension; Drs. Jim Bowen and

Wallace Palmer on equine veterinary extension; Dr. Marie Suthers-McCabe on the human-animal bond and companion animal extension; Dr. Whittier on beef cattle and cow/calf extension; Dr. John Currin on beef cattle and stocker/grower extension; Dr. Calvert Larsen on poultry extension; and Dr. Kevin Pelzer on small ruminant and swine extension.

The group also conducted discussions on the present status and future directions of various programs within the overall veterinary extension project.

VMRCVM Extension Advisory Committee members include Mathew Miller, animal science extension agent, Hillsville, VA; Dr. Bill McKinnon, Department of Animal Science, Virginia Tech; Sue Puffenbarger, dairy science extension agent, Rocky Mount, VA; and Dr. Bennett Cassell, Department of Dairy Science, Virginia Tech.

Also, Allen Sisson, dairyman, Shawsville, VA; Buster Hounshell, food animal producer, Wytheville, VA; Dr. Tom Vandyke, food animal veterinarian, Abingdon, VA; Dr. John Wise, equine veterinarian, Staunton, VA; Bob Reel, director, Virginia Horse Center, Lexington, VA; and Dr. Lauren Keating, human-animal bond veterinarian, Natural Bridge Station, VA.

Also, Dr. Bill Sims, State Veterinarian, Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, Richmond, VA; Dr. Elizabeth Krushinskie, poultry veterinarian, Broadway, VA; Dr. Audrey McElroy, poultry extension specialist, Virginia Tech; and Mrs. Lee Fitzgerald, small animal industry, Fincastle, VA.

## DNA Sequencing Facility Moves to Virginia Bioinformatics Institute

The Virginia Tech DNA Sequencing Facility, which was founded in 1998 and operated in the VMRCVM, has been integrated with the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute's Functional Genomics Core Laboratory and is now housed in the Fralin Biotechnology Center.

Originally funded by a university SPIRES grant, contributions from the VMRCVM and the Fralin Biotechnology Center, the laboratory was initially staffed and equipped to provide reliable and prompt DNA sequencing services for a variety of investigators in the life

sciences across the university, according to Dr. Stephen Boyle, a professor in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology who supervised the development of the facility.

The facility will be enhanced to meet the more rigorous demands of the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute and other users across the university, according to Boyle.

Lee Weigt, who has directed the lab since it was established, has also transferred to the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute.

## Eyre Leads Virginia Tech's Provost Search Committee

Dr. Peter Eyre, dean of the VMRCVM, chaired the 21-member search committee tasked with recruiting a new provost for Virginia Tech.

Following eight months of work, the committee recommended three candidates to President Charles Steger in early April. A new provost has not been named at press-time.

The committee, which included representation from a broad range of university constituencies, evaluated applications from over 50 qualified applicants and nominees and conducted seven off-campus and three-on campus interviews.

"This was a time-consuming and demanding job, and I deeply appreciate the immense contributions of the search committee," said Eyre, who was asked by President Steger to lead the effort in Summer 2000. "I also appreciate the outstanding administrative support provided by Carole Nickerson for this effort."



Dr. Craig Reed, administrator of the USDA's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service recently spent a day on campus meeting with faculty and students. Reed presented a lecture on Foot and Mouth Disease during his visit. Here, Reed chats with first-year student John Dyer in a classroom following his lecture.



Several guests from the St. Francis of Assisi Service Dog Foundation joined college officials during a ceremony commemorating the gift of the painting to the college. Foreground, Carol Willoughby and service dog Blake. Rear, from left; WSLs-TV News Director and Anchor John Carlin, Artist Mark Young, Dean Eyre, Doug Willoughby, and Teresa Kelley, executive director of the SFASDF.

## Portrait Of National Service Dog Of The Year Unveiled

A formal oil portrait of a golden retriever named Booker who helped inspire the founding of the Saint Francis of Assisi Service Dog Foundation was recently dedicated in the lobby of the college's Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

Booker, who was named the Delta Society's "National Service Dog of the Year" in 1988, faithfully served owner Carol Willoughby until he passed away from cancer in 1997. Booker's wonderful service led Willoughby to establish the Roanoke-based foundation, which now trains service animals to work with people facing a variety of challenges.

The life-sized oil painting, which has been donated to the college by Carol and her husband Doug, will replace another which hangs in an exhibit that memorializes Booker's life and celebrates the foundation's work. Painted by noted artist Mark Young, the painting was unveiled following remarks from VMRCVM Dean Peter Eyre, Mrs. Willoughby, and others.

## Booker's Legacy

*Every single one of the happiest people I know has a story to tell about a once-in-a-lifetime dog. My once-in-a-lifetime dog was Booker. Booker was a ninety-pound golden retriever with wise, old eyes and a snow-white muzzle. He was my devoted service dog and faithful friend for ten years. In 1988, Booker was named Delta Society's "National Service Dog of the Year." After a distinguished career, he received another Service Dog of the Year Award in 1997 from Omega Tau Sigma Veterinary Fraternity at Virginia Tech. Unfortunately, it was awarded posthumously just two weeks after he died. Today, his portrait hangs in the hospital lobby of the Maryland Regional Veterinary Medicine*



*A yearly award is to honor other ex-service dogs, guide dogs, search and police dogs and the train them.*

*It's frustrating a pen, a hairbrush, not be able to pick frightening to imagine one around and phone to call for After a decade spent rheumatoid arthritis and undergoing numerous joint replacements, I was elated to have a dog to serve as my arms and legs and to help me with physical tasks. Yet, he did so much more. He restored my self-confidence, helped me raise two sons, motivated me to start a business and helped shape the attitudes of thousands of schoolchildren through Ability Awareness programs and service dog demonstrations. The backpack he wore proudly, decorated with badges and pins, spoke of cross-country travels and many friends and acquaintances made along the way. Before he died from cancer in 1997, he helped train his successor, Blake, and inspired the founding of Saint Francis of Assisi Service Dog Foundation in Roanoke, Virginia to provide service dogs for people with disabilities. Indeed, this Foundation is Booker's legacy.*

*Virginia-College of at Virginia Tech. given in his name traordinary dogs, hearing rescue dogs, programs that*

*to drop a crutch, or a book, and them up. It's ine falling with no way to get the help. Booker independence. battling severe*

Carol Willoughby



FDA-CVM Director Dr. Stephen Sundlof (right) speaks with Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies Dr. Gerhardt Schurig (left) and Dr. Stephen Boyle (center), a professor in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, after discussing research underway in the college. Sundlof was also briefed by Dr. Ansar Ahmed, associate professor, DBSP, during his visit.

## FDA-CVM Director Sundlof Visits

The director of the Food & Drug Administration's Center for Veterinary Medicine said 80% of his organization's efforts are designed to promote human health and well-being and praised its long-standing relationship with the VMRCVM during remarks presented in the Fralin Biotechnology Center on the campus of Virginia Tech.

Dr. Stephen Sundlof outlined major programmatic initiatives underway in dealing with the antimicrobial resistance issue,

biotechnology, and Mad Cow Disease (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy) as part of a day-long program in which the senior leadership of the FDA made presentations at Tech.

After providing an overview of the National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring Program (NARMS), Sundlof described the enormous challenge of developing "science-based" regulations on the rapidly developing area of genetically modified animals. Various firms around the world are presently working on about 25 different genetically modified aquatic species.

Shifting to the BSE situation, Sundlof outlined

prohibitions regarding the the feeding of mammalian protein to cattle and other measures designed to keep BSE out of America. He said the BSE related regulations are costing about \$58 million a year, which pales next to one estimate that suggested a BSE outbreak in the United States could cost \$64 billion in losses during just the first year.

"CVM has had a very good relationship with Virginia Tech," said Sundlof, commenting on the numerous veterinary college students who have studied at the FDA-CVM through the college's Center for

Government and Corporate Veterinary Medicine. "We retain a lot of these people. They have become extremely valuable to us."



Dr. Will Eyestone (left) explains some of the work underway in the college's Center for Reproductive Excellence Using Advanced Technology and Endocrinology to Sundlof during a tour.

## "Dry Rendering" Waste Processing Facility Under Construction

Construction is underway on the development of a novel new waste processing facility that eliminates the air pollution hazards associated with incineration and minimizes wastestream volume.

Housed at the VMRCVM, the university facility will use an innovative new "dry rendering" technology that has not been used anywhere else in the country.

During the dry rendering process, animal carcasses are placed in a specially designed chamber, agitated and heated by high temperature, high-pressure steam. Dry rendering transforms the material into liquid and solid components that can be safely disposed of in the sanitary sewer system and in landfills.

Microorganisms naturally present in the animal carcasses are destroyed by the extremely high temperature steam and pressure, thereby "sterilizing" the material in much the same way a medical autoclave is used to purify surgical instruments.

The process is termed "dry rendering" because no additional water beyond that which is naturally present in the carcasses is used during the process. By eliminating the 40-60% water that most animals are comprised of, the wastestream is reduced by approximately half.

