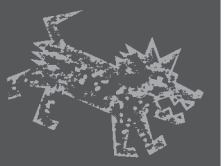






AWC NEWS

NUMBER 12 • FALL 2003

Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre

ATLANTIC VETERINARY COLLEGE • UNIVERSITY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

From the Coordinator's desk

Welcome to the twelfth 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 reports on the 11 projects completed this year, an update on Bill C-10B (federal cruelty to animals legislation), a tribute to this year's Christofor Award winner Barb Jones, and information on the recent 2003 Invited Lecture in Animal Welfare, given by Dr. Joe Stookey. On page 9, there is information about ordering brochures in our Animal Welfare Series. These brochures have been well-received by veterinarians and humane organizations.

The bulk of the Centre's funding supports projects with the potential to provide tangible benefits for companion animals, horses, and wildlife. For each of the completed research projects, scientific presentations and pending publications are mentioned at the end of the report; however many of these are not published until months or years after completion of a project. A list of all projects funded since 1994 can be found on our web site at **www.upei.ca/awc/projects.htm**, as well as a list of publications and presentations to date at **www.upei.ca/awc/publications.htm**

Dr. Alice Crook, Editor
AWC NEWS
Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre
Atlantic Veterinary College
University of Prince Edward Island
550 University Avenue
Charlottetown, PEI C1A 4P3

Tel: (902)628-4360
Fax: (902)566-0958
Email: acrook@upei.ca
chewson@upei.ca
www.upei.ca/awc

Production & Design: Computer Services

Message from the Research Chair

During the fall, the Atlantic Veterinary College had four guest speakers who examined the veterinary profession's role as servant of the public good. Dr. Ted Leighton, University of Saskatchewan, and Dr. Ole Nielsen (retired; former Dean of the Ontario Veterinary College) argued that veterinarians are neither encouraged nor fully equipped to work in the areas of public health and food safety. To these areas I would add animal welfare. The third speaker, lawyer Doug Jack, proposed five legal challenges faced by Canadian veterinarians. One of these challenges is vulnerability to lawsuits on the grounds that a pet's quality of life has been adversely affected by veterinary treatment. A veterinarian's failure to use analgesia after routine surgery (common in 1994; Dohoo S. and Dohoo I. *Can Vet J* 1996; 37:546-551) might be legitimate evidence for the plaintiff. The fourth speaker was Dr. Joe Stookey, University of Saskatchewan, who examined the double standard in use of analgesics for routine surgeries such as castration in farm animals and companion animals (see page 7). Dr. Stookey argued that veterinarians must show greater leadership in use of analgesics for farm animals.

There are many reasons why the profession has not fulfilled its public duty in animal welfare, including lack of education, lack of media engagement, unquestioned clinical habits, etc. These issues need to be examined and resolved because animal welfare is a public good and, as the only animal-oriented profession, veterinarians are automatically invested with public trust and a responsibility to lead in questions of animal use. The profession might meet its responsibility better in three ways: by incorporating non-physical aspects of animal welfare (the state of the animal's mind and the satisfaction of its nature) into veterinary work, by publicly identifying areas of welfare concern, and by engaging more with the animal welfare movement.

Veterinary education is a central part of this leadership. Canadian veterinary schools now incorporate some animal welfare training, typically in pre-clinical years. In contrast, three of the six UK veterinary schools (Glasgow, Liverpool and Bristol) are planning to incorporate animal welfare into every stage of the curriculum, and are currently hiring veterinary faculty in animal welfare, funded by the British Veterinary Association. In addition, the Bristol school has added an optional 1-year intercalated MSc in animal behaviour and welfare to the undergraduate curriculum. Such engagement with animal welfare reflects the societal need in the UK for veterinarians to have expertise in welfare. The same need may be expected to grow in Canada. The underlying ethical imperative has already been shown to exist in New Brunswick, through the research of Dr. Bev Schneider, former external representative on the Animal Welfare Centre's committees. Dr. Schneider found that the "new ethic" for animals in New Brunswick is a combination of the philosophies of utilitarianism and animal rights and was the ethical position of companion animal veterinarians studied (Schneider, B. *Can Vet J* 2001; 42: 540-547). Moreover, in the 2002 membership survey, the members of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association voted animal welfare as the organisation's first concern. The authenticity of that vote regionally was reflected by a good attendance at Dr. Stookey's lecture (page 7). Further evidence of members' commitment will be revealed through increased interest in continuing education in animal welfare, by the actions of veterinarians in practice, and by the actions of the CVMA itself.

