

2006 Veterinary Public Health Management Dinner - 23 February

Professor Ian McConnell, Professor of Veterinary Science and Director of Research, Department of Veterinary Medicine, University of Cambridge, was the guest speaker at the 2006 Veterinary Public Health Management course (VPHMgt) dinner. His work has a focus on immunology, slow virus infections and prion diseases and he played a major role in the establishment of the Infectious Diseases Consortium at Cambridge - a consortium aimed at creating a world-class research environment for the future training of veterinarians as infectious disease specialists.

The VPHMgt dinner is an inclusion in the first residential course of the year, and has become an opportunity for new and current students of this largely online program to meet fellow students, tutors and course administrators. This successful postgraduate program, now in its fourth year, continues to attract a diverse student intake from Australia and internationally.

Professor McConnell spoke on veterinary public health issues, such as BSE and avian influenza, and the role of vets in identifying and controlling emerging diseases that affect both animals and humans. He emphasised the necessity for a multifaceted approach to handling these diseases that goes beyond technology, and spoke about communicating risk to superiors, the public and consumers, as well as managing the 'dramatic' risks reported by the media. Teaching about this need to manage and communicate the difference is one of the important features, he believes, the VPHMgt course provides.

VSF Fundraising Antarctic Adventure

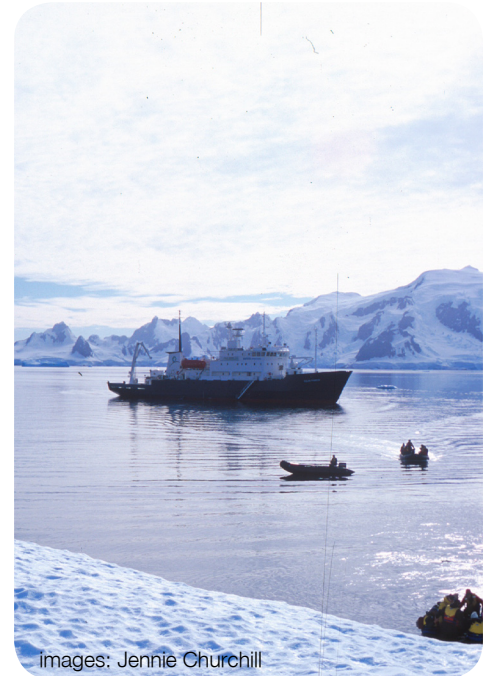
Following a successful 2004 fundraising trek to Nepal, the Veterinary Science Foundation again joined World Expeditions to offer a 2006 'odyssey' to Antarctica. Fifteen veterinarians, friends and donors of the Foundation set off in January for the trip of a lifetime.

The adventure commenced in the Argentinian capital Buenos Aires and included a visit to the breathtaking Iguazu Falls before the group flew south to Tierra del Fuego and Ushuaia, the southernmost town and port in the world. Here they embarked on Aurora Expedition's 12 day voyage to the Antarctic Peninsular and Weddell Sea, joining 35 other travellers on the Russian ice-strengthened vessel, the Polar Pioneer.

Accompanied by Aurora's highly experienced and knowledgeable staff, and after traversing the Drake Passage, voyagers enjoyed a minimum of two landings a day - via zodiac and weather permitting - on various islands and the Peninsula. Each landing was different and memorable, with opportunities for close encounters with wildlife, including huge penguin colonies and seals, and exploration of magnificent icebergs.

Ten members of the group continued on to Chilean Patagonia to walk in the Torres del Paine National Park.