The dry rendering process is similar to that which is regularly

used in hundreds of rendering facilities across the nation. However, this would be the first time dry rendering has been used to dispose of this type of waste by a laboratory or university.

Most of the animal carcasses that must be disposed of are cows, horses, sheep, and pigs derived from the university's agricultural herds, as well as mortalities from the VMRCVM's Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

Laboratory animals used in support of university research programs which do not require special medical handling are also included.

University generated regulated medical wastes will not be included in the rendering system; they will continue to be disposed of through licensed waste disposal contractors in accordance with federal guidelines.

The 4,000 square foot facility is expected to be on-line by late 2001.

## Dr. G. Daniel Boon, 55

*Dr. George Daniel Boon, 55, an associate professor in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology (DBSP), succumbed to cancer on April 20.*

*A nationally respected clinical pathologist and tireless champion of his discipline, Dr. Boon held faculty appointments at Mississippi State University, Purdue University, and the University of Missouri prior to joining the Tech faculty in 1998.*

*"Dr. Dan Boon was an outstanding leader in veterinary clinical pathology, a terrific colleague and a very fine human being," said Dr. Lud Eng, head of the DBSP. "His death is a tremendous loss to the profession and to those of us whose lives he touched, and we are many."*

*Boon's love for animals led to his career in veterinary medicine. He approached his profession with such vigor and zeal that his excellence was honored by Phi Zeta, Phi Kappa Phi, Sigma Xi and the C.L. Davis Foundation.*

*Boon was a member and provided leadership for the American Society for Veterinary Clinical Pathology, the American Veterinary Medical Association and other organizations.*

*During funeral services held on a beautiful afternoon in a quiet country church, Dr. Boon was remembered as a man of integrity and honor whose vision often prompted colleagues and students alike to approach him with the question, "What do we do, Dan?"*

## Alum Named to Fed Food Safety Post

Dr. Sharon R. Thompson, '87, has been appointed Department of Health and Human Services liaison to the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research.

The United States Department of Agriculture and DHHS created JIFSR to coordinate planning and priority setting for food safety research among the two Departments, other government agencies, and the private sector.

In the new post, Thompson will serve as a senior level consultant to the Executive Director of JIFSR, providing in-depth knowledge of Federal research agencies, with particular emphasis on the needs and concerns of the participating HHS agencies like the FDA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes for Health and their stakeholders.

Prior to this new appointment, Dr. Thompson served as the Associate Director for Veterinary Medical and International Affairs in the Office of the Director, FDA-CVM.

# VMRCVM Faculty Member Earns National Teacher of the Year Award in Veterinary Medicine

A neurobiologist on faculty in the college has been named the nation's best teacher in veterinary medicine.

Dr. Bradley Klein, an associate professor in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, has been awarded the national Carl J. Norden Distinguished Teacher Award.

Several thousand faculty members on staff at the 31 North American veterinary colleges annually compete for institutional Norden awards.

Those winners are then evaluated by the Association of American Veterinary Medical College's (AAVMC) National Norden Selection Committee and a "veterinary educator who epitomizes what is good and excellent in education is selected," according to AAVMC documents.

"I'm pretty excited," said Klein, who joined the college in 1988. "It's nice to know that the work I put into teaching is appreciated."

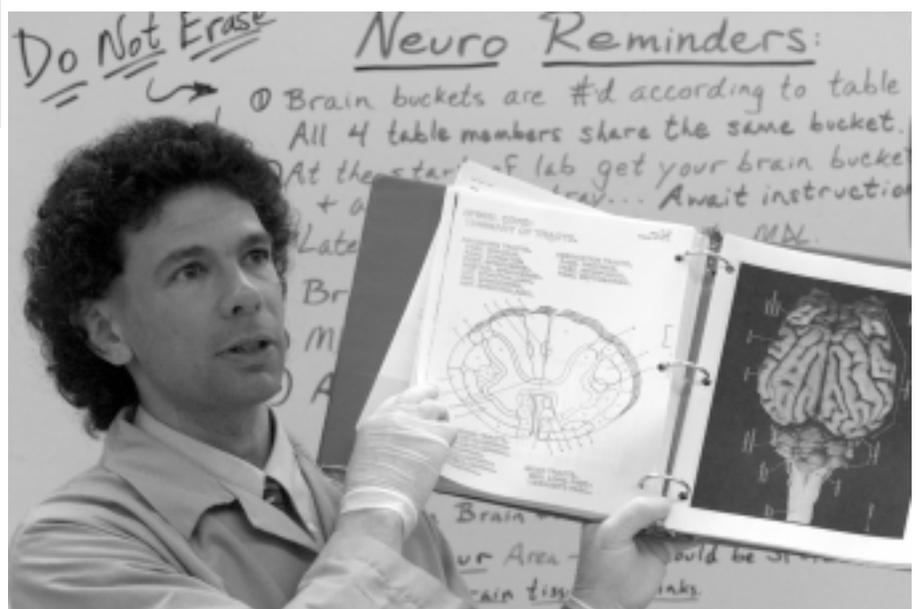
***Klein's strategy for teaching excellence is to prepare, organize, clarify and underscore the relevance of the field to everyday life.***

Klein's distinction as national teacher of the year is unusual on two fronts. First, he is a biomedical scientist with a Ph.D and not a doctor of veterinary medicine. The nation's top

teaching award usually goes to a faculty member who is a DVM.

Second, Klein's subject area, neuroscience, is often viewed as notoriously complex and difficult by veterinary students.

"This is the first time one of our faculty members has earned this prestigious national award and we are understandably very proud of Dr. Klein," said VMRCVM Dean Peter



Dr. Brad Klein deploys a variety of creative strategies to fully engage his students during their studies of neurobiology. For example, he brings in an electric guitar to help illustrate how the brain processes sound.

Eyre. "The fact that he has achieved this national distinction while teaching in such a challenging area speaks volumes about his gifts as a teacher."

Klein's strategy for teaching excellence is to prepare, organize, clarify and underscore the relevance of the field to everyday life.

"It is very complex material so I try and simplify it and break it down into pieces that the students can take away and remember," said Klein, who earned his Ph.D from City University of New York while conducting research at New York City's prestigious American Museum of Natural History. "I try and use everyday analogies to illustrate the concepts I am teaching."

For example, he brought in an electric guitar to illustrate that there is an orderly relationship in frequencies produced by the instrument and an orderly relationship of frequencies that can be processed by the inner ear's basilar membrane, the first section of the auditory system responsible for interpreting sound.

To further illustrate the relevance of neuroscience to everyday life, he assigned teams of students in his class to harvest articles from the newspaper that dealt with neuroscience issues throughout the semester. Klein then posted the articles on a class web-site and con-

ducted weekly votes among his students to discern the "coolest fun-fact."

At the end of the semester, the winning students were treated with a giant chocolate chip cookie created and decorated to look like a brain and spinal cord by signature Blacksburg donut shop Carol Lee Donuts.

Klein conducted a National Institutes of Health sponsored post-doctoral fellowship in neuroanatomy and neurophysiology at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey following his graduate work at CUNY.

He is currently working with Entomology professor Jeff Bloomquist on a U.S. Army funded project designed to explore a possible relationship between pesticide exposure and the development of Parkinson's Disease-like symptoms.

Funded with a grant from the university's Center for Innovation in Learning, he developed a computer-based learning tool that featured digital representations of a variety of nervous system laboratory specimens. Prior to its development, veterinary students could only inspect the specimens in the lab.

Klein has also headed up the Neurosciences option within the university's emerging Biological Sciences Initiative.

## Veterinary College Professor Culminates 30-Year Tenure as Leader of International Ulcer Conference

Looking out over the podium at the physicians and researchers gathered in a hall at the Thermal Hotel Helia in Budapest, Hungary one evening last October, Virginia Tech Professor Dr. Carl J. Pfeiffer might have allowed himself a tiny nod of silent satisfaction.

The scientists before him had assembled for a major combined international symposium on gastroenterological research: the 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Ulcer Research (ICUR) and the 5<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Cell Injury and Protection of the Gastrointestinal Tract: From Basic Sciences to Clinical Perspectives.

For the next three days, these scientists, representing leading universities from throughout Europe, the United States, Russia, the Middle East and Japan, would share insights and theories in venues ranging from academic lecture halls to social cruises on the Danube River.

