

# r u m e n a t i o n s

*The science of animal welfare and its profile within the Faculty has been significantly elevated through the winning by Dr Paul McGreevy of the 2002 Prince Laurent Foundation Prize.*

The prestigious international prize is granted every two years to a person or a group of persons who have done fundamental scientific research, whether in Belgium or abroad, for the benefit of animal welfare.

Dr McGreevy shares the prize with colleague Professor Christine Nicol of the University of Bristol. Their work in equine behaviour has been pivotal in dispelling the many myths surrounding the appearance of stereotypic behaviours – often labelled “stable vices” - in horses. They aim to identify humane and appropriate strategies for preventing the onset of these behaviours by taking an holistic approach to equine welfare.



**Crib-biting foal.** Image Caroline Bower

The key achievements of the work have shown that stereotypic behaviour is an important indicator that something is seriously wrong with a horse's environment. Lack of forage – combined with the provision of concentrate feed in young horses - is the most significant management factor linked with the development of oral stereotypic behaviour such as crib-biting.

McGreevy and Nicol's work indicates crib-biting is associated with gastrointestinal tract disorders, including an association between stomach ulceration and crib-biting in foals. Dr McGreevy said the award was especially

welcome at this time as he is hoping to set up an initiative that promotes the recruitment of horses exhibiting these behaviours into the University herd at Camden. Far from being a sign of viciousness, oral stereotypies are emerging as useful indicators of some of the negative aspects of intensive management. A resident population of horses that display their response to gastrointestinal discomfort could prove especially helpful in developing innovative feeding strategies that pose fewer threats to acid base balance.

### Staff Wins

Dr Geraldine Hunt has been promoted to Associate Professor from 1 January 2002. The well-deserved promotion recognises Geraldine's international stature in the field of small animal surgery.

Dr Greg Bartlett and Dr Richard Lucy, both Senior Registrars in Small Animal Surgery at the UVCC, achieved success at the recent round of examinations conducted by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons – Dr Bartlett with a Certificate in Small Animal Surgery, and Dr Lucy with a Certificate in Veterinary Cardiology.

Dr Mat Gerard, recently awarded a PhD by the University after completing his doctorate at the UVCC, has been appointed Assistant Professor in Equine Surgery at North Carolina State University.

### The Christmas Party

Don't forget the Faculty Christmas Party – 4.00pm Friday 14 December, on the Veterinary Precinct Lawns. All staff and their families are welcome – adults \$10, children \$5 (includes buffet dinner and soft drinks, BYO alcohol). RSVP Rhian Foster ext 17430 or rfoster@mail.usyd.edu.au.

## From the Dean's Desk

It is exciting to look back over a year of enormous change and substantial achievements by the Faculty.

Our new Faculty structure has been implemented successfully and has led to significant improvements in our financial management, as well as breaking down a number of previous departmental barriers. It has also led to many new challenges in working out effective methods of communication and feedback to encourage a collegial environment with effective decision making.

Our culture workshop has been a personal highlight with new ideas and suggestions for improving the Faculty. These have been incorporated into the new 2002-2004 strategic plan for the Faculty which focuses on 5 major goals (to be incorporated into our 2002 operational plan):

- Shared commitment to teaching and learning
- Research performance
- Excellence in clinical service, teaching and research
- Communication and financial sustainability
- Development of key external relationships.

It is exciting that we will have a number of new academic staff joining us in 2002. In total, by midway through 2002, we will have 12 new academic positions in the Faculty, including 4 Chairs, from our staff profile in early 2001. We will also be making a further 7 replacement positions. This is a wonderful opportunity to bring new blood into the Faculty to continue to enhance our teaching, research and clinical missions.

I would like to thank all staff for their remarkable efforts in 2001 during a period of significant change and also thank the students for the energy and drive they bring to help achieve our Faculty vision - "A world leader in veterinary education, animal science and research focused on the health and welfare of animals and benefit to the community".

## The Web



**Federico Costa - the Faculty's new Web Services Coordinator**

The development of competitive and effective websites for the Faculty and Veterinary Science Foundation is the task of Federico Costa, the new Web Services Coordinator for the Faculty. Since his arrival in September, Federico has audited the current sites, created site maps and is working with the Faculty Information Resources Committee (which now has its own site - <http://www.usyd.edu.au/su/vetfac/irc>). Federico is already working on draft designs for the Faculty site.

Federico's role also encompasses other information-related projects such as OLIVER (On-Line Library of Images for Veterinary Education and Research), and he is working with the OLIVER development group which includes technical staff from the Faculty of Medicine who are programming the OLIVER database.

Before joining the Faculty, Federico was manager of an IT group developing on-line resources for community and human services organisations.

Federico is interested in ideas from staff, and is asking for volunteers to join focus groups as he develops the site – he can be contacted on [fcosta@vetsci.usyd.edu.au](mailto:fcosta@vetsci.usyd.edu.au) or 9351 2092.

### Contact Us

We want your comments and contributions. Contact the newsletter team on email [vsf@vetsci.usyd.edu.au](mailto: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.