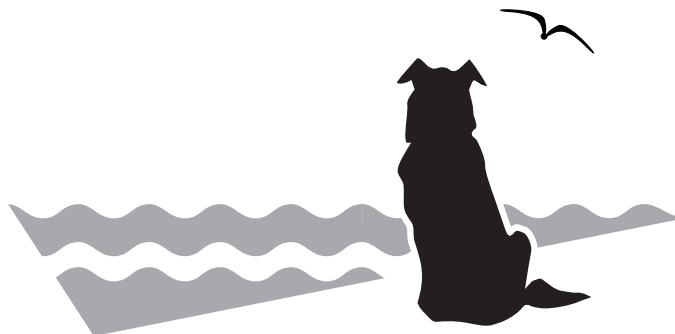


# *AVC NEWS*

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Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre  
ATLANTIC VETERINARY COLLEGE • UNIVERSITY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

## From the Coordinator's desk



Welcome to the tenth edition of *AWC News*, the newsletter of the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre (AWC) at the Atlantic Veterinary College (AVC), University of Prince Edward Island. In this edition you will find brief synopses of the projects completed this year, an update on Bill C-10 (Cruelty to Animals), a tribute to this year's Christofor Award winner Ms. Jennifer McKay, and information on the 2002 Invited Lecture in Animal Welfare on November 18, and a new series of brochures that we are developing on topics with animal welfare concerns.

Several of the completed service projects received renewed funding in this year's competition. We are pleased that several of these represent renewed funding for highly successful projects that are coordinated with community groups, including the *AVC humane dog training programme* with the PEI Humane Society, *Neutering feral cats on PEI* with the PEI Cat Action Team (CAT), and *Health management services* for the PEI Equine Retirement Society. Veterinary students continue to be directly involved in all the service projects. (Descriptions of all projects funded this year are in *AWC News #9* which can be found on our web site.)

Please visit our site at [www.upei.ca/awc](http://www.upei.ca/awc) to find out about upcoming events at the Centre, and for information such as projects funded to date, associated publications and presentations, and animal welfare resources at the UPEI library.

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## Message from the Research Chair



### How can vets provide leadership in animal welfare?

Concern about animal welfare is set to gain momentum in Canada. This is because higher standards of animal welfare are being set elsewhere: our trading partners in the European Union and restaurant chains in the US (e.g., McDonalds) are respectively legislating and requiring improved welfare standards for farm animals. These developments are prompting renewed discussion of animal welfare amongst Canadian farmers, restaurant chains and government, and will probably stimulate an increase in public concern about animal well-being. As debate in Canada continues, leadership may reasonably be expected from veterinarians, both individually and collectively. However, the veterinary profession has been criticised for having too narrow an understanding of animal welfare (as primarily health-related), and for failing to show leadership on broader questions of animal well-being. Any failure probably reflects (i) lack of knowledge

about animal welfare, (ii) the difficulty in assessing welfare, and (iii) some degree of conflict between veterinarians' vocation and their interest in making a good living. Veterinary education can help to address this, and the Animal Welfare Centre has a particular contribution to make here.

### The AWC's contribution

The educational scope of the Centre is growing steadily. The brochures on issues of welfare concern (page 7) are in the final stages of development, and the drafts have generated favourable interest. These brochures are one way in which veterinarians can educate the public about animal welfare. The Centre's annual lecture in animal welfare is another form of public education. This year's lecture (page 7) will be followed by a panel discussion about how best to address the problem of relinquishment of animals to shelters. We hope that this format will be an effective way to stimulate the public's concern and imagination.

Education of students is also critical. Dr. Crook has a full complement of 10 students for the final-year rotation *Issues in Animal Welfare* which includes an afternoon of media training. In addition, Dr. Crook and I are working with student Jeremy Orr (AVC 2004) on a keynote session for January's meeting of Canadian veterinary students here at the Atlantic Veterinary College. We plan to use role-playing and interaction to teach delegates some ways in which they might address animal welfare issues through their work as practitioners.