For Pfeiffer, Secretary-General of the ICUR Standing Committee, it

***“I think that I could say that this has been one of the biggest contributions of my career,” said Pfeiffer, a professor in the College’s Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology who joined the Tech faculty in 1982. Pfeiffer has recently retired, but continues research in his laboratory.***

must have been a moment of immense satisfaction; 30 years earlier, in 1970, he had convened the very first such conference in Copenhagen, Denmark. Every three years since, in cities like Tokyo, Jerusalem, Berlin, Kyoto, Cologne and others, the scientists have gathered again to share information and forge collaborations that have helped diminish the effects of this



Dr. Carl Pfeiffer (right), professor, Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, has served as Secretary-General of the Standing Committee of the International Conference on Ulcer Research since it was founded 30 years ago. He is pictured with colleagues Chi Hin Cho (left) of the University of Hong Kong’s Department of Pharmacology, and Susumu Okabe (center) of the Department of Applied Pharmacology at the Kyoto College of Pharmacy. Cho helped organized the international ulcer conference in Hong Kong in 1997 and Okabe organized it in Kyoto, Japan in 1994.

troublesome health disorder.

During the congress’ opening ceremonies, Pfeiffer detailed the history of the meeting and the progress that has been made over three decades of ulcer research. While the erosive effects of gastric juices have been observed by physicians and scientists since the 1700’s, he said, very significant advancements have occurred over the past 30 years. Improved understanding of the pathogenesis of ulcers, technological advancements such as the development of fiberoptic endoscopes, and improved medical and surgical techniques have all led to better recognition and treatments for ulcer disease.

“Ulcers are considered a multi-factorial disease,” said Pfeiffer, a former recipient of the American Cancer Society’s prestigious Eleanor Roosevelt International Cancer Fellowship. “Stress is one of the factors,” he continued, acknowledging the widespread misconception in the middle of the century that stress causes ulcers. “But there are a lot of humans under very intense stress that never have ulcer disease.”

Drugs like steroids and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents like

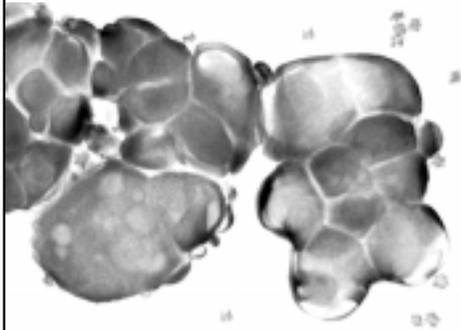
ibuprofen and aspirin are believed to play a role in the development of ulcer disease, he said, as are factors like blood type and heredity. But one of the most illuminating breakthroughs occurred in the late 1980’s when Australian researchers established the connection between a bacterium called *Helicobacter pylori* and ulcers.

This spiral-shaped bacteria found in the gut is believed to play a central role in the development of ulcer disease and may be linked to stomach cancer, according to Pfeiffer. Work is underway on the development of a vaccine that may prevent the *Helicobacter pylori* bacterium from causing ulcers.

“I think that I could say that this has been one of the biggest contributions of my career,” said Pfeiffer, a professor in the college’s Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology who joined the Tech faculty in 1982. Pfeiffer has recently retired, but continues research in his laboratory.

Pfeiffer, who has collaborated frequently with Japanese researchers at the Kyoto University, Tokyo University, and Kobe University, was also involved with scientific experiments on a NASA Space Shuttle mission in the mid 1990’s designed to assess the effects of zero-gravity on embryonic development.

# Cancer Center Under Development At The College



Carcinoma cells

A new center, the Center for Comparative Oncology (CeCO), designed to promote cancer research and to develop expanded options for veterinary clinical care, is currently being developed in the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Tech.

"Science has made a lot of headway in understanding the molecular foundations of cancer, yet it remains our most vexing disease threat," said VMRCVM Dean Peter Eyre. "We believe this center will help us leverage our existing strengths in a way that will accelerate our activities in this critical area of human and animal health."

The goal of the Center is to organize resources and establish alliances in a way that will stimulate increased external cancer research funding and foster improved care for cancer patients in the Veterinary Teaching Hospital, according to Eyre.

Because animals are living longer and with the introduction of improved diagnostic procedures, veterinarians are dealing with cancer in companion animals more frequently now than at any time in the past, according to Dr. John Robertson, a professor in the Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, who is CeCO's first director.

"We now appreciate just how common cancer is in our pets," said Robertson, noting that studies indicate about half of animals older than ten will develop a tumor and have clinical problems associated with it. "Looking at all diseases that affect dogs and cats, about 25% of all pets will die from cancer."

Making progress toward a cure for the many forms of cancer in both humans and animals will be a focus of research and clinical activities. A significant number of researchers on the Virginia Tech campus already are investigating novel methods for the detection of cancer using lasers, quantifying fundamental genetic changes in normal and neoplastic cells, studying effects of diet on the development of breast cancer, and seeking an understanding of how tumors grow new blood vessels, Robertson said.



Several investigators at the College have recently begun a study of malignant lymphoma in dogs, which may develop insights for the human form of the disease, he said. Efforts are currently underway to establish research alliances within the College and University that will stimulate scientific dialogue and pool knowledge resources.

"The major goal we face right now is the identification of new resources to build this program," said Robertson. While funding to support major initiatives in the short term remains unidentified, future goals include expanding

***Because animals are living longer and with the introduction of improved diagnostic procedures, veterinarians are dealing with cancer in companion animals more frequently now than at any time in the past.***

- Dr. John Robertson

clinical facilities and recruiting a team of clinical oncologists to accommodate an expected increase in companion animal cancer patients, Robertson said.

Eyre said that the formation of the Center is a natural step for the College to take in light of Virginia Tech's new goal of achieving Research 30 status by the year 2010 and its emerging initiatives in the biomedical sciences. Those include partnering with the University of Virginia and the Carilion Biomedical Institute and the establishment of a major Bioinformatics Institute in Blacksburg. It will also be critical to establish formal collaborations with the Cancer Centers at the University of Virginia and the Medical College of Virginia, he said.

"We know that it will take five to 10 years for us to realize the full potential of the Center for Comparative Oncology," said Robertson, who spent 13 years in corporate pharmaceutical research prior to joining the faculty in 1989. "We need to identify new financial resources to fund the Center, and attract the people who are dedicated to fighting this horrendous disease. I'm very committed to making this happen."



## Virginia Tech Themed Dog Cart Donated To VMRCVM

By Melissa Samuel, Public Relations Intern

When Coco Walden, a frisky five-year-old Jack Russell Terrier sustained massive head trauma after being hit by a car this past December, things looked pretty grave.

Coco was the victim of an early morning hit and run, while walking with owner Rita Walden to retrieve the morning paper.

"It happened so fast," says Mrs. Walden, of nearby Christiansburg. "It was a nightmare scenerio!"

Two months later, thanks to advanced clinical care from the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, Coco has made a miraculous recovery. And in

***Two and half months later, Coco has made a remarkable recovery. She no longer needs the cart and is able to walk, eat, drink, and even climb stairs on her own. Coco will remain on medication to prevent seizures for the next six months, and her veterinarians expect a full recovery.***

return, Coco's grateful owners have donated a custom-crafted Hokie maroon and orange canine rehab cart to help future patients in the hospital.

After being referred to the college by veterinarians at Town and Country Veterinary Hospital of Christiansburg, Coco had arrived comatose and was non-responsive.

"We gave Mr. and Mrs. Walden a poor prognosis in the beginning," said Dr. Max Banwell, a small animal



Dr. Max Banwell, Coco and Coco's owner Reggie Walden with the custom-crafted Hokie maroon and orange canine rehab cart the Waldens donated to the Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

medicine and surgery intern in the college's Veterinary Teaching Hospital. "But we decided to give it some time."

After emerging from the coma, Coco's condition remained very serious. Clinicians initially thought she was blind and she was extremely disoriented. She was fed through a feeding tube and medically supported for ten days before showing any signs of improvement.

Unsure of Coco's future, Banwell and fourth-year veterinary students Phil Turfle and Anne Steinbach monitored the Jack Russell and began a therapy program. After small improvements with her appetite and some body movements were observed, Banwell and his students decided to begin rehabilitation by placing Coco in a special "dog cart." The cart would help Coco strengthen her leg muscles, and possibly help her regain her ability to walk.

Because the hospital's dog-cart was designed to fit large-breed dogs, Banwell packed the cart with towels so that it didn't completely dwarf the 18-pound Jack Russell. Thanks to the conscientious support of the veterinary staff, Coco began to show improvement. By the middle of January, she was strong enough to go home, but still needed help walking.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Walden and her husband Reggie, had grown concerned about how they were going to be able to continue Coco's rehab when she was

released. Mr. Walden had noticed that the rehab cart the hospital staff had used was a bit oversized for Coco's "petite" frame. So he headed to the home improvement store and purchased PVC piping to build Coco her own miniature rehab cart.

Then, in order to honor the Virginia Tech connection with Coco's miraculous recovery, Mrs. Walden sewed an orange and maroon "pouch" and attached it to the frame her husband made in order to support Coco while she walked. A Virginia Tech logo was added, and the PVC piping was painted maroon for the finishing touches.

Two and half months later, Coco has made a remarkable recovery. She no longer needs the cart and is able to walk, eat, drink, and even climb stairs on her own. Coco will remain on medication to prevent seizures for the next six months, and her veterinarians expect a full recovery.

