

r u m e n a t i o n s

Issue 4 November 2001

The introduction of Veterinary Conservation Biology into Year 2 of the undergraduate curriculum is good news for the eighty percent plus of 2001 first year veterinary science students who nominated the treatment and care of wildlife as a major field of interest.

Led by Associate Professor Tony English, the undergraduate program provides an introduction to the roles of veterinarians concerned with the conservation of biodiversity and includes wildlife health, the conservation of endangered species, sustainable farming practices and the sustainable utilisation of wildlife.

Staff from Taronga Zoo also contribute to this totally new unit of study, and the students have an opportunity to visit the zoo as part of their studies. The Taronga tours begin in the zoo's Education Centre with an introduction by Dr Karrie Rose, Veterinary Pathologist, Veterinary Quarantine Centre – the veterinary section of Taronga Zoo.

Dr Rose, a Canadian with wildlife medicine experience now resident in Australia, told students the rapidly increasing competition to become a zoo veterinarian means it's crucial to first spend time in practice – preferably mixed general practice – to gain basic skills in diagnostics, medicine, surgery and anaesthesia before they can expect to specialise in wildlife medicine.

Dr Rose said the role of the veterinarians at Taronga Zoo is broad and covers wildlife disease and health (fungal skin diseases in frogs), exotic disease surveillance, animal management and welfare (shooting of flying foxes by fruit growers), human impact studies (fairy penguins at Manly), and pathology services which assist vets in practice. The zoo also manages the Australian Registry of Wildlife Health, an initiative established by the late Dr Bill Hartley in 1985 which now comprises 13,000 individual case studies.

Dr Larry Vogelneust, Senior Zoo Veterinarian, and veterinarian, Julie Barnes introduced the students to behind-the-scenes reptile and macropod physiology, disease and on-site

management, and led a tour of the Wollomi Exhibit, the latest in the zoo. This exciting and innovative exhibit combines, in one vast area, the mammals, reptiles, birds and natural terrain and vegetation of the Wollomi region.

The students are positive about their new unit of study. Second year student Sandra Barnard, who works as a vet nurse at the Austral Veterinary Clinic on weekends, said "The inclusion of Veterinary Conservation Biology in the curriculum has already been a huge benefit to me in my work in practice. I like the way the unit combines anatomy, physiology and clinical aspects of native animals with their ecology – it gives a rounded picture of Australian wildlife and their problems".

Another satisfied student, Eloise Koelmeyer said "Australian wildlife is so unique and the practical anatomy classes with reptile and marsupial specimens from the Australian Museum, combined with the lectures, gave us so much information. And the guest lecturers have been excellent".



Louise Gibbs admires an iguana during the zoo visit.

From the Dean's Desk

I am pleased to report good news on finance and resources. The Faculty is anticipating an increase in revenue of 16% for 2002 compared with 2001 – and this is after the replacement of 6 academic positions and the creation of 3 new academic positions. Contributing factors include:

- Improved research performance over the past 2 years and fairer distribution of RIBG income to benefit and reward researchers
- The ability of the Faculty to continue to attract full fee paying students (this income will peak in 2003)
- Financial restructure with improved financial management through consolidation of cost centres (teaching, research, consulting and administration) and better use of resources
- Both Clinics anticipate breaking even overall in 2002
- The University will contribute \$1.3 million to the consolidation of dairy research and teaching at Camden.

The Faculty has also attracted University and industry funding to support two new Professors in 2002 (Farm Animal Health and Dairy Genomics) and one Lectureship in Epidemiology, and the new CRC in Innovative Dairy Products will provide another 6 relief teaching positions at Camden.

Stop Press

Dr Michelle Hyde is one of 3 finalists in the biological sciences category of the prestigious national teaching awards, to be announced on 4 December in Parliament House. Michelle is the only University of Sydney staff member to make the finals. Dr Hyde and Dr Henry Collins both won Vice Chancellor Outstanding Teaching Awards before being nominated for the national awards.

Contact Us

We want your comments and contributions. Contact the newsletter team on email vsf@vetsci.usyd.edu.au, or phone Jennie Churchill, Director of the VSF on 9351 8024, or Denise Popovic, VSF Communications Coordinator on 9351 8026.

Rose and Ralph

Rose and Ralph Panebianco not only nourish and nurture staff and students at our very own Ralph's Café, they contribute in other ways too.

The new student photocopier near the common room has been generously donated by Rose and Ralph, and renovations are planned for the entire café and common room area.



In Brief

- Associate Professor Terry Rothwell retired on 31 October after more than 20 years service as a Veterinary Pathologist in the Faculty
- Dr Malcolm France has been promoted to Senior Lecturer from 1 January 2002
- Genetics postgraduate student and assistant coach Colin Cavanagh's Animal Production students took out the first 3 team and first 4 individual places in the annual MLA sponsored National Meat Carcass Judging competition. Cathy Stimson and Shawn McGrath have now been selected in the Australian team to compete in the USA
- Associate Professor Chris Moran is one of a consortium of medical and veterinary researchers who have won a \$4 million plus grant over 5 years for research on "A preclinical model of pig islet xenotransplantation as treatment for type 1 diabetes". The Westran line of pigs fundamental to the project are located at the University Farms, Camden
- Keith Smith is organising the current upgrade of the IT network on the Camden Campus to provide a faster and broader coverage.