The Veterinary Science Foundation is grateful for the tremendous generosity of our group members and World Expeditions - the company facilitated a significant donation for the Foundation following the Antarctic Adventure.



images: Jennie Churchill

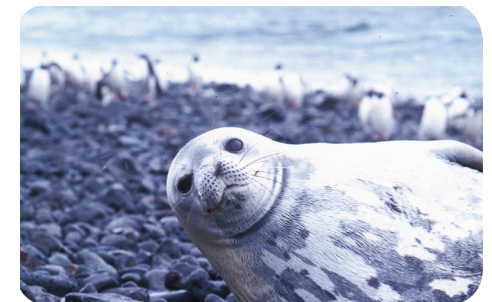
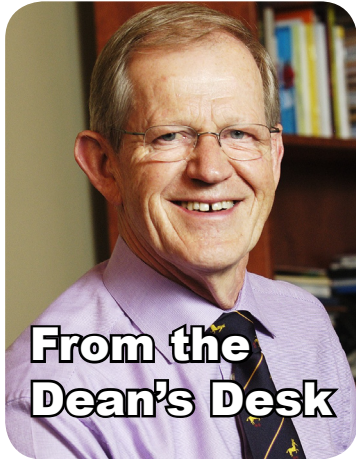


Image: Adrian Boddy





From the Dean's Desk

It is always pleasing at the start of a new year to have the opportunity to report good news. We are proud of the quality of our undergraduate and postgraduate students, but we can now quantify the equally high quality of their student experience. The Faculty has recently received the University survey statistics that rank both undergraduate and postgraduate experiences: the Student Coursework Experience Questionnaire (SCEQ) and the Student Research Experience Questionnaire (SREQ). We are delighted to report these results place the Faculty among the best in the University.

* 2005 SCEQ (undergraduate) gave the Faculty above average University scores for % agreement for Good Teaching (second highest score of any Faculty), Clear Goals and Standards (second highest), Generic Skills (second highest), Learning Community, and Overall Satisfaction (highest score of any Faculty). The % agreement for Good Teaching, Clear Goals and Standards, Generic Skills and Overall Satisfaction has steadily increased from 1999 to 2005.

* SCEQ (postgraduate) results for the Masters in Public Health showed scores for Good Teaching, Appropriate Assessment, Generic Skills and Learning Community to be all well above University

average. The Overall Satisfaction was 96% with 100% satisfaction with the Faculty student administration. These excellent results were the highest of any Faculty across the University and are testament to the dedication of our teaching and administrative staff.

* Finally, the SREQ results for our postgraduates were outstanding confirming the considerable improvements in supervision since 2002. All categories assessed (quality of supervision, infrastructure, research climate and generic skills) have shown dramatic improvement and put us in top position in the College of Sciences and Technology.

I am also pleased to report that three final year students will be attending the prestigious Cornell Leadership Program for Veterinary Students in 2006. They are Bronwyn Clayton, Louise Fitzgerald and Lynda Shaw. This brings the total of Sydney students to 49 since the first group was accepted in 1992.

Professor Leo Jeffcott

Faculty News

Student Competes in the Winter Olympics



Year 4 Faculty of Veterinary Science student, Astrid Lock-Wilkinson recently competed in the 2006 Winter Olympic Games in Torino, Italy. She was the pilot of Australia's first two-women bobsleigh team.

Astrid and team mate Kylie Reed finished 14 out of 15 of the world's top bobsleigh teams, after largely financing their own bid for the Olympic Games. Interviewed by the Daily Telegraph before she left for Italy, Astrid said that her first run down the ice in a sled was terrifying, but now she loves it and plans to keep going to 2010.

February Faculty Visits

Professor Bill Hill was invited to the Faculty as a guest of the Dairy Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) to review its research results on DNA markers, undertaken by the Faculty's ReproGen. He recently retired from the University of Edinburgh where he was Dean of the Faculty of Science and held a chair in animal genetics. During his visit Professor Hill addressed staff and students on "What determines variation in quantitative traits?". He also talked about his report for the UK government on cases of BSE in cattle born after the reinforced feeding ban in August 1996 (BARBs) - www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/bse/pdf/hillreport.pdf

Professor Wes Johnson, from the University of California, visited the Camden campus to work with the Farm Animal Health group developing Bayesian models for estimating animal level prevalence from pooled faecal culture (PFC) results, a technique currently used in Australia for diagnosis of ovine Johne's disease (OJD). Professor Johnson is one of the world's top Bayesian statisticians, and during his visit he presented a Faculty seminar on "Introduction to Bayesian Diagnostic Testing Evaluation in the Absence of a Gold Standard".