"Pets are a member of the family and when they are injured, it's a traumatic experience," said Mrs. Walden. "We were hoping for a good outcome, but we did not expect one."

Mrs. Walden said she was very pleased with the care Coco received in the VTH, especially the intensive care unit. Grateful that she has made this recovery, Mr. and Mrs. Walden decided to donate the cart to the teaching hospital.

**John J. Dascanio**, VMD, associate professor, Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences, presented "How to Diagnose and Treat Fungal Endometriosis" at the American Association of Equine Practitioners in San Antonio, Texas. Dascanio also serves as Equine Vice-Chair of the American Board of Veterinary Practitioner's Credentials Committee.

**Dr. Spencer A. Johnston**, associate professor, Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences, made a series of nine presentations on orthopedic surgery, osteoarthritis and pain management at the 2001 North American Veterinary Conference in Orlando, Florida.

**Dr. David S. Lindsay**, associate professor, Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, was guest editor for a special February issue of the *Journal of Veterinary Parasitology* which was devoted to equine protozoal myeloencephalitis (EPM). The journal contained a major review article and 23 original papers covering systematics, *Sarcocystis neurona* isolate characterization, sporocyst induced infections in horses, immunity and diagnosis, in vitro cultivation and drug development systems, epidemiology, molecular biology, and experimental models.

**Dr. X.J. Meng**, assistant professor, Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, has recently served on the review panel for the FY2002 research proposals and chair for the Hepatitis Viruses review section for the FY2000 Annual Reports of the U.S. Department of Defense's Military Infectious Disease Research Programs (MIDRP). Meng recently gave a lecture on hepatitis E virus zoonosis for the Grand Round Lecture Series at the World Health Organization's Collaborating Center for Tropical Diseases, Galveston, TX. Meng was also invited to write a chapter on swine hepatitis E virus and xenotransplantation for the Current Topics in Microbiology and Immunology Series (Springer-Verlag), and was also co-author for another book chapter on Commercial Methods in Clinical Veterinary Microbiology (American Society for Microbiology Press). He served as co-author of six presentations at recent national meetings at the 81st Conference of Research Workers in Animal Diseases, Chicago, IL and 2001 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Swine Practitioners, Nashville, TN.

**Dr. Martha Moon**, professor, Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences, presented lectures on abdominal ultrasonography and veterinary echocardiography at the 3rd annual Congress of the Spanish Association of Veterinary Diagnostic Imaging Specialists (AEVDI) in Murcia, Spain.

**Dr. Jeryl Jones**, associate professor, Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences, presented lectures on veterinary computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging at the 3rd annual Congress of the Spanish Association of Veterinary Diagnostic Imaging Specialists (AEVDI) in Murcia, Spain.

**Dr. Beverly J. Purswell**, professor, Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences, is serving as an alternate to the American Veterinary Medical Association from the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association.

**Dr. Mark M. Smith**, professor, Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences, has been appointed Editor of the Journal of Veterinary Dentistry.

**Dr. Marie Suthers-McCabe**, associate professor, Extension Specialist Human-Companion Animal Interaction, Center for Animal Human Relationships, has been appointed to Board of Directors for Equine Facilitated Mental Health Association-North American Riding for the Handicapped Association and Board of Directors for St. Francis of Assisi Service Dog Foundation. Suthers-McCabe also made a presentation on "Pets and Children in Violence" and served on a panel of speakers during "A Community Response to the Prevention of Violence in Children Workshop" which was presented by the Domestic Violence Prevention Task Force in New Castle, Virginia. She has also been appointed a board member of the Equine Facilitated Mental Health Association, a branch of the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association. Suthers-McCabe also presented "Specialists Update on Animal and Human Development" at the annual in-service training meeting of the Maryland Cooperative Extension Service in Ocean City. She also spoke on "Safe Housing for Victims of Domestic Violence" at a meeting of the Virginia Federation of Humane Societies in Afton. She also presented a lecture called "The Link Between Cruelty to Animals and Inter-Domestic Violence" at Emory & Henry College in Emory. She also presented a talk entitled "Animal Assisted Therapy as an Alternative Therapeutic Intervention for Older Adults" during the Virginia Tech Center for Gerontology's annual Spring Forum. She also presented the keynote address at a "Public Forum on Animal Cruelty Laws" sponsored by WLSL-TV and the Virginia Partnership for Animal Welfare and Support at the Roanoke Higher Education Center.

**Dr. Craig Thatcher**, professor and head, Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences, made a presentation on nutritional support of companion animals at the 101st Penn Annual Veterinary Conference at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Thatcher has also been elected Secretary-Treasurer of the American College of Veterinary Nutrition.

**Dr. Peter Eyre**, dean, served as the keynote speaker during a conference entitled "Leading Curricular Change" which was sponsored by the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association. Eyre discussed ways in which veterinary curricula can be modified in order to provide students with increased training in business and communication skills. Eyre has also served as chair of the university search committee charged with recruiting a new Provost for Virginia Tech.

**Dr. D. Phillip Sponenberg**, professor, Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, presented papers entitled "Conservation of Criollo Livestock in the USA: Philosophy, Triumphs, and Challenges," "Breed Conservation in the United States," and "Conservation of Rare Varieties of Turkeys" at the "V Congreso Iberoamericano de Razas Autóctonas y Criollas" in Havana, Cuba. Sponenberg also presented "Animal Imports, Exports, and Rare Breed Conservation - Opportunity or Hazard?" and "Breed Definition and Maintenance - Myths, Facts, and Opinions" at the Fifth Global Conference on Conservation of Domestic Animal Genetic Resources in Brasilia, Brazil.

**Kevin Gullikers**, second-year resident, was awarded third place in an annual scholarship/grant program sponsored by the IAMS Company and BASF Corporation that honors outstanding research studies or clinical reports which demonstrate the role of clinical nutrition in managing common diseases affecting dogs and cats. Gulliker's program was entitled "Dietary management of a dog with exocrine pancreatic insufficiency (EPI) and a gastrointestinal foreign body."

**Dr. Michael Leib**, professor, Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences, led a laboratory on upper GI system endoscopy and presented lectures on chronic vomiting, chronic diarrhea, acute pancreatitis, and fluid therapy for gastrointestinal disease at the Central Veterinary Conference in

Kansas City, Kansas. Leib also presented lectures on diagnostic approach to chronic diarrhea, acute pancreatitis in dogs, giardia infection, Helicobacter gastritis, fluid therapy for GI diseases, and introduction to GI endoscopy: the technicians role at the Tufts Animal Expo in Boston, Massachusetts.

**Elizabeth Embree, Scott Gustin, and Jared Taylor**. At the meeting listed above, it was also announced that Elizabeth, Scott, and Jared won third place in the Hillis National Public Health Award for their manuscript Healthy Hands, Healthy People. These students worked closely with Dr. Hueston in their manuscript. The reviewers were highly complimentary of the manuscript and have recommended that it be submitted for the Secretary of Health and Human Services Award next year. The manuscript will also be published in an appropriate journal.

**Dr. Jonathan A. Abbott**, assistant professor, Department of Small Animal Clinical Sciences served as editor and a contributor on a book entitled "Small Animal Cardiology Secrets," published by Hanley and Belfus of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

**Dr. Ansar Ahmed**, professor, Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, presented two papers at the 2nd International Conference on Experimental and Clinical Reproductive Immunology at Amsterdam, Netherlands. Those papers were "Estrogenic Hormones alter apoptosis and induce autoimmunity in normal mice" and "Gamma-interferon levels are up-regulated by 17 beta-estradiol and diethylstilbestrol."

Ahmed also served as an editor on a CD book entitled "CD-Canis" published by VetStream of Cambridge, United Kingdom. He also published an article entitled "The immune system as a potential target for environmental estrogens (endocrine disruptors): A new emerging field" in the journal *Toxicology*.

Dr. Ahmed also presented a paper entitled "Estrogens affect patterns of apoptosis and induce autoimmunity in normal mice" at the 5th International Congress of the Immunology of Diabetes Society in Chennai (Madras), India. He was also one of four invited speakers to present lectures at the International Society for Neuroimmunomodulation Symposium presented by the American Association of Immunologists in Orlando, Florida. The title of his lecture was "Animal models of estrogen-induced immunological changes."

Ahmed also presented two lectures at Environmental Biology 2001, a scientific conference which was also held in Orlando. Those presentations were "Estrogenic hormones (17-estradiol and diethylstilbestrol) up-regulate interferon- and nitric oxide" and "Estrogenic Hormones Promote B Cell-Function: Induction Of Autoantibodies In Normal Mice."

**Dr. Bonnie J. Smith**, associate professor, Department of Biomedical Science, has authored a textbook on Canine Anatomy as part of Williams & Wilkins National Veterinary Medical Review Series. Designed to provide an overview of the most salient anatomical concepts, the book is intended to be useful for first-year veterinary students studying anatomy, as well as for review by upper classmen for board exams, etc.