Meanwhile, the Centre's dedicated animal welfare research projects continue. Data analysis is underway in two of them (*Veterinarians' use of peri-operative analgesics in dogs and cats*, and Julie Christie's MSc project *Factors affecting the welfare of non-racing horses in PEI*). In the third project, *Development of a canine quality-of-life scale*, Nina Wojciechowska is currently collecting data. We are looking forward to reporting the results from these projects in 2003.

## COMPLETED PROJECTS - 2002

The bulk of the Centre's funding supports projects that will benefit companion animals, horses, and wildlife.

Below are summaries of the research and service projects completed this year. Several of the service projects received renewed funding in 2002. A current list of publications from all AWC projects is maintained on our web site.

### **The veterinarian's role in recognizing and reporting animal abuse**

Dr. L. Carioto, Dr. C. Adams and Ms. Suzie Kovacs

It is important that veterinarians act effectively when faced with potential animal abuse, both to protect the animal and because of the link between animal abuse and violence towards people, particularly other members of the family. Yet recognizing and dealing with animal maltreatment is not always straightforward, since it may range from unintentional neglect which can be resolved by client education, to outright cruelty that should be reported to the appropriate authorities.

The purpose of this study was to survey veterinarians in southwestern Ontario and the Atlantic provinces to determine their attitudes and opinions regarding animal maltreatment cases observed in the clinic. Initially, in-depth interviews were conducted with a representative sample of veterinarians. From these interviews a standardized survey was developed and distributed widely to practitioners in the two regions. Analysis of the data has been completed, and the results are being compiled. The information obtained will provide a measure of the prevalence of animal maltreatment seen in practice, as well as gauge the present state of knowledge and opinion regarding the practitioner's ability to detect, assess, and respond to animal maltreatment.

Some of the information from this study is now included in one of the Ontario Veterinary College's courses, and has been presented to a Canadian Federation of Humane Societies workshop. By the nature of the surveys, awareness has been raised about the topic of animal abuse among practitioners. Besides lectures on animal maltreatment and the veterinarian's role that are given at the Ontario and Atlantic Veterinary Colleges, a particular case study obtained through the practitioner interviews was incorporated into the Art of Veterinary Medicine's communication labs at the Ontario Veterinary College. The implementation of similar learning labs is being discussed for the Atlantic Veterinary College curriculum. Increased discussion of the topic of animal abuse in the veterinary curriculum will help prepare future practitioners to deal effectively with this issue.

This study was co-funded by the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre at AVC, the Pet Trust Fund at the Ontario Veterinary College, and the Ontario SPCA.

### **Screening tests for immune failure in newborn foals**

Drs. J McClure and J. DeLuca

Human infants obtain antibodies from their mothers before birth. In contrast, foals (and other animals) are born without immune protection. Antibodies are concentrated in the mare's

first milk (colostrum). Foals must stand and nurse within the first 18 to 24 hours to absorb these antibodies which are necessary for survival. The condition when something goes wrong with this sequence of events is called "failure of passive transfer" (FPT). Foals with FPT are prone to infections and often die.

There is considerable variation in the reliability of the tests that are used to detect FTP in newborn foals. This project compared five currently used screening tests to determine which gives the most accurate and reliable results. Over the course of the project, approximately 205 foals were tested for FTP. Many that were found to have FTP were treated through a related project (funded in 1999 through the AWC) that evaluated two different treatments for this life-threatening condition in foals.

The study found that some of the screening tests currently in use are unacceptable, resulting in many foals with FPT going undiagnosed and/or positive misdiagnoses of FPT being made (resulting in unnecessary treatment of foals that do not have the condition). Other screening tests are preferable, but some limitations were identified. The authors found that combining two tests can improve overall reliability of the results.