COMPLETED PROJECTS - 2003

Below are summaries of the 5 research and 6 service projects completed in 2003. The last 2 projects were funded through the Centre's Student Project Fund. A list of all projects funded since 1994 can be found at **www.upei.ca/awc/projects.htm**

Factors affecting the welfare of non-racing horses in PEI
C. Hewson, J. Christie, C. Riley, I. Dohoo, M. McNiven and L. Bate

In North America and the United Kingdom, there are few representative, horse-level data about equine welfare and equine management practices. The Canadian Agri-Food Research Council has published guidelines for equine care but, without data, it is not known whether the guidelines are being followed. To help address these deficits, a randomised, horse-level survey was carried out in Prince Edward Island in summer 2002.

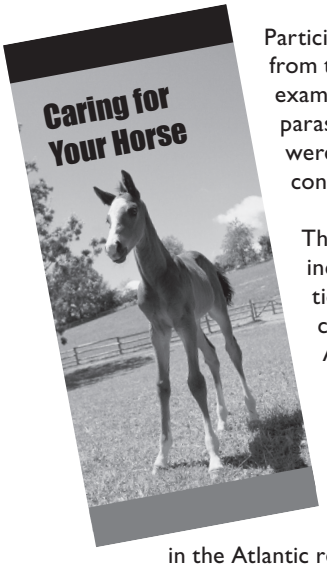
The objectives of the study were to describe the demographics and management of non-racing horses in PEI, to describe the welfare of non-racing horses in PEI as indicated by stereotypic behaviour and body condition score, to determine the management factors that reduce welfare (as indicated by the above markers), and to produce an educational leaflet for PEI non-racing horse owners, targeting areas of concern.

One hundred and seventeen horse owners and 312 horses were recruited though a random phone book search. Data

Julie Christie with an overweight horse

were obtained by questionnaire and by site visits that included a physical examination of each horse. The results indicated that owners were experienced in caring for horses, and that the horses were generally in good condition. However, areas for improvement included parasite control, dental and hoof care, and tail docking.

The demographic and statistical data from the study were presented respectively at the International Symposium of the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (Edinburgh, April 2-4) and the 37th annual conference of the International Society for Applied Ethology (Italy, June 24-28). Three scientific papers have been submitted and are currently under peer review.



Participating animals benefitted from the study through a clinical examination, fecal egg count for parasites, and diet analysis. There were no cases of major clinical concern.

The results of the study were incorporated into an educational brochure, and 10,000 copies have been printed. Available through the Centre (**acrook@upei.ca**), the brochures are entitled *Caring for Your Horse* and have been distributed to tack and feed shops across Prince Edward Island, to veterinary practices in the Atlantic region, and to equine interest groups. The brochures were also sent to all the owners who participated in the survey. Similar information has been outlined to the public through interviews on CBC local radio and *Horse and Pony* magazine.

Diabetes mellitus and tear formation in dogs
(Keratoconjunctival effects of diabetes mellitus in dogs)
C. Cullen and S. Ihle

Cataract formation in one or commonly both eyes occurs frequently in diabetic dogs. Many of these cataracts enlarge rapidly, causing inflammation, pain, and eventually, blindness. Surgical removal of the cataracts offers the best chance of reducing discomfort and restoring vision, but the success rate of the surgery is lower in diabetic dogs than in dogs who have cataracts removed for other reasons.

It has been found that the tears (crucial for normal nourishment and lubrication of the eye) in diabetic people are decreased in amount and are abnormal in consistency. This is thought to contribute to the eye disease that is a common complication of diabetes mellitus. Through this project, Dr. Cullen compared the qualities of the tears in diabetic and normal dogs, with the goal of identifying typical abnormalities and making recommendations for treatment before surgery, to make dogs more comfortable and increase the surgical success rate for diabetic cataract surgery.