**Dr. John Robertson**, professor, Department of Biomedical Sciences and Pathobiology, presented a lecture "Toxicologic Pathology" at the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research of the Food and Drug Administration. The lecture is one in a series of talks on toxicologic pathology, being presented for a course at the FDA that Robertson organized and for which he is the Course Leader.

Robertson also was nominated to serve on the Board of Directors of the Foundation for Comparative and Conservation Biology (FCCB). The primary goal of the FCCB is primate conservation and research. Plans are currently being developed for a primate Biopark in southwestern Virginia, where observational studies of geriatric great apes can be conducted.

Robertson has also been named Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Board of New River Pharmaceuticals.



Lynn Young  
Alumni Coordinator

# ALUMNI NEWS

## College of Veterinary Medicine Alumni Events

The College of Veterinary Medicine held their annual alumni reunion on the weekend of September 22-23. Around 30 alumni and friends enjoyed presentations from their peers as well as a catered cookout dinner at the Hand-In-Hand Playground in Blacksburg. Future alumni reunions will be held in the NOVA/DC area in odd years and on the Blacksburg campus in even years. An additional alumni reunion was held in conjunction with the DC Academy on March 1-3 at the Elks Lodge in Fairfax. More than 50 alumni, their families, staff and friends enjoyed continuing education sessions as well as social festivities which included live music.

The Alumni Society board meeting held its first meeting on September 23. President Julie Holland '89 appointed Bill Tyrrell, President-Elect and Elizabeth Santini, Secretary/Treasurer. Holland recognized the founding Adjunct Alumni Society Members: Jerome Beller, John Brooks, Bob Brown, Mark Finkler, Charles Hickey, Sashi Mohanty, Glenn Noffsinger, Arch Park, Mike Radabaugh, Steve Rogers, Dick Streett, and Bill Truban. The founding adjunct Alumni Society Members are individual veterinarians whose help in developing the VMRCVM has been invaluable.

A new VMRCVM alumni event was held on October 14 at the Morven Park Steeplechase Races in Leesburg; over 25 alumni enjoyed the festivities. The last alumni reception was held at the North American Veterinary Conference on January 14 from 8-10 p.m. in Orlando; over 50 alumni and friends attended. Please see schedule of alumni events below.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Lynn Young, College Alumni Coordinator, at [youngl@vt.edu](mailto:youngl@vt.edu) or 540-231-5809.



More than 25 alumni turned out to enjoy a wonderful October afternoon at the Morven Park Steeplechase Races in Leesburg. It was the first such event for the VMRCVM Alumni Society.

## Meet Our Alumni Society Board of Directors



**Michael D. Erskine '88**

Mike is the owner of an equine-exclusive private practice, and a member of Damascus Equine Associates. He is President of the Maryland

VMA, a member of the Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center Council, an Executive Board member of the Maryland Association of Equine Practitioners, an Executive Board member of the Maryland Horse Council, and a Diplomate, Equine Practice, of the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners. In addition, he is a member of the American Association of Equine Practitioners, the AVMA, the Association for Equine Sports Medicine, and the Howard County Iron Bridge Hounds.

Mike resides in Woodbine, MD with his wife Kathleen and daughter Olivia.



**Richard (Chip) L. Godine, Jr. '87**

Chip currently works at the Animal Hospital of Waynesboro. He has a special interest in orthopedics and ultrasonography.

Chip is active in the VVMA, the Gideons, and his local church. He enjoys running, golf, and spending time with his family in the mountains and rivers of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Chip lives in Charlottesville, Virginia with his wife Caroline Kohlstadt Godine (VMRCVM '87), who home schools their four children and does occasional relief work.



**Douglas S. Graham '98**

Doug is a companion animal veterinarian now practicing at West Frederick Veterinary Hospital. He is active in helping "budding veterinarians" find their way by serving as a mentor at VMRCVM and with the Veterinary Science Club at the University of Maryland.

Doug is a resident of Urbana, MD.



**Julie Holland '89**

Julie currently lives just north of the Mason-Dixon line, and practices part-time at two small animal hospitals in Maryland.

She also does some large animal work, with a special interest in small ruminants and camelids. Julie has three children, Ross, Lucy, and Quinn, all in elementary school. Coordinating her class with an annual newsletter led her to the position of Alumni Society president, an interesting and challenging position.



**Matthew E. Iager '96**

Matt was active in the Food Animal Practitioners' Club, Alpha Psi Fraternity, and the Bovine Palpation Team. He was awarded the Robert L. Hogsett Senior Year Award, and was a member of Phi Sigma Honor Society. Prior to attending the VMRCVM, he received a BS in Dairy

Science from the Delaware Valley College of Science and Agriculture in 1993.

Currently, Matt is a partner with Mid-Maryland Dairy Veterinarians in Hagerstown, Maryland; the practice is an exclusive dairy cattle and embryo transfer practice. He is licensed and accredited in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania; He is a member of the American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Association of Bovine Practitioners, the National Mastitis Council, the Maryland Holstein Association, the Washington County Holstein Club, the Holstein Association USA, the Maryland Farm Bureau, the Howard County 4-H All-Stars, the Purebred Dairy Cattle Association's Approved Judges List, the National Dairy Shrine, the Hagerstown Jaycees, and Trinity Lutheran Church.

Matt resides in Hagerstown with his wife Laura. He enjoys judging dairy cattle and auctioneering.



**Elizabeth Naylor Kirby '84**

After graduation, Elizabeth worked in Troutville for one year in a mixed animal practice. She then moved to Blacksburg to work at Companion Animal Clinic, where she became a partner in 1999. She is on the Board of Directors of the Virginia Academy of Small Animal Medicine.

Elizabeth resides on a farm in McCoy, Virginia with her husband Tom. She enjoys gardening, riding, and breeding horses.



**Elizabeth Santini '2000**

Elizabeth was SCAVMA President, active in the Food Animal and Equine Practitioners' Clubs and was a member of the Alpha Psi Veterinary Fraternity. She is currently an associate veterinarian at Big Valley Animal Hospital, a mixed practice in central Pennsylvania.



**Annette Slowinski '86**

Annette served in the Peace Corps in Nepal for three years as a veterinarian. Upon returning to the United States, she worked in mixed practices

in Gettysburg, PA, Buckeystown, MD, and Northern Virginia. Annette is a past president of the Western Maryland Veterinary Medical Association, and she received the Outstanding Young Alumna Award from the VMRCVM in 1997. She supports the US Pony Club by teaching 6-8 sessions for youth annually, and she taught a wet lab on anatomy at their national meeting in Baltimore in Spring 2000.

Annette currently practices mostly small animal medicine in Potomac, MD, and is completing her Master's in Public Health through Johns Hopkins University.



**William (Bill) D. Tyrrell, Jr. '92**

Upon graduation from vet school, Bill joined a small animal private practice in Northern Virginia. While in private practice, Bill developed a special interest in cardiology. In 1996, he obtained a residency in cardiology at the Angell Memorial Animal Hospital in Boston. He finished his ACVIM residency credentials with Chesapeake Veterinary Cardiology Associates. Bill passed his ACVIM cardiology certifying examination in 1999 and is now a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine in the subspecialty of cardiology. He is now a full-time cardiologist and co-owner of Chesapeake Veterinary Cardiology Associates with offices in Annapolis, Springfield, Baltimore, Leesburg, and Rockville.

**Schurig:** continued from page 1 in developing vaccines against bovine brucellosis, a zoonotic disease that causes reproductive problems in cattle and undulant fever in humans.

"I am honored and energized by this appointment," said Schurig, "President Steger's goal of establishing Virginia Tech as a top 30 research institution by the end of the decade is a great challenge to us all. But we have a very talented faculty and many opportunities to explore. I am confident we will do our part."

Schurig earned his DVM degree in 1970 from the University of Chile. After earning M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in immunology from Cornell University, Schurig spent two years working in the Department of Veterinary Science at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He then joined the Virginia Tech faculty and

Bill is an officer in the Northern Virginia Veterinary Medical Association, and a vestry member of his church. He also served a 6-year term on the Virginia Tech Alumni Association Board of Directors. In his spare time, he enjoys working in the yard and biking.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

### May 11

VMRCVM Graduation

### May 20

2nd Annual Alumni Reception  
College Park, MD

### June 21-24

VVMA, Virginia Beach;  
<http://www.vvma.org>

### June 24-27

MVMA, Ocean City, MD;  
<http://www.mdvma.org>

### July 14-18

AVMA, Boston;  
<http://www.avma.org>

### August 25

Mentoring Workshop, Blacksburg

### October 13

Morven Park Steeplechase Races,  
Leesburg

### October 14

10<sup>th</sup> Annual Thoroughbred Yearling  
Auction and Alumni Reception,  
Middleburg

### November 25-28

American Association Equine  
Practitioners, San Diego;  
<http://www.aaep.org>

began a research career in brucellosis that culminated with the invention of the RB-51 vaccine. That vaccine has become the global "gold standard" in bovine brucellosis control and played a major role in the virtual eradication of the cattle disease in the United States.