Foal nursing

The results of this research have been presented at the AVC 2001 Fall Conference, the 2002 American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (ACVIM)

Conference in Dallas, Texas, and the 2002 fall meeting of the New Brunswick Veterinary Medical Association. The manuscript has been submitted in anticipation of publication prior to the 2003 foaling season. Dissemination of this information is crucial to give veterinarians a better understanding of which test(s) functions best, so that foals can be accurately diagnosed for FPT, appropriate treatment can be initiated, and unwarranted therapy can be avoided.

### **TGF- $\beta_1$ in chronic kidney failure in dogs**

Drs. D. Shaw, P. Foley, A. Cribb, and S. Burton

Chronic renal failure (CRF) is a serious disease of dogs and cats in which there is progressive loss of kidney function, ultimately causing death. Transforming growth factor-beta 1 (TGF- $\beta_1$ ), a small protein with many effects, may be a factor in the scarring and associated loss of function that occurs in the kidneys of animals with CRF.

This project measured levels of TGF- $\beta_1$  in dogs with CRF to determine the significance of this protein, and whether TGF- $\beta_1$  levels can be used to assess the severity of kidney damage and the response to treatment. Ultimately the researchers hope to find ways to block TGF- $\beta_1$  production, and slow or halt the progression of kidney damage in CRF.

Specifically, the authors compared the plasma and urine concentrations of TGF- $\beta_1$  in dogs with chronic renal failure (CRF), dogs with illness other than CRF, and dogs in normal health. It was anticipated that the blood and urine TGF- $\beta_1$  concentrations would be elevated in dogs with CRF based on work reported from rodents and humans. The second objective of this study was to correlate serum creatinine concentration in the dogs with CRF to the measured blood and urine TGF- $\beta_1$  concentrations.

The authors found that the plasma TGF- $\beta_1$  concentration was significantly increased in dogs with CRF; however the TGF- $\beta_1$  concentration did not correlate well with the serum creatinine concentration. There was difficulty in measuring urine TGF- $\beta_1$ , which was in all cases below the limit of detection of the kit. Various methods are being tried to concentrate canine urine to the point where TGF- $\beta_1$  can be detected.

While plasma TGF- $\beta_1$  concentration is probably not a reliable marker of renal function, it is elevated in CRF, and may be useful in monitoring the response of patients to different treatments (eg: dietary protein restriction, dietary phosphorous restriction, anti-oxidants, and angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors). This study has laid important groundwork for a double-blinded, placebo-controlled clinical study (also funded through the Centre) which the authors are conducting to investigate the effect of benazepril on plasma and urine TGF- $\beta_1$  concentration in dogs with CRF.

Over the course of this project, blood and urine samples were obtained from dogs in the Maritimes with naturally occurring CRF. These dogs benefitted because the veterinarians who cared for them had access to additional laboratory data, and there were regular consultations with clinicians at the AVC Veterinary Teaching Hospital. The results of this work will be presented at the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine Annual Conference in 2003.

#### **Effects of spaying on the behaviour of young female dogs**

Drs. L. Bate and N. Guy, and Ms. L. McMullin

Ovariohysterectomy (spaying) is one of the most common surgical procedures performed by veterinary clinicians. The majority of owned female dogs and cats in North America are spayed by one year of age, to prevent unwanted litters and diseases of the reproductive system. The physical and developmental effects of spaying are well-understood, but little work has been done to see if/how the procedure affects non-reproductive behaviour. Some evidence suggests that there may be an increase in aggressive behaviour in some dogs following ovariohysterectomy.

Through surveys of Maritime dog-owners before and after their pets were spayed, this project looked at whether there is a significant behavioural effect of spaying. The authors found that there was a higher incidence of growling reported by spayed dog owners and that spayed dogs were also reported to be more excitable than intact bitches.