The specific objectives of this study were to determine if diabetic dogs have significant alterations in tear film quantity and quality, corneal sensitivity, conjunctival cytology, conjunctival histopathology, and conjunctival microflora in association with tear glucose levels as compared to normal dogs and dogs with cataracts due to other underlying etiologies; to determine if the degree of diabetic regulation affects the aforementioned ocular parameters in diabetic dogs; and to determine whether

alterations in these ocular parameters play a significant role in the reduced success rates observed in diabetic dogs undergoing cataract surgery.

The study revealed consistent abnormalities in the ocular parameters in diabetic dogs. Factors such as reduced corneal sensitivity, lower aqueous tear production, and premature tear film evaporation are all possible contributors to ocular irritation including conjunctivitis and ulcerative keratitis. Cataract surgery on an already compromised eye could increase the risk of postoperative complications, especially ulcerative keratitis. The results of this project indicate that additional ocular diagnostic tests should be evaluated in diabetic dogs by veterinary ophthalmologists, especially prior to contemplation of cataract surgery. The tear film abnormalities could be addressed with topical ocular medications such as artificial tear supplements and/or cyclosporine prior to the contemplation of surgery and prior to the development of serious ocular disease.

Participating dogs benefited from this study in that their respective owners were immediately informed as to the state of their pet's ocular health. Those dogs with cataract-related uveitis (inflammation inside the eye), low tear production, rapid tear film evaporation, etc. were provided with appropriate ocular treatments to prevent ongoing and/or future ocular discomfort. As well, owners were advised as to whether or not their dog's eyes were in good condition for cataract surgery. Two of the dogs from this study returned to the AVC to have cataract surgery performed and their quality of life was improved via the return of good vision. Blood and urine tests were performed on all participating dogs. The results of these tests provided information for referring veterinarians and owners about the degree of diabetic regulation as well as other systemic abnormalities.

It is hoped that this study will lead to improved diagnosis and management of eye diseases in diabetic dogs by general practitioners. The results of the study were presented at the annual meeting of the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists in Idaho in October 2003. A manuscript is in preparation.

Glucosamine - an alternative treatment for arthritis in dogs
C. Runyon and M. Vijarnsorn

Osteoarthrosis is a relatively common joint problem in dogs. There is deterioration of the cartilage and inflammation of the joint capsule, causing pain and varying degrees of lameness which generally worsen over time. Various drugs are used to reduce the pain and improve the dog's quality of life, but all of these have some undesirable side effects when used over the long term.

Recently, attention has shifted to alternative methods of managing arthritis that focus on slowing the process of cartilage deterioration, and at the same time promoting production of new cartilage. Glucosamine is a nutritional supplement that has been used successfully in humans to relieve some of the symptoms of arthritis. Although glucosamine is also being used to some extent in dogs, its effectiveness has not been studied.

This project looked at the use of glucosamine as a treatment for osteoarthrosis in dogs. Dogs with this disorder were thoroughly assessed before and after treatment with glucosamine, through radiographs, blood tests, and detailed gait analysis.

The project has been completed and all data have been analyzed. No significant difference was found between treatment groups as measured by force plate analysis, subjective orthopedic evaluation, radiographic evaluation, and owner-assessed lameness.

Dr. Vijarnsorn was awarded a Master of Science degree with distinction based on this work. She is currently a PhD candidate, continuing her research in the area of osteoarthrosis through another AWC-funded project *A new diagnostic test for joint disease in horses*.

The preliminary results of this study were reported at the annual convention of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association in July 2002. A paper is currently in preparation. It is anticipated that publication will stimulate further studies of slow acting disease-modifying osteoarthritic agents in dogs.

Acupuncture to treat hip dysplasia in dogs
A. Ortenburger, C. Runyon, and M. Parsons-Doherty

Acupuncture has been available at the Atlantic Veterinary College since 1996, when an acupuncture service was started by Dr. Ortenburger with a grant from the AWC. Hip dysplasia is a common cause of arthritis in dogs, and is the single most frequent reason that dogs are referred to the Veterinary Teaching Hospital for acupuncture. Although acupuncture appears to be highly effective in treating the pain and lameness associated with hip dysplasia, there is a lack of published scientific data to support this, which leads some to question its usefulness. Through this pilot project, Dr. Ortenburger did some preliminary work with a small group of dogs with hip dysplasia, to look at ways of measuring the effect of acupuncture on their pain and lameness.