Schurig has also been working on an almost \$500,000 project with the United States Army Medical Research and Development Command to develop a vaccine which will protect people from brucellosis.

"We are delighted that Dr. Schurig has stepped forward to lead this importance enterprise," said VMRCVM Dean Peter Eyre. "Our college has made a commitment to intensify its research and graduate studies programs during the decade ahead, and I think he will be a superior

Please see **Schurig:** page 20

# DEVELOPMENT



## Development Report from the Blacksburg Campus

by E. Frank Pearsall, II, DVM '84

### “Two Great Friends”

As we look at the College; where we have come from, where we are after 20 years, and where we are going, it is important to consider how we have gotten here. That will tell us a great deal about how we can expect to move to the next tier of excellence.

President Steger has thrown out the challenge to be a top 30 research university by 2010, which means we will have to move from mid-pack, a pretty good place to be as the second youngest, to a top ten veterinary college. Obviously in keeping with Va Tech's research focus, much of the sought growth will occur in the research arena through increased partnerships with industry and government. And this comes at a perfect time in the life of the college, so we embrace that challenge gratefully.

But increased research alone will not move us into the top ranks we seek. Excellence of that caliber relates also to the heart of the institution. And that comes back to why we are here and why so many have given so much of their time, energy, and resources, and yes, their love, to partner with us on our journey. Perhaps it would be instructive to look at two such benefactors, both attracted by the excellence they already saw.

James M. Stevens '52 and his wife, Eleonore E. Stevens, are long time Hokies and animal lovers. They got to know more about our College when their daughter, Susan Stevens, a Tech PhD student in Curriculum and Instruction, visited during an Open House and shared with her parents her enthusiasm about what she saw. For years her parents had cared for family pets, neighborhood animals, and visiting strays. More recently, as a result of the relationship which developed from Susan's comments, they created and steadily added to a named scholarship endowment for veterinary students. Now they have created a named “Animal Assistance” endowment with an initial gift of \$105,000. It's purpose is simple; to be sure pets that can be helped are helped rather than be euthanized due solely to financial constraints. This fund will not be able to solve all such problems, but it will go a very long way to addressing them. Accordingly it will be a huge benefit to animals, owners, and the clinicians, staff, and students that serve them. We thank them sincerely.

Another long time Hokie and animal lover, Charles J. Gose, Jr. '51, became aware of the College when his Jack Russell Terrier, Domino, was in the Teaching Hospital. Charlie was so impressed with the quality of care and compassion extended to both his dog and himself, that he decided to limit an existing university-wide scholarship established through his estate plans to students at the college of veterinary medicine. Charlie and Domino, later succeeded by Ditto, obviously another Jack Russell, became close friends of the College and ambassadors to the entire Brandon Oaks community in Roanoke where they lived. To our great sorrow, Charlie recently passed away, but his love of animals will live on through the countless veterinarians his scholarship will help to educate. And Ditto is adjusting nicely to his new home, having been given a great start in life by a great owner.

With friends like these, is it any wonder great things are happening at the College? Is there any question that we can move up to the next tier of excellence? Not in my mind. Thank you all.



This cast relief of Cecil Maxson assures that the long-time member of the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors and special friend of the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine will be able to look after the university's beautiful campus in perpetuity. Maxson was appointed by three different governors to serve three four-year terms on the board. For eight of those years, he presided over the Board of Visitors' Building & Grounds Committee. During that tenure, he oversaw the well-being of a physical plant that includes over 100 major buildings on 2600 acres. Mr. Maxson was said to approach that task with such attention to detail that work crews decided to surprise him by commissioning and installing the relief. Maxson was a member of the VMRCVM's Campaign Leadership Committee and has also been inducted into the college's John N. Dalton Society. He was awarded the university's most prestigious honor, the Ruffner Medal, as well as an Alumni Distinguished Service Award, during Virginia Tech's recent Founder's Day Ceremony.



## Dear Thagy...

*Thagy (short for Pythagoras – his Mom is a Math Professor) lives with Steve Clark, Director of Planned Giving at Virginia Tech. In addition to completing basic obedience class, he has acquired some experience in various estate planning issues.*

Dear Thagy,

I just read something about “gift taxes.” I didn’t realize that I could be taxed on making gifts to my family. Will I have to pay taxes just to give my nephew a birthday present?

Barking in Bethesda

*Dear Barking,*

*No, unless you are very generous, you won’t have to pay taxes on your nephew’s birthday present.*

*Gift taxes are the lifetime version of estate taxes. There is a tax on transferring assets above a certain amount, whether you do so during your lifetime (gift tax) or afterwards (estate tax). The current threshold is \$675,000, rising to \$1,000,000 in 2006 under current law. The exception is a transfer to a spouse or to a charity such as the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine – except for certain special spousal situations, gift taxes and estate taxes effectively don’t apply to either.*

*Annual gifts to individuals under \$10,000 per year don’t count against this total. Therefore, you can give up to \$10,000 every year to as many people as you like without anything counting against your annual lifetime total. (That’s a lot of bicycles!) You also can pay an individual’s educational or health care expenses without it counting, provided you pay the service provider directly.*

Thagy.

Dear Thagy,

I have heard that I could give some stock to the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine and actually increase the income I receive from it. Is this possible?

Howling in Harrisonburg

*Dear Howling,*

*Sure! “Life income gifts” allow a person to continue to receive income from their gift, typically for the rest of their life. It’s also easy to make sure a spouse or other loved one continues to receive the income if they survive you.*

*Life income gifts can be funded with cash, stock, real estate, or other assets. Because of how they work, it can be possible for a person to receive more income from the life income gift than they did from their cash, stock, or real estate—sometimes two or three times more! There are several different types: charitable remainder trusts, gift annuities, pooled income fund. The main differences are in how they pay income to you.*

*In addition to providing income, they also can help with income taxes and estate taxes. To learn more about how you can make such a gift, call Dr. Frank Pearsall at the College – 540-231-4259.*

*Well, I’ve got to go chase my little brother Trig. Talk to you next time. Arf!*

Thagy.

## Spotlight Increases for Donor Recognition

Effective April 1, 2001, the university will be using new eligibility criteria to elevate its highest donors to a newly established level of donor recognition. Those individuals who have made lifetime contributions of \$1 million or more – contributions that have been received rather than pledged – will become charter members in 2002 of the President’s Circle, a new level of the Ut Prosim Society, the university’s most prestigious donor recognition organization.

“We believe this new level will appropriately recognize a very special, select group of individuals,” said Betsy Flanagan, vice president of

development and university relations, in announcing the creation of the President’s Circle at this year’s Ut Prosim induction dinner. “Their outstanding philanthropy has been of immeasurable benefit to Virginia Tech, its students, its faculty, and its programs”

New eligibility criteria will also apply to the society’s other three giving levels. At the Benefactor level, the giving threshold will rise from \$50,000 to \$100,000, with donors qualifying with lifetime giving of \$100,000 to \$249,999. The Senior Benefactor level will increase from \$200,000 to \$250,000, with a donor’s lifetime giving totaling between \$250,000 and \$499,999. And at the Distinguished Benefactor level, a

donor’s lifetime contributions must add up to \$500,000 to \$999,999. Again, contributions, including matching gifts, must be received by the university in order for donors to qualify for membership at all levels.

As with the President’s Circle, these new eligibility criteria are effective on April 1, 2001, with the exception of the Benefactor level, where donors have until December 31, 2001 to qualify for Ut Prosim membership in 2002 under the previous criteria of giving or pledging \$50,000 within a five-year period.

The Ut Prosim Society currently has a membership of 653 individuals.

# NEWS FROM THE LEESBURG CAMPUS

## Fregin Appointed to Horse Industry Board

Dr. G. Frederick Fregin, the Jean Ellen duPont Shehan Professor and Director of the Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center, has been appointed to a three-year term on the Commonwealth of Virginia's "Virginia Horse Industry Board."

The Virginia Horse Industry Board was established in 1994 as the result of legislation and a statewide referendum. The 12-member board is responsible for the promotion and economic

development of the Virginia Horse Industry.

Activities of the Board are supported by the Virginia Horse Industry Promotion and Development Fund. Monies in the fund are generated by an assessment of \$1.50 on each Equine Infectious Anemia (Coggins) sample in the state.

In a letter of appointment, Virginia Lieutenant Governor John H. Hager said Fregin's "experience, personal integrity and moral character have made you a clear choice for this post."



## Computed Radiography Online at EMC



Computed radiography makes it possible to discern obscure orthopedic problems like these OCD lesions in this equine carpus.

Non-invasive imaging capabilities at the Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center have been significantly enhanced with the acquisition and installation of an advanced computed radiography system. The Leesburg equine hospital becomes one of just a few veterinary referral centers in the country to offer the service, available to clients since November 2000.