The ultimate goal of the project was to add to the understanding of behaviour in dogs, in order to increase the opportunities to prevent or treat problem behaviours, and thus strengthen human-animal relationships. Dissemination of these results will

provide the general public and animal care professionals with an increased knowledge of behaviours that may result from spaying. The next step will be to identify and encourage methods for appropriate behaviour intervention. The results of this study were presented in Halifax, NS at the 2002 Canadian Veterinary Medical Association Annual Convention, and internationally in Egmond aan Zee in the Netherlands at the 36th International Congress of the International Society for Applied Animal Ethology. The thesis for this study is being written as journal articles and will be submitted to Applied Animal Behaviour Science for publication.

#### **Canine inherited disorders database**

Drs. A. Crook, B. Hill, and S. Dawson



Canine inherited disorders can profoundly affect the quality of life of a dog and its human companions. The main goal in creating the database was to sort the almost overwhelming amount of information available on inherited disorders in dogs, in a fashion that is useful to owners and potential owners, to veterinarians, and to breeders.

Located at [www.upei.ca/cidd](http://www.upei.ca/cidd), the database is also accessible from the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre and Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) sites, with links from other sites such as those of the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies and various breed clubs. The web site will be useful to dog owners whose pet has been found to have an inherited condition; potential dog owners who want help in avoiding these problems when choosing a pet; dog breeders who are looking for suggestions on how to avoid these conditions in their lines of dogs and improve breeding practices; and veterinarians looking for current information on both well-known and more obscure inherited disorders, including therapeutic and diagnostic information.

The database is organized into three main sections. The first is general information: "What is a genetic disorder?" "How are defects inherited?" The second section forms the bulk of the database and consists of approximately 175 disease pages, divided into systems: "Inherited cardiovascular (nervous system, blood, endocrine, eye, skin, gastrointestinal, immune, respiratory, urinary and reproductive, and musculoskeletal) disorders." Each disease page contains a description of the disorder, information about how the disorder is inherited, consequences of the condition for the dog, and recommended or required care by the owner and veterinarian. The disease pages are written in non-technical language, except for a section on diagnostic and therapeutic considerations which is specifically for veterinarians. Owners may look up these diseases on their own, and/or veterinarians may print these pages off for their clients when an inherited disorder is diagnosed.

The third section contains individual breed pages, on which are listed disorders of concern in each breed. These are divided into those which are relatively common in a breed, those that are less common, and any disorders associated with conformation (eg. respiratory disorders in brachycephalic breeds such as the English bulldog). Each disorder listed on a breed page is linked to the relevant disease page. The breed pages, which have been built over the course of the project, are currently being edited and will be added to the site shortly.

The first of its kind, CIDD was created to provide comprehensive, readily accessible, useful information for all those dealing with canine inherited disorders. The ultimate goal is to reduce the incidence and impact of these generally debilitating conditions, through encouraging improved breeding practices, creating more knowledgeable dog owners, and providing veterinary practitioners with current information. Judging from the number of inquiries and positive comments from veterinarians, breeders and owners from as far away as Australia, progress has already been made in achieving these objectives.

This project was funded jointly by the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association.

#### **Wildlife rehabilitation (including orphaned wildlife care) (2000-01)**

Drs. H. Gelens, C. Runyon, P.-Y. Daoust

The objectives of this project were to maintain and improve the level of care provided to injured and orphaned wildlife at the AVC, and to encourage continued and increased student participation. The learning experience obtained in dealing with these wild animals is unique within the AVC. Students in veterinary medicine at the AVC and pre-veterinary students at UPEI participate in this project.

Over the last year, nursing care, medical management and



Northern gannet that was found inland and is receiving supportive care in the AVC flight cage before being released.

special procedures (eg. diagnostic tests, x-rays, bandage/casting material) were provided through this project to 126 animals, including 90 injured and/or orphaned birds. There was some mortality, especially in the orphaned small songbirds, but overall

survival was improved over last year. The goal for all animals is successful release back into the wild.