Sabre receiving treatment for hip dysplasia

This project has been completed as planned, and provided the answers it set out to learn. The measures of pain reduction and improvement of lameness for a common cause of lameness in dogs (hip dysplasia) lack utility for the purposes of this research, and argue against continuation of the project.

The specific objectives of this study were to obtain an approximate estimate of the effect of acupuncture in dogs with lameness due to hip dysplasia, through both randomized and historical treatment models; and to demonstrate the feasibility of assessing improvement in such dogs by objective measures (force place data).

The first objective has been accomplished. Analysis of force plate data revealed that the treatment effect is small in relation to the "noise" intrinsic to the force-plate system. A larger scale study which might reveal significant differences between a treatment group and a control group would require many hundreds of dogs, and possibly thousands.

With respect to the second objective, the experience with recruiting, treating, and evaluating the dogs confirms the feasibility of the project design. However, the limited data failed to show a treatment effect sufficient to warrant further investigation. The costs and human effort to attain the desired results are simply too large, and so the second objective has not been achieved. The force plate appears to be insensitive in detecting changes of gait when compared to other, more subjective observations.

From this pilot project, the authors also concluded that conventional measures of gait (force plate data, defined owner observations at home, and gait evaluation by videotape recording) are insensitive, and would require a large number of subjects to attain acceptable results. It also appears that assessment of a dog's gait in an unusual place (the veterinary hospital) does not correlate well with observations which are routinely seen in the home, and that gait abnormalities and occasional signs of chronic orthopedic pain shown by dogs at home are difficult to quantify. For example, following conclusion of the study, owners of five dogs described significant and valuable reduction of signs of pain in their dogs at home. Four of these owners sought and paid for further acupuncture treatment for their dogs in the months which followed. Yet, the observations recorded by these same owners during the project (number of painful events each day, overall mobility of the dog, etc.) did not reveal significant improvement.

During this study, eight dogs were evaluated and treated for hip dysplasia. The owners of five of these dogs described significant improvement and reduction of pain; four of these dogs continue to be treated for their chronic pain with acupuncture. An additional five dogs were evaluated but had to be rejected from the study for cause; these five dogs were given a specific diagnosis, which better informed the owner of their problems, and in several cases resulted in appropriate therapy (e.g. surgical repair of a ruptured cruciate ligament).

Wildlife rehabilitation (including orphaned wildlife care) (2002-03)
H. Gelens, C. Runyon, and P-Y. Daoust

The purpose of this ongoing service project is to maintain and improve upon the level of care provided to injured and orphaned wildlife brought to the AVC. This includes nursing care, medical management, and special procedures such as diagnostic tests, X-rays, and bandaging/casting. Humane euthanasia is sometimes the best option for some of these animals. The project also encourages continued and expanded student participation. Students in veterinary medicine at the AVC, as well as pre-veterinary students, receive hands on wildlife interaction through participation in this project. This past year has been a busy one for this project. Many birds and several displaced and/or injured wild mammals were admitted to the AVC. A small percentage had to be euthanised but overall survival was up compared to last year's figures.

Songbird cared for at the AVC before release

Due to the late start of the summer in 2003, many small birds came into the AVC during a relatively short period. The number of patients was more than could be handled with the available cage space. For immediate housing relief some additional bird cages were purchased. Work on a long term housing solution has been started by creating a solid straight table/platform for the bird cages, that will improve access, hygiene and comfort for the birds. As well, additional larger size birdcages have been ordered for within the AVC flight cage. This project will be done at cost thanks to the help of (student) volunteers.

An information sheet has been prepared for members of the public who bring in injured or displaced wildlife, to explain the programme and the costs involved. This project continues to provide quality veterinary care for injured wildlife, and to educate future veterinarians in the way injured and orphaned wildlife can be cared for. Hands-on student participation remains at the core of this project, which has been funded by the Centre since 2000.

AVC humane dog training programme (2002-03)
N. Guy

The goals of this ongoing project are to improve the quality of life for dogs being held for adoption at the Prince Edward Island Humane Society (PEI HS); to increase the adoption and retention of humane society dogs and to develop better ways of tracking this process; to increase the basic level of dog training skills among AVC students and humane society staff; to pro-actively 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.