"This computed radiography system raises the standard of medical imaging at the Equine Medical Center," said Dr. Nat White, Assistant Director for Clinical Services. "The new technology not only provides optimal diagnostic service for horse owners, but it also expands our opportunities for teaching and research."

The new Fuji radiography system produces a highly-refined digital image which is useful for evaluating both orthopedic and soft-tissue problems. The image can be digitally enlarged and/or enhanced to reveal problems that cannot be identified using less advanced imaging technologies like standard film x-rays and xeroradiography. Digital images from computed radiography can be stored in a variety of media and formats, are easily archived with patient records, and can be transmitted electronically throughout the world on the internet, White said.

Recent cases demonstrate the usefulness of this technology. One horse presented with pain in one of his cannon bones. Routine radiographs appeared normal whereas manipulation of the digital image revealed a stress fracture coursing vertically in the bone. The ability to find the fracture allowed appropriate treatment and likely prevented having the horse return to training too rapidly. Computed radiography has also aided clinicians in finding previously difficult-to-see osteochondritis dissecans (OCD) lesions. Early diagnosis is the key to managing OCD both by conservative and surgical management.

The new computed radiography service was made possible thanks to the generous support of friends of the EMC.

## EMC's Tuesday Talks Series Draws Equine Enthusiasts and Professionals

The Equine Medical Center hosted four "Tuesday Talk" sessions in its community education series this winter.

At each monthly session, horse owners, trainers, managers and veterinarians are invited to gather at the Leesburg campus for faculty lectures on relevant topics in veterinary medicine. Tuesday Talk presentations are made by faculty members from the Leesburg and Blacksburg campuses. This informal lecture series began in 1995 in response to the equine community's request for information on equine health and medical issues.

Topics in the 2000-2001 season included "Assisted Reproductive Technologies: Where Do We Go From Here?" by Dr. Jim Bowen, "First Aid and Treatment of Fractures: We Don't Shoot Horses Anymore" by Dr. Nat White, "Update on Neurologic Diseases: EPM and West Nile Virus" by Dr. Martin Furr, and "Treadmill Diagnostics" by Dr. Fred Fregin.

Suggestions for topics are encouraged from those who attend the lectures.

### Names in the News

**Dr. Nathaniel A. White II**, the Theodora Ayer Randolph Professor of Surgery at the Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center, authored "Handbook of Equine Colic" which was published by Butterworth-Heinemann of Oxford.

## EMC welcomes Davenport and Sykes

The Equine Medical Center's faculty and staff welcomed two additional doctors early in 2001.

**Celia L.M. Davenport, MA, Vet MB, MRCVS** joined the Equine Medical Center staff in February as a clinical instructor in emergency care and equine surgery. Dr. Davenport received her Bachelor of Arts from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge University, UK in 1993. She received her Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine, Cambridge University Veterinary School, UK in 1996. She completed her postgraduate large animal surgery internship in 1997 and large animal

surgery residency in 2000, both from University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, New Bolton Center.

**Benjamin W. Sykes, B.V.M.S., B.Sc.** began work at the EMC in January as a resident/graduate student in equine medicine. Dr. Sykes received his BSc in 1995 and Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery degree in 1997, both at Murdoch University School of Clinical Science, Western Australia. Dr. Sykes completed an internship in equine medicine and surgery at Ranwick Equine Centre, Sydney, Australia, in 1998. From February 1999 to mid-2000, he was employed by Murdoch University as an instructor in equine medicine and surgery; subsequently he went to a private practice for the breeding season.

## EMC Development Update

Catherine Larmore, Director of Development

The Equine Medical Center Council under the able leadership of Mrs. Shelley Duke is developing new priorities and goals to enhance veterinary service, research, and teaching at the Leesburg campus in the coming year.

Among the goals identified by the Council as critical for the EMC in 2000, completed projects included the purchase of cutting edge computed radiography and the design of a Level 2 Bio-Containment Isolation Unit, required for renewal of AVMA accreditation for the College. Construction on the latter project will commence after renovations of the Treadmill Facility are complete for its mid-summer 2001 opening.

Volunteers also play an important role at the Center, particularly as the foaling season begins with winter turning into Spring. The foal watch program for seriously ill neonates requiring intensive hospitalization and other helpful volunteer efforts are coordinated by Maria Wakefield. The Equine Medical Center is indebted for the tender care these volunteers so freely give each patient.

# NEWS FROM THE MARYLAND CAMPUS

## Disease Detective Addresses Mad Cow Disease by Pamela Townshend -UMCP

Dr. Will Hueston, associate dean for the Maryland-Virginia Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, is always busy. Between teaching a graduate course in College Park and two DVM courses in Blacksburg and overseeing day-to-day operations at the college's Avrum Gudelsky Center at the University of Maryland, he doesn't have much free time to call his own. And for the past several months his schedule has become even more hectic, thanks to events taking place thousands of miles away.

With the recent outbreak of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) – dubbed “mad cow disease” by the British press – in cattle in France, Portugal, Belgium, Germany, and Italy, Hueston has been called upon to comment on the disease by such American news media as CNN and U.S. News & World Report. And while most of us were preparing to celebrate the winter holiday season, he was flying to Geneva to participate in a meeting on BSE sponsored by the World Health Organization.

Hueston, a veterinary epidemiologist who describes himself as a “disease detective,” is no stranger to this degenerative neurological disease. Following its original appearance in Britain in 1986, he and colleagues at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National

Animal Health Monitoring System evaluated the potential risk of a BSE epidemic in the United States. Their report — the first national risk assessment of BSE anywhere — was published in 1990. And while the authors concluded that the United States' animal production and processing system is

sufficiently different from that of Britain to make a similar epidemic highly unlikely, their analysis set the stage for additional controls that reduced the risk even further.

In 1991 Hueston spent six months in England as part of the British

Please see **Disease:** page 18



Faculty members and information technology professionals from both the Blacksburg and College Park campuses recently met to go over a number of enhancements that have improved teleconferencing capabilities between the two campuses. From left, Dr. Peter Shires, Dr. Ted Mashima, Dr. Will Hueston, Dr. Jeff Wilcke, and Mr. Brad Taleg are pictured in the library's student computer center. Upstairs in the Richard B. Talbot Educational Resources Center, an Interactive Learning Center has been constructed which provides dedicated facilities for real-time inter-campus conferencing.

**Disease:** continued from page 17  
government's epidemiology unit investigating BSE. Two years later he became the first non-Briton on their Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee. Their charge: to provide scientific information and guidance to UK government officials struggling to develop policies in the face of a rapidly escalating public health scare with economic and political overtones.

"Suspicions had arisen that BSE might be linked to a similar brain-wasting illness in humans," says Hueston, "Beef sales plummeted and consumer confidence was shaken."

Following intense medical and scientific investigations, the British government publicly acknowledged a strong link between BSE and a new form of a human neurological malady called Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in March 1996. The media spotlight focused on Hueston once more. As the U. S. spokesperson on BSE, he appeared on or was quoted by Reuters, Dateline, the McNeil Leher Report, CBS, NBC – even the Oprah Winfrey Show. "There was, and continues to be, intense public concern regarding this disease, despite its limited impact on human populations," Hueston says. "From 1996 to early December 2000, some 90 cases of new variant (nv) Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease were reported, compared to 180,000 cases of lung cancer that appear annually in the United States alone. The difference is that some people survive lung cancer, while nobody survives (nv) Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease."

Scientific data indicate that BSE is spread to humans through consumption of contaminated beef products – primarily brain and nerve tissue. Neither muscle meat nor high-quality ground beef are a problem, according to Hueston. "We've never been able to identify any BSE infectivity in muscle meat, and only one odd finding in bone marrow," he explains. That means that even residents of – and travelers to – UK and Europe can enjoy some filet mignon, New York strip steaks, or high-quality hamburgers. Less safe are sausages and other processed meat products, which are more likely to include brain or nerve tissue. "Basically, the less identifiable it is as meat, the less comfortable I am," says Hueston.

Although the origins of BSE are still unclear, many researchers believe that cattle developed BSE after eating rendered meat and bone meal produced

from sheep infected with scrapie, another "transmissible spongiform encephalopathy," which has been around for more than 250 years without causing illness to humans or other animals. The problem was exacerbated when animal protein meal derived from infected cattle was then added to animal feed.

Given these facts, the British government has taken drastic measures to eradicate BSE, slaughtering nearly 5 million cattle, forbidding cows over 30 months old from entering the food chain, and prohibiting the use of rendered meat and bone meal in feed for cattle, sheep, and goats. Unfortunately, Hueston thinks that the battle against BSE in Europe is just beginning and that millions more cows will have to be destroyed. But he also thinks efforts there will ultimately be successful, and that BSE will disappear in the United Kingdom and the rest of Europe.