Many students were involved in the care and rehabilitation of these animals, and will feel more comfortable and knowledgeable in dealing with wildlife as a result. Cooperation with existing wildlife rehabilitation centers has been streamlined, and this is mutually beneficial.

First funded in 2000, this project received funding again in 2002, to continue to provide veterinary care for injured and orphaned wildlife and to educate future veterinarians in the ways that such care can be provided.

#### **Neutering feral cats on PEI (2001-02)**

Drs. K. Gibson and T. Bailey, and Ms. K. Keizer

Many communities have feral (semi-wild) cat populations which are a concern for community members, veterinarians, and animal control agencies. These semi-wild cats are the offspring of stray or abandoned animals, and typically live in areas where they are able to find some food and shelter. These cats are often

unhealthy, with a significantly reduced lifespan due to illness and injury - much of this related to uncontrolled reproduction. An alternative to euthanasia of these cats is a "trap, neuter and release" programme. These programmes are being carried out in many areas of North America, and result in cat populations that are more stable (zero to low birth rate) and healthier (tested, vaccinated, and with reduced fighting associated with mating behaviour).



AVC students neutering cat

Such a programme was established through this project at the Atlantic Veterinary College in 2001, in cooperation with the Cat Action Team (CAT) in Charlottetown and the Town Council of North Rustico. In 2001 these groups

trapped and brought in 185 feral cats and kittens over six weeks of age to the AVC where they were anesthetized, tested for two common serious infectious diseases, vaccinated, identified, neutered, and, after recovery from anesthesia and surgery, released back to the original area. Fifty-six additional feral cats were neutered at the AVC with funds privately raised by CAT.

Dr. Karen Gibson, who initiated the project along with veterinary student Karen Keizer, has left the College. Her report of the project has recently been published in the Canadian Veterinary Journal (K Gibson, K Keizer, and C Golding *A trap, neuter and release program for feral cats on Prince Edward Island* Can Vet J 2002; 43:695-698). Based on the success of this initial project, and strong community support for it, a similar project has been funded for two more years, under the leadership of Drs. Hans Gelens and Peter Foley.

#### **AVC humane dog training programme (2001-02)**

Dr. N. Guy

Through this project a programme was developed by AVC students to work with the PEI Humane Society, its dogs, and their new owners. The objectives were to improve the quality of life for dogs being held for adoption at the PEI Humane Society; to increase the adoption and retention of humane society dogs; to increase the basic level of dog training skills among AVC students and humane society staff; to improve the dog training skills of new owners and provide them with a knowledgeable contact person to troubleshoot common problems in the first few months of ownership; and to provide leadership in positive methods of behaviour modification among the PEI community at large, and thereby decrease the use of abusive training practices. Over the last year, 15 volunteer student trainers worked with over 60 dogs at the PEIHS, to teach basic commands and reduce problems with unwanted behaviours. The intent of all training was to reduce the occurrence of unruly behaviour by rewarding desirable behaviour, and to teach dogs that focus on the handler was rewarding. Behaviour modification using positive reinforcement (clicker training) was used. No aversive, or punishment-based, techniques are employed. Tolerance of some handling procedures (such as nail trimming) was also shaped, especially in the youngest puppies.

Aside from the potential for a long-term effect on the behaviour of the dogs, the interaction with the handlers provided significant enrichment in an otherwise sterile and often stressful environment. For the youngest puppies, a session with the handler typically included an opportunity to play with novel toys in a environment other than the run where they were normally housed, with the intention of increasing their exposure to new situations. Even brief exposure to new and harmless stimuli can have a lifelong impact on a dog's ability to cope with unusual events.

Each adoptive owner was sent home with a training information packet prepared by the student coordinator, which included the contact information for the two "helpline" services (voicemail and email) through which new owners can receive support and training advice. The student handlers have also had numerous informal interactions with members of the public visiting the shelter. In this way they are able to promote the use of positive reinforcement in the training of dogs. Signs are posted in the shelter inviting visitors to ask questions or observe training sessions. A website linked to both the PEIHS and AVC is currently under construction. Two of the students in the programme worked with other shelters during their summer break.