Between May 2002 and April 2003 there were 204 dogs placed on the adoption floor of the PEI HS. Of those dogs, 137 were classified as puppies and 67 were classified as young adults or adults. Thirty-five of the puppies arrived at the shelter as part of a litter or were born at the shelter. AVC student trainers worked with about half of the dogs. Many of the youngest puppies were adopted out very quickly and so were not trained. In other cases, dogs remained on the adoption floor for up to 5 months, if space was available and they were still judged to be adoptable by the shelter manager. Dogs which remained at the shelter for longer periods received additional attention from the students to help them deal with the shelter environment. One young dog with recurrent health and behaviour issues related to kennel stress was fostered by one of the student trainers and was then successfully adopted.

The trainers counselled many visitors to the shelter on appropriate and humane training techniques and general dog behaviour. Fifty-three of the dogs on the adoption floor this past year had been surrendered to the shelter for reasons related to the owner feeling as though they couldn't cope with owning the dog. Members of the public continue to ask questions that reveal a very poor understanding of basic canine behaviour and principles of behaviour modification. As an important part of this programme, almost all new dog owners were called within approximately a week of the adoption to check on their progress, regardless of whether or not the AVC trainers had clicker trained the dog prior to adoption. Any calls coming into the shelter regarding problem behaviour in an adopted dog were forwarded to the student coordinator.

In November 2002 the PEI HS began a microchipping programme for all adopted dogs. This should improve the ability to document the project's long-term effectiveness as the HS will now be able to accurately identify any dogs that are returned to the shelter.

By enhancing training skills and the understanding of normal dog behaviour by members of the general community, it can be expected that many more dogs than those that go through the shelter will benefit from more humane interactions with people. It is clear from the type of questions received at the shelter that awareness of positive training methods (clicker training) has increased substantially over the past two years since this project was begun.

The proficiency of the general AVC student body in the area of behaviour modification has also increased substantially over the past two years. The volunteers have received additional training from both Dr. Guy and trainer Heather Logan. These students go on to help not only shelter visitors who are having problems with pets, but also their classmates. In a special opportunity this year, the AVC trainers attended a clicker training workshop run by the inmates of the Nova Institute, a Corrections Canada facility for women located in Truro, N.S. These inmates train shelter dogs to the level of service work, and run classes for the public under the direction of Heather Logan. It was an amazing experience for all involved as veterinary students and inmates shared training ideas (and lunch!).

In November 2002 a large clicker training demonstration was held at the annual AVC Open House. Over four continuous hours, hundreds of people stopped to watch and learn more about the shelter programme and about positive training techniques. There was also a clicker training demonstration by Heather Logan to veterinary students from all four Canadian veterinary colleges at the annual convention of the Student Chapter of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (SCVMA) in January 2003 at the AVC.

More information about the programme can be found on the *AVC humane dog training* web site at **www.upei.ca/%7Etraindog/** An article on the programme is also in preparation for submission to the *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*. The article describes the benefits and pitfalls of using veterinary students in a structured programme as shelter volunteers, in the hope that other veterinary schools will develop similar programmes with humane societies in their areas.

Perhaps the most significant impact of this programme on the welfare of animals is the dissemination of knowledge by graduating AVC veterinarians to their colleagues and clients. Although this effect will always be difficult to measure, a graduate's hands-on experience and "comfort" with managing problem behaviour will undoubtedly work to keep many dogs in their homes who might otherwise be relinquished to shelters.

Molly and owner Donna Hearn

Molly is a German shepherd mix puppy who was born at the PEI HS after her mother was taken there as a stray in December 2002. When Molly was adopted, she had been in the shelter 5 months. She was the second last of a litter of 11 to be adopted, with the last being adopted shortly thereafter. AVC student trainer Allison Avery started clicker training with her in May 2003 and continued until she was adopted five weeks later. When Allison started working with her, Molly was very fearful and would cower in the back of her kennel when offered the opportunity to come out. Molly was very responsive to positive training. She knows all her basic obedience, and is fully house trained and crate trained. Her new owner has continued the clicker training at home and has been thrilled with the puppy. Molly is now an outgoing, friendly well-adjusted puppy who can be seen regularly in the PEI HS dog park socializing with other dogs and people.