2006 Lunctime Lectures

The Faculty's 2006 'Lunctime Seminar' series commences this month. March speakers are:

8 March	Sonia Cattley - <i>How to explain 'what is a gene' to your mother</i>
15 March	Matthew Hobbs - <i>Bioinformatics within the Innovative Dairy Products CRC</i>
22 March	Jennie Churchill - <i>VSF Antarctic Adventure</i>
29 March	Gareth Evans - <i>How to chose the sex of your off-spring</i>

Seminars are held every Wednesday at 1pm in the Webster Lecture Theatre. Further details of each session will be advertised closer to the date by email and poster.

Magistrate Patricia O'Shane AM (LLM 86) will be the guest speaker at the next University of Sydney Graduate Connections Breakfast, to be held at 7.15am for 7.30am, on Wednesday 29 March at The Tea Rooms, Level 3, Queen Victoria Building, George Street, Sydney. Magistrate O'Shane will present *Men Behaving Badly or Crime as Social Control*. For further information, please phone the Alumni Relations Office on (02) 9351 2673 or email rsvp@usyd.edu.au. The cost is \$45 per head or \$320 per table of eight (including GST).

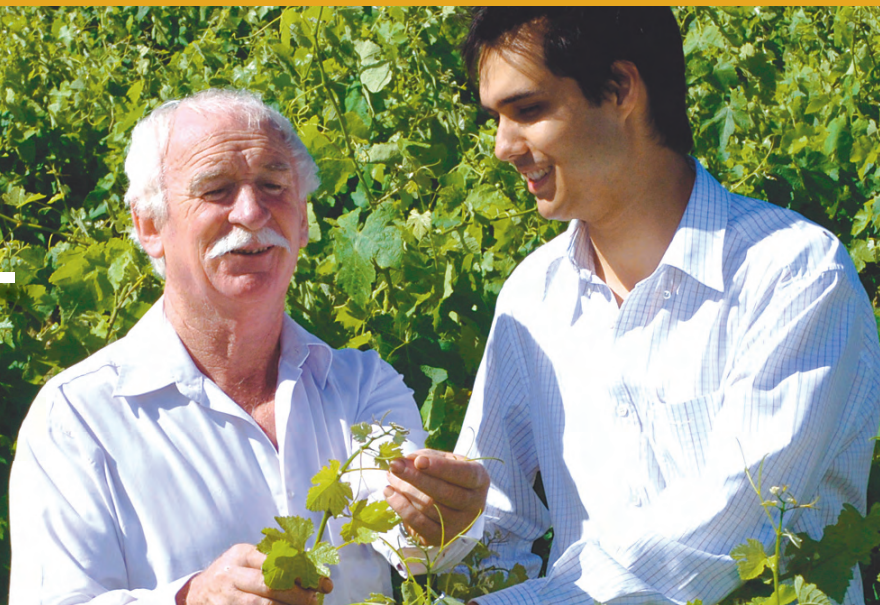
The University of Sydney Graduate Connection Breakfast



We want your feedback and contributions. Contact the newsletter team on email vsf@vetsci.usyd.edu.au, or phone Zara Gosson on (02) 9351 8026.



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Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

graduate opportunities

If you want to be involved in some of the big issues in Australia today – such as land and water conservation, international trade, biosecurity and quarantine, or developing a competitive rural and food sector – then consider a career with us.

We need graduates who have **Veterinary Science degrees** – with fresh perspectives, and enthusiasm to work with us in Canberra.

In your first year we'll get you started with a challenging training programme. After that, the opportunities are endless, and there will be plenty of support along the way.

Your future career opportunities with us could include:

- policy and programme development
- economic and scientific research
- working on quarantine and inspection issues
- international and trade activities – including representing Australia's agricultural and trade interests overseas.

Applications for our 2007 Graduate Development Programme close Monday, 10 April 2006, at 5pm (AEST). Apply now at:

www.daff.gov.au/graduate

If you can't apply online, phone 1800 639 442 between 9am-5pm (AEDST).

The Department is committed to workplace diversity