There has been strong media interest in this programme, with stories on radio and television, and in print. Presentations and/or displays about the programme have also been made at the AVC Open House, at an annual general meeting of the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, and in continuing education sessions for several veterinary associations and associations of professional pet dog trainers.

Funding for this project has been renewed for another year.

#### **Teaching PEI schoolchildren about responsible animal care - Humane education project (2000-02)**

Dr. K. Gibson

The humane education project was developed in 1997 to educate children, motivate young pet owners, and encourage veterinary students to become involved with the community. Since then, over 300 classrooms and groups have been visited by veterinary students and their pets. Evaluation forms completed by the teachers consistently place at least 85% of the presentations in the excellent or very good category, and word of mouth among teachers about the quality of the programme has led to a dramatic increase in requests for presentations.

Each year, schools are contacted, classroom presentations are organized, and veterinary student volunteers and their pets are recruited. All animals used in the programme are evaluated for suitable behaviour by Dr. Norma Guy of the AVC Clinical Behaviour Service. Species used have included dogs, cats, parrots, ferrets, rabbits, and a turtle. Although this programme mainly serves PEI, a large number of presentations have also been given in the other three Atlantic Provinces.

The Humane Education Lesson Plan Book has been revised since its creation in 1997. Age appropriate topics for grades kindergarten to 12 include: a pet's daily routine, pet selection, pet care, dog and cat bite prevention, lost pets, seasonal changes

and your pet, how to communicate with your pet, pet first aid, the importance of a humane society, pet overpopulation, euthanasia, spaying and neutering, veterinary care, and zoonotic diseases. New components added to the project since 2000 include the in-house production of a 12 minute video entitled "A visit to your veterinarian", a lesson plan for use in presentations to Brownies and Guides for use in attaining a pet care badge, and a lesson plan which includes an audiovisual tour of AVC and the different types of work undertaken by veterinarians. All 20 lesson plans, including photographic material, are available on CD. Videos, a French-English colouring book, word games, puzzle games, posters, magnets, and other materials are used to supplement the lesson plans.

Educating schoolchildren about the enjoyment and realities of pet ownership will have a positive influence on their interactions with their pets, and, it is hoped, with animals in general for the rest of their lives. In addition, veterinary students can begin to fulfill their obligation to educate the public about animal-related issues, through talking about their pets and their profession to an eager audience.

The Humane Education Programme has received considerable publicity in PEI and Newfoundland, and has been presented at four successive AVC Open House events. Lesson plan books have been widely distributed, on request, to humane societies and educators. This project has received a further two years of funding, under Dr. Norma Guy.

#### **Health management services for the PEI Equine Retirement Society Inc. (2000-02)**

Drs. W. Duckett and G. Conboy



Gem's Dale is a 6 year old Standardbred stallion who had a fractured sesamoid bone in the right front leg. He was treated and gelded at the AVC, and subsequently adopted.

The PEI Equine Retirement Society Inc. (PEIERS) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the rehabilitation of horses destined to be destroyed or shipped for the meat industry, and to finding new homes for them as pets or pleasure horses. Since its founding in O'Leary in 1996 by Mr. Dale Cameron, the Society has taken in 27 horses, of which 11

have been placed in new homes, 4 have been euthanized due to intractable health problems, and 12 are currently at the facility. Funded through the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre, this project has provided preventive medical care to the horses at the Society from the beginning.

Specifically, the goals of the project are to provide basic medical care to incoming and resident horses, to minimize the spread of respiratory disease, to decrease parasite burdens at the facility, and to increase the adoptability of the horses. Through this project the 27 horses donated to the PEIERS to date have received physical examinations, vaccinations against influenza, rhinopneumonitis, and tetanus, treatment for parasites; and dental floating as required. Four with intractable health problems

## OTHER NEWS

were euthanized. Routine fecal floatations on the herd have been performed at each visit to monitor parasite burdens. Senior veterinary students have been involved in each of the visits to the facility, thereby providing an opportunity for them to perform routine equine management work not commonly seen in academic practice.