Pain management in birds
C. Runyon, A. Ferraro, and E. Miller

The importance of proper assessment and management of pain is being recognized more and more in veterinary and human medicine. Untreated pain causes physical and psychological stresses that result in states ranging from mild discomfort, to delayed healing and recovery, to shock and even death. Pain management is a real challenge in birds. Little is known about how to assess if birds are feeling pain and how to determine effective dosages of pain relievers. The intent of this study was to investigate pain assessment and management in companion and wild birds, by measuring physical changes that are known to be associated with pain in other species, and by documenting behaviours in birds that may be associated with pain by videotaping the birds when they are alone. Dr. Runyon's eventual goal was to develop specific ways of assessing pain in companion and wild birds, and to determine appropriate medication to relieve their pain.

Completion of an in-depth literature review resulted in a change in the research model (to pigeons, *Columbia livia*) as well as the drug selected for study (to carprofen). The research proposal was re-written, accepted by Dr. Ferraro's graduate committee, and submitted to multiple agencies to be considered for complete funding.

This project was funded as a pilot project by the AWC. Unfortunately the investigators were unable to obtain sufficient funding from other funding partners to continue, and the project was terminated.

Improving care of poisoned animals in Atlantic Canada
C. Gaskill

This service project had 2 objectives. The first was to improve the diagnosis, clinical care and treatment of poisoned companion animals by providing timely and accurate toxicological information to the veterinarians of Atlantic Canada. The second was to improve the general knowledge and instructional materials of AVC professionals by increasing usage of the Animal Poison Control Center (APCC) database.

This project has been a great success with local and regional veterinarians and has significantly improved the care of numerous poisoned animals. Dr. Gaskill and clinicians at AVC receive at least one and often several calls per day from regional veterinarians looking for guidance with poison cases they are treating. Through the database of the APCC, clinicians are able to access information on unusual or new toxins - information that is not available from any other source. As well, veterinary students, interns, and residents are able to access important epidemiological information concerning common types of poisoning in the different regions of North America. This has made it possible to provide veterinarians with the most accurate information available, thereby improving treatment for many poisoned animals. This information has also enabled better teaching in this area, and thereby will improve the abilities of AVC graduates to treat poisoned animals in the future.

In addition to phone consultations with individual veterinarians about specific poison cases, more general information about treatment of poisoned animals is provided via a web-based newsletter, available at **www.upei.ca/~toxinfo/** or from the AWC web site. The newsletters contain information about toxicological resources available to veterinarians, sampling techniques to diagnose intoxications, information on new and unusual animal toxicants, and other toxicological information. Dr. Gaskill has received positive feedback from numerous veterinarians on the usefulness of the newsletters.

In summary, this project has been a tremendous success with veterinarians at the AVC and throughout the Atlantic region. There has been an increase in veterinary awareness of the resources available to assist with poison cases, and expanded training in this area for AVC students, residents, interns, and regional veterinarians.

Marine wildlife rehabilitation (2001-03)
P-Y. Daoust, H. Gelens, A. Ortenburger, C. Runyon, and G. Dobbin

The objective of this service project was to maintain and improve upon the level of care provided to marine mammals and birds presented to the AVC Teaching Hospital and to animals stranded on the shores of PEI. This includes provision of adequate holding facilities and diet, medical treatment of animals (including relevant laboratory tests), and euthanasia if necessary.

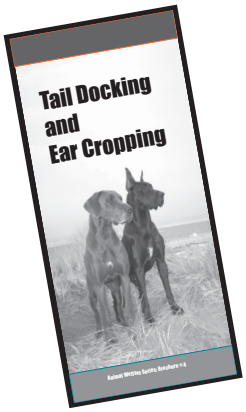
Few marine animals were presented to the AVC Teaching Hospital for medical care during the duration of this project. Over the last two years, the main contribution in the area of marine wildlife rehabilitation has been in the care of orphan harbour seal pups. One or a few of these pups have been brought to the AVC every year. Although taking care of these animals is labour-intensive, this occurs at a time of year when several very interested summer students are available to help. In 2002 three orphan harbour seal pups received care at the AVC. Two were successfully weaned, fattened, and released while the third died from a severe bacterial meningitis after a few weeks of care. This pup was likely already sick when it arrived.

An unexpected and beneficial development occurred following submission of the sick seal. It was brought to the AVC by a PEI tourist operator whose facility includes a medium-sized swimming pool. In previous years, this person had a permit from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans authorizing the capture of 1 or 2 healthy harbour seal pups from PEI waters in June, to be held in the pool for exhibition until early September when they would be released back into the

wild. There are concerns about capturing healthy young seals and keeping them in captivity for at least two months, at a time when these animals should be learning to adapt to their environment in preparation for the much more demanding winter season. An informal arrangement was made whereby orphan seals cared for at AVC can be brought to the facility as soon as they are weaned, so that they may benefit from a larger pool to swim in and where they can learn to catch live fish, until they are released in early September. In return, the facility's proprietor has agreed not to capture wild healthy seals. The 2002 orphan pup that survived was transferred to that facility in late June and tagged and released (with another captured seal) in September of that year. A pup orphaned in 2003 was also cared for at AVC, monitored regularly at the facility this past summer, and released in September.

The ability to respond to medical and other needs of some marine animals provides the opportunity to promote interest in, and respect for, the species involved. Several veterinary students have gained knowledge and experience as a result of taking care of the marine animals that were presented to the AVC Teaching Hospital. This will be of benefit to them in future opportunities to assist with care of marine wildlife. In addition, if in future years two or three orphaned harbour seal pups are weaned and brought to the above tourist facility, this will prevent the capture and maintenance in captivity of an equal number of healthy pups.

Ear cropping and tail docking in dogs: information pamphlet
K. Evers



Cosmetic surgery is performed to change a dog's appearance, and is not required for health reasons. Although banned in many countries, tail docking and to a lesser extent ear cropping are still common in Canada and the US, as specified by North American breed standards. These procedures are painful and there is a risk of post-operative complications, including infection, improper ear shape, and chronic pain. Working with Drs. Crook and Hewson, veterinary student Keri Evers has written an information brochure about these surgeries, to help owners make informed choices when acquiring a pup of a breed in which ear cropping and/or tail docking is still common practice in North America. This project was funded through the AWC Student Project Fund. Brochures are available from **acrook@upei.ca**

A peaceful death for all creatures great and small
B. Murrell-Liland, B. Fawcett, S. Graham, and J. Lear

Veterinarians are not uncommonly called upon to euthanise animals. To provide the best possible death for the animal, and support for the people involved, it is important that vets be well-informed and well-prepared with the necessary technical skills and an understanding of the emotional issues surrounding euthanasia. Senior veterinary student Blakeley Murrell-Liland organized this one-day workshop to educate fellow students about specific euthanasia techniques for different animal species, and to provide information and an opportunity for discussion about the many other aspects of humane animal euthanasia, including emotional issues.

In the morning session, six speakers presented specific techniques for humane euthanasia of companion animals, exotic pets, pocket pets, lab animals, horses, cattle, wild mammals and wild birds. The six afternoon speakers talked about the human-animal bond, grief, support for the client and veterinary team, and pet loss hotlines. The speakers included faculty, staff and students from the AVC, and together they did a thorough job of covering the many aspects of humane euthanasia.

Attendees included veterinary students, and technicians, support staff and veterinarians from seven different Island veterinary clinics. Based on the responses received from the evaluation form, people found the seminar to be very helpful and informative and believe that a similar seminar should be held every year or every other year.

Attendees received a handout with lecture notes from each of the speakers, as well as information on euthanasia and grief from the Argus Institute which operates out of Colorado State University School of Veterinary Medicine. A handout was also placed in the UPEI Robertson Library.

The more educated that veterinary professionals are about humane euthanasia, the more confident and self-assured they will be when they have to explain euthanasia to pet owners and when they have to perform euthanasia This will have a direct positive effect on the animals with which they work.

This workshop was sponsored through the Centre's Student Project Fund.

CONFERENCE NEWS

In June, Dr. Hewson and graduate students Julie Christie and Nina Wojciechowska attended the 37th annual conference of the International Society for Applied Ethology in Italy. They attended an equine welfare workshop where delegates proposed that surveys of welfare were needed with research on the effect of riding aids on welfare, as well as public education. These elements were present in Julie Christie's survey (see page 2), some results from which were presented as a poster. In addition, Dr. Hewson gave an oral presentation on the background to the canine quality of life research that she and Nina Wojciechowska are pursuing.