He also is quite confident that – given the scientific surveillance and government regulations currently in place – the United States will keep BSE at bay, although he warns against complacency. "There is a tendency to think that 'if it isn't broken, don't fix it,'" he explains. The current situation in Europe demonstrates the fallacy of that attitude. You always have to prepare for the worst, or else you can be caught off guard."

Hueston's biggest concern involves the rest of the world. Given the global nature of the food trade, he believes it's likely that foods made with contaminated beef have already been distributed to many countries around the world, many of which lack the resources necessary for adequate surveillance and prevention programs. "There are other countries with BSE," he emphasizes. "I'd stake my career on it."

## Center for Government and Corporate Veterinary Medicine Responding to Animal Disease/ Public Health Threats

The Center for Government and Corporate Veterinary Medicine has recently organized and hosted two conferences focused on major animal disease problems that possess significant implications for human health and well-being.

The center has presented the conferences in an effort to disseminate information and create synergies between academic, government and private practitioners, according to Dr. Bettye K. Walters, CGCVM Associate Director.

Last Fall, the center presented a "West Nile Virus" seminar which featured experts from organizations like the United States Department of Agriculture, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the VMRCVM discuss diagnostic and containment strategies, public health implications, and other matters.

More recently, a "Foot and Mouth Disease Seminar" was held on the University of Maryland campus.

That event featured presentations from Dr. Charles Mebus, Former Director, Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratories at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center in New York; Dr. Roger Olson, State Veterinarian, Maryland Department of Agriculture; Dr. Dave Vogt, Area Veterinarian in Charge, USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; Dr. Tracy DuVernoy, Center for Veterinary Public Health, State Department of Health And Mental Hygiene; and Mr. Don Vandry, Director of Communications, Maryland Department of Agriculture.

## Names in the News from the Maryland Campus

**Dr. Wendy Fineblum** made two presentations at the annual Society for Risk Analysis Meeting. She also made a presentation at the Risk Assessment Consortium/ Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition public meeting on evaluating data for use in risk assessment. Fineblum also spoke at the FDA Leadership Team Meeting. Fineblum also recently organized a meeting entitled: Food Safety Risk Analysis: Creating an Internet Community." The goal of the meeting was to increase interaction and collaboration among the various groups who have, or are planning to provide resources on the Internet for food safety risk analysts.

**Dr. Robert Heckert** received a National Food Safety Initiative grant from the USDA. This three year grant for \$596,000 is targeted at exploring Salmonella immunobiology. The proposal is a collaborative effort between the University of Maryland, the USDA Agriculture Research Services and the Food and Drug Administration. The study will investigate various

methods of preventing Salmonella colonization and eliminating Salmonella persistence.

Two Maryland campus faculty members have been awarded funds from the University of Maryland Distance Learning Development Fund. **Dr. Nathaniel Tablante** received \$16,000 to support development of a web-based biosecurity training program for the poultry industry. **Dr. Ted Mashima** received \$12,500 to support development of a course for veterinary students at VMRCVM entitled "Problem-solving in Ecosystem Health."

An article authored by emeriti professor **Dr. E. T. Mallinson** and **Dr. N. L. Tablante**, assistant professor, has been published in the Journal of Applied Poultry Research. "A Management Technique to Identify Prime Locations of *Salmonella* Contamination on Broiler and Layer Farms" concerns efforts that can be taken at production facilities to minimize the risks of *Salmonella* contamination.



AVMA Council on Education site visitation team; from left, Drs. Deborah T. Kochevar, Fred Everhart, Donald G. Simmons, Michael M. Pullen, Keith E. Sterner, Gregory S. Hammer, VMRCVM Dean Peter Eyre (not COE member), Charles E. Short, James Reid, and Sylvie Latour.

## Accreditation: continued from page 1

of an isolation facility at the college's Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center in Leesburg, Virginia and mandated that a report documenting the conclusion of that project must be filed with the AVMA within the next two years.

Planning documents concerning the \$1 million facility are almost complete, funds to support the construction have been identified, and the isolation unit will be built within a year, according to Eyre.

This was the first time the AVMA

has conducted an accreditation visit on the basis of programmatic outcomes assessment, Eyre said, and COE officials have indicated that the successful experience with the VMRCVM process may lead to a transformation of the process for other colleges of veterinary medicine in the future.

The AVMA's Council on Education typically evaluates each of the 32 colleges of veterinary medicine in the United States and Canada on the basis of 11 "essentials." Those essentials include organization,

finances, facilities and equipment, clinical resources, library and learning resources, students and alumni, admissions, faculty and staff, curriculum, continuing education and extension, and research and graduate studies.

As opposed to traditional accreditation processes that measure various institutional criteria against established norms, the outcomes assessment process provides a more individualized assessment that measures various performance parameters against stated goals and objectives.

In order to develop the data required to evaluate the college's performance in each of the "essential" areas, the college conducted extensive surveys with faculty, staff, students, prospective students, professional and graduate alumni, employers of veterinarians trained in the VMRCVM, and veterinarians who refer cases to the Blacksburg Veterinary Teaching Hospital and the Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center.

A 20-member committee of faculty, staff and students worked from April 1999 through October 2000 on the outcomes assessment self-study, which produced an almost 300-page document which was then forwarded to the AVMA Council on Education for review prior to their site visit.

## FMD Risks: continued from page 1

animal facility for at least five days following their return to the United States.

The measures were outlined in a memorandum authored by Dr. Peter Eyre, dean of the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine (VMRCVM); Dr. Andy Swiger, dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS); and Dr. Greg Brown dean of the College of Natural Resources (CNR), which was circulated widely to students, staff and faculty around the state.

The university has decided to take the action because of the special threat posed by the university's many international activities. Faculty, staff, and students are frequently engaged in teaching, research and service activities in countries around the world. Also, international visitors often travel to Virginia to work with university personnel in Blacksburg and in university-operated facilities around the state.

"Everyone who is engaged in international travel should recognize their individual responsibility to do whatever is necessary to ensure the integrity of the biosecurity measures that the United

States Department of Agriculture has taken to protect our nation," said Eyre.

University personnel engaged in international travel are required to observe the new regulations, and all faculty, staff and students are being asked to take steps to make sure that university visitors observe the biosecurity protocols.

The action has been taken to manage risks associated with the devastating outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease currently centered in Great Britain, where over 1,000 cases have been identified and more than two million animals have been slaughtered as part of eradication efforts.

FMD is a highly contagious viral disease that infects domestic and wild cloven-hoofed animals like cattle, sheep, swine, deer, elk and others. FMD causes its victims to develop blisters on their feet and in their mouths that eventually rupture into painful, raw sores. Although the disease is generally not fatal to adult animals and does not present a health risk for people, it causes major agricultural productivity problems and is extremely contagious.

Most outbreaks are controlled by establishing virus-free perimeters around

confirmed outbreaks and destroying all animals that could be infected. FMD is so contagious that virus particles can be transported intercontinentally on a pedestrian's clothing or a truck or an airplane before infecting an animal host in another country several weeks later.

The United States has been FMD free since the last epidemic was contained in California in 1929. But because of the economic implications associated with an outbreak, the USDA has elevated surveillance and biosecurity measures at our nation's borders and ports of entry.

"It is difficult to overestimate the gravity of the risk that is presented to the United States and the rest of the world by the current epidemic on the European continent," said Eyre.

"As a major American land-grant university with historic programs in agriculture, natural resources and veterinary medicine, we feel a profound sense of concern for the misfortunes of affected farm families and the difficulty of the challenge which is facing government officials who are struggling to contain this great animal disease epidemic," he added.

**Schurig:** continued from page 15

leader for this effort. His scientific credentials are impeccable, he understands the evolving role of university research in business and economic development, and he is widely respected throughout the greater academic community.”

Schurig currently leads the college’s international programs and is director of the college’s World Health Organization Collaborating Center for Veterinary Education in Management and Public Health. He served as head of the college’s Department of Veterinary Biosciences in the mid-1980’s before helping create and assuming leadership for the CMMID in 1987. During his seven-year tenure as head of that center, it established itself as a major research and development center focused on creating vaccines and improved diagnostic tests for several economically significant animal diseases.

Schurig is a member of numerous professional societies, including the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Association of Veterinary Immunologists, and the American Society for Microbiology. He has received several major teaching and research awards, including the 1986 Beecham Award for Research Excellence.



Students conducting fourth-year clerkships through the college’s Center for Government and Corporate Veterinary Medicine can expect to obtain interesting experience in some of the more unusual areas of veterinary medicine. But when fourth year veterinary student Megan Harris (with clipboard) signed up last summer to do a clerkship at the National Zoo in Washington, she never dreamed she would be part of a team evaluating Mei Xiang and Tian Tian, the new breeding pair of Panda bears the zoo recently obtained from China. Here, National Zoo Director and VMRCVM adjunct professor Dr. Lucy Spelman examines Tian Tian while Megan monitors and documents the bear’s vital signs. Spelman flew to China on November 27, 2000 to retrieve the bears and returned with them on December 6. This was the animals’ first physical examination.



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