Benefits to the horses are manifold. Current vaccination and parasite management strategies are particularly important in a facility that has constant movement of horses in and out of the herd. The incidence of respiratory disease is minimized, and parasite burdens are controlled. Physical examination of each donated horse provides an opportunity to assess its adoptability, and special needs or concerns for potential new owners can be addressed. These preventive practices help provide the donated horses with a healthy start prior to their adoption to new homes.

Once initiated at the PEIERS facility, continued health care for adopted horses is a requirement of the adoption agreement. Guidelines for the health care of the horses are established with their new owners prior to adoption, and include requirements for an annual health certificate from a licensed veterinarian, documentation of an appropriate vaccination and parasite control schedule, and documentation of routine hoof care by a qualified farrier.

Funding was renewed for 2002-2004, to continue provision of veterinary services to the PEIERS.

### **Wildlife short course**

Ms. M. Hicks and Ms. K. Jones

The AVC Wildlife and Exotics Club hosted a weekend course at AVC in wildlife rehabilitation and management in November 2001. Offered by the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association (NWRA), the course was funded partly by the NWRA, partly by the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre (through the Centre's Student Project Fund), partly through fund raising by the Wildlife and Exotics Club, and partly through a small fee charged to participants.

The course consisted of two mornings of in-depth seminars and two afternoons of wet (participatory) labs. Taught by two acclaimed specialists in wildlife veterinary medicine, Dr. Erica Miller and Dr. Stuart Porter, the course encompassed many different species, including birds and mammals. Laboratory topics included orthopedic and bandaging techniques, fluid therapy, catheter placement and gavage techniques. Over fifty students as well as interested faculty members participated in the course. A reference manual was provided to all participating students and faculty.

The course provided an invaluable opportunity for participants to gain beneficial practical wildlife rehabilitation experience outside of the regular AVC curriculum. As a result of the knowledge gained during the weekend of instruction, more injured wildlife will receive assistance from educated veterinarians, who will act as a source of information and be able to properly manage wildlife situations in the future. This should increase the number of these animals who are successfully rehabilitated, and decrease the number who are euthanized.

### **2002 Christofor Award in Animal Welfare**

Fourth year student Jennifer McKay is the recipient of this year's award, presented in October at the Atlantic Veterinary College Awards Night. Jennifer has a long-standing commitment to improving the lives of animals. Prior to attending the AVC, she



2002 Christofor Award recipient Jennifer McKay and presenter Dr. Alice Crook

cared for animals at the Wolfville Animal Shelter while at Acadia, and later was involved with the Truro SPCA. During her years at the College, Jennifer has played a central role in the success and expansion of the *Humane education programme*, which promotes animal welfare by educating schoolchildren about

responsible animal care. Jennifer has been instrumental in expanding the programme to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. She firmly believes that teaching young people respect for their pets and other animals around them, is one of the best ways to prevent cruelty and mistreatment of animals.

Besides her work with this programme, Jennifer is a regular volunteer with the *Neutering feral cats on PEI* project, and has been active in the training programme for the AVC teaching beagles, to teach them social skills and to find homes for them. She also spends time with the teaching cats, to enrich their lives while they are at the College. The AVC congratulates Jennifer on her well-deserved receipt of the 2002 Christofor Award.

### **Update on Federal Cruelty to Animals Bill**

Bill C-15B was reintroduced in the Canadian Parliament and passed through the House of Commons on October 9, 2002. The Bill (renamed C-10) has passed First and Second Reading in the Senate, and was referred to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee on November 20. The Senate directed the Committee to split the bill into two parts so that it may deal separately with the provisions relating to firearms and to cruelty to animals.