2003 Invited Lecture in Animal Welfare
On November 1, Dr. Joe Stookey from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM), University of Saskatchewan, gave the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre's 2003 Invited Lecture. The lecture generated a lively discussion and was the plenary session at the Atlantic Veterinary College's Fall Conference. Dr. Stookey examined the paradox that companion animals are castrated under anesthesia while farm animals receive no anesthetic or pain killers for the same procedure. He also examined the contradiction that painkillers are not commonly given for tail docking in any species even though the available data indicate that the procedure causes acute and

sometimes chronic pain. Dr. Stookey argued that it is largely indefensible to conduct routine surgical procedures (known to be painful) in animals without providing adequate pain relief, particularly when, in the case of dehorning, data do not support the popular view that horned beef animals produce better carcasses. Dr. Stookey also noted that questions about the humane management of these procedures are not going to leave the veterinary profession or the livestock and companion animal industries. Dr. Stookey has had extensive involvement with the sheep, swine and beef industries as an owner, as a farm laborer, in management roles, and via his research; he called for all groups to carefully examine the various issues and interests, and to be proactive in addressing ethical concerns.

Dr. Joe Stookey talking to students

During his visit to the College, Dr. Stookey also gave a seminar on recent research done by him and his graduate student, Derek Haley. A number of objective indices indicated that two-step weaning was much less stressful for beef calves than abrupt weaning. In addition, Dr. Stookey also talked with undergraduate veterinary students, met with graduate students and faculty at the College, and gave an interview on CBC radio's Maritime Noon.

Ontario Veterinary College Animal Welfare Forum
On October 4, Dr. Hewson spoke at the Ontario Veterinary College's third annual Animal Welfare Forum. She addressed the question *What should vets do about animal welfare*? The presentation generated lively discussion in which students expressed frustration at the lack of professional guidance in areas of welfare concern, and the need for the profession to have clearer positions. Other speakers were Dr. Dan Weary (University of British Columbia), Dr. Bernie Rollin (Colorado State University), Kris Chandroo and Dr. Suzanne Millman (University of Guelph), and Dr. Kirsty Lauglin (University of Michigan). One of the delegates was Anthea Smith (Class of 2007, WCVM) who has begun an animal welfare club there. Now all three Canadian anglophone veterinary colleges have student animal welfare clubs.

OTHER NEWS

2003 Christofor Award in Animal Welfare
Fourth year student Barb Jones is the recipient of this year's award, presented October 30 at the Atlantic Veterinary College Awards Night. Barb has a long-standing commitment to improving the welfare of animals. Prior to attending the AVC, she volunteered at animal shelters and at the Cape Wildlife Center in Cape Cod, rescuing and helping to treat injured wildlife. During her years at the College, Barb has been vocal about animal welfare issues, and was the moving force behind the establishment of the AVC Humane Ethics Club, one of the first student chapters of the Society for Veterinary Medical Ethics. The main goal is to address issues relevant to the ethics of animal treatment within the veterinary profession. Club events have included a debate on the ethics of declawing, ear cropping and tail docking; a presentation on animal welfare issues in the Canadian seal hunt; a lecture on animal ethics from a member of the UPEI Philosophy Department; presentations on animal use and alternatives in the veterinary programme; and an educational video and panel discussion about the role of early-age spay-neuter programmes in controlling pet overpopulation.

2003 Christofor Award recipient Barb Jones

Barb has also been extensively involved with the Cat Action Team (CAT), a volunteer organization working to care for stray and feral cats on PEI. She has helped with fundraising, newsletter creation, and trapping of cats for neutering, and was the president of the first Board of Directors. Over the last 2 years she has worked closely with Dr. Peter Foley in establishing procedures for feral cat neuter clinics at AVC through the AWC-funded *Neutering feral cats on PEI* project. Barb is instrumental in organizing and coordinating the veterinary student volunteers at the bi-monthly feral cat neuter days.

It is clear that Barb's interest in improving animal welfare was important in her preparation for veterinary school, and has been a central concern during her time as an AVC student. The AWC has no doubt that this passion will continue to be fundamental to her work as a veterinarian, and congratulates her on her well-deserved receipt of the 2003 Christofor Award.

Animal Welfare Centre graduate students
In August, Julie Christie successfully defended her MSc thesis *Factors affecting the welfare of non-racing horses in Prince Edward Island*. Nina Wojciechowska will defend her MSc thesis in December (*Development of a novel instrument to assess canine quