

r u m e n a t i o n s

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Meat and Livestock Australia has joined forces with the Faculty of Veterinary Science in an effort to achieve breakthroughs in the diagnosis and control of Ovine Johne's Disease.

The \$3.2 million grant provided by Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) and funded through the sheep industry, may be the key to achieving control of this difficult worldwide disease.

Professor Richard Whittington, Sesqui Chair of Farm Animal Health at the Faculty of Veterinary Science, says the grant will support a team of five leading scientists and up to twelve additional research students. The team will be established at the Faculty's Camden laboratories to study the basics of Johne's infection, and with the latest genomics technology it is hoped that in the three years of the project intensive research may lead to tests that can effectively detect the infection in the earliest stages before it has had a chance to spread.



Dr David Skerman,
National Manager
Animal Production,
Meat and Livestock
Australia and
**Professor Richard
Whittington,** Chair of
Farm Animal Health,
Faculty of Veterinary
Science

Ovine Johne's Disease is already entrenched across much of southeast Australia, but due to its complexity, there are as yet no totally reliable early diagnostic tests and certainly no effective means to treat and eradicate the disease. Efforts are being made in Australia to control the disease long term, but Richard says lack of basic knowledge about the disease is hindering the design of improved tests, treatments and effective vaccines.

Richard believes Johne's disease can be compared to the challenge of the global tuberculosis epidemic in humans, but because research in animal diseases has been wound back in Australia over the last decade and there is a significant shortage of

technical expertise, its diagnosis and control have been poorly supported.

The vision of Meat and Livestock Australia and the expertise of world class scientists in the Faculty could provide the breakthrough.

Sesquicentenary Celebrates Alumni

The University of Sydney Sesquicentenary celebrations include a superb black and white photographic exhibition, Schools of Thought, featuring outstanding alumni – and the Faculty of Veterinary Science is well represented. Professor Graham Mitchell AO, alumnus and partner of Sir Gustav Nossal in Foursight Associates Pty Ltd, is the first image to be viewed on the University's exhibition website - <http://www.usyd.edu.au/sesqui/SchoolsOfThought/>

Schools of Thought presents insights into the University's community of students, teachers and alumni - from laboratory technicians to professors, people respected for their work and contributors to the University's outstanding traditions of teaching and being taught.

In keeping with the teaching theme, another Faculty alumnus represented is Dr Rosanne Taylor. The exhibition is wide-ranging and other subjects include 'celebrities' such as The Hon Gough Whitlam, Yvonne Kenny and The Hon Justice Michael Kirby.

The exhibition, located in the University of Sydney War Memorial Gallery in the main quadrangle from 8 to 24 October, is the work of photographer Lisa Giles. Lisa shot the images at the subjects' homes, offices, workplaces and various University locations, and the exhibition includes her comments and a short biography.

From the Dean's Desk

Two important events have occurred in the last month that will build the Faculty's capacity to deliver better training for undergraduate and postgraduate students in the area of farm animal health and production. An exciting new postgraduate coursework program, from Certificate to Masters level, will commence in 2003 in Veterinary Public Health Management.

This is a unique course internationally and the material developed will also assist undergraduate teaching. The other major initiative was a planning day for all staff in the Faculty, held on September 16 to examine ways of enhancing our research in farm animal health and production.

The Faculty has very strong research capability in animal genomics, farm animal diseases, nutrition and reproduction and has identified aquaculture and fish diseases as being a new area for building our capacity. We are working on looking at the key issues facing veterinary medicine in the future to ensure we are developing teaching and research programs that are relevant and meet future community needs.

Feline Expertise Recognised



Feline specialist and Valentine Charlton Senior Lecturer Dr Richard Malik has been honoured with the prestigious 2002 European Society of Feline Medicine International Award for Outstanding Contribution to Feline Medicine, the

only Australian veterinarian to be acknowledged by this Society at the highest level. He received the award when participating as a speaker at the European Society of Veterinary Internal Medicine conference in Munich in September.

Richard says the award recognises a large body of work, including an extensive study on feline lymphosarcoma undertaken

with Associate Professor Paul Canfield and PhD student Les Gabor, and wide-ranging research into feline infectious diseases (such as cryptosporidiosis and leprosy-like diseases) undertaken in conjunction with Drs Patricia Martin, Denise Wigney and the late Professor Daria Love.

Exercise Minotaur

One hundred and twenty Year 3 students had the opportunity to learn from Exercise Minotaur, the recent national foot and mouth response simulation, when they focused on the issue of 'sudden death' during a visit to the Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (EMAI) at Camden as part of a series of weekly case studies in their second semester workload.

NSW Agriculture staff took the students through the processes adopted following submission of a tissue or blood sample from a dead or sick animal, and the sequence of events following an emergency response announcement. Their visit coincided with the start of Exercise Minotaur when participating staff were receiving their initial briefings.

Friday Seminar Series

11 October – Associate Professor Geraldine Hunt, Yet Another Way To Skin A Cat (Use of skin fold flaps for reconstructive surgery), 1pm VSCC.

18 October – Prof. Norm Eizenberg, from University of Melbourne, 'Bringing Anatomy to life: Reincarnating concepts from buried facts', 1pm VSCC.

Monday 21 October - Eminent pathologist Professor Claus Buergelt, from University of Florida, title TBA, 1pm VSCC.

These will be the last seminars for 2002, but more are planned for 2003 – we will keep you posted. Contact Postdoctoral Fellow Nerida Gallagher (N.Gallagher@staff.usyd.edu.au) for further information.

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.