Bill C-10 contains amendments to the Canadian Criminal Code that will provide important new protection for animals in Canada. Under the Bill, Canadians convicted of intentional cruelty to animals will face up to five years in prison and fines of up to \$10,000. The current maximum penalties are six months in prison and fines of up to \$2000.

The text of the bill can be found on the Department of Justice web site at <http://www.parl.gc.ca/>, under bills (specifically Bill C-10, Part VI, Cruelty to Animals). The amendments will replace sections 444 - 447 of the Criminal Code which are largely unchanged since they were enacted in 1892. Updates on Bill C-10's progress are posted on the AWC web site as they become available.

### 2002 Invited Lecture in Animal Welfare

On November 18, 2002, we held our second annual lecture in animal welfare, as part of a symposium about the relinquishment of companion animals to shelters. The guest lecturer was Nadine Gourkow MSc, Animal Welfare Research Manager of the British Columbia SPCA. Ms Gourkow is well-known for her work on enriching the psychological well-being of cats in shelters, and has produced an excellent video and accompanying workbook which will be valuable tools for anyone housing cats and assessing feline behaviour. Ms. Gourkow spoke about this work and about other initiatives at the BC SPCA to improve the welfare of the animals there, including the development of a hide-and-perch box for cats. The videotape and accompanying book are available at the Robertson Library, and the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre also has a copy of each of them.

Following Ms. Gourkow's talk, there were presentations about local initiatives for unowned companion animals in PEI. Dr. Norma Guy, AVC Behaviour Service, spoke about the AVC humane dog training programme at the PEI Humane Society. Then, Barb Jones, President of the PEI Cat Action Team, spoke about a trap-neuter-return scheme for controlling feral cat populations in PEI. Both programmes are sponsored by the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre (see page 4).

The symposium closed with a panel discussion about the reasons for and long-term solutions to the problem of companion animal relinquishment. The panel members were Ms. Gourkow, Dr. Guy, Jack MacAndrew (journalist and pet owner), Dr. Claudia Lister (local veterinarian), and Heather Irving (Executive Director of the PEI Humane Society). Many useful points were made. In particular, panellists stressed that modern lifestyles and expectations, and the failure of owner-animal attachment are key contributors to relinquishment. The panel agreed that responsibility for the problems of relinquishment and overpopulation of dogs and cats, is shared across society. Ms. Gourkow's closing suggestion was that both problems must be addressed in terms of a holistic and humane vision for society, which includes a kinder regard for companion animals.

The symposium was video-taped. Copies are in the UPEI (Robertson) library and at the Animal Welfare Centre.

### Animal Welfare Series

A new development for the Centre has been our work on public information brochures about issues of welfare concern. The idea stemmed from a project by Ms. Keri Evers, funded earlier this year through the Centre's Student Project Fund, to develop an educational pamphlet about cosmetic surgery in dogs. Veterinary student Robin Masland worked with the Centre over the summer to research and write five more pamphlets - on feral cats, declawing of cats, and buying a puppy/kitten, an exotic animal and a "pocket pet". The brochures outline the issues of welfare concern, based on reputable sources, and encourage the public to treat animals responsibly. These brochures may be ordered by veterinary clinics, humane societies, or other outlets; there will be a nominal fee to offset printing costs. For more information, please contact the Centre. The brochures will also be available on the Centre's web site. Brochures on other topics are planned



## MANDATE

The Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre (AWC) exists to promote animal health and well-being in the broadest sense.

#### Objectives:

- 1) The AWC promotes research projects and service activities where there is a clear potential for tangible benefits to animals.
- 2) The AWC serves as a resource centre to compile, generate, and disseminate information relevant to the well-being of animals.
- 3) The AWC strives to raise the awareness of the public and the veterinary profession on broad questions of animal welfare and animal use, and to provide accurate, scientifically based information on these questions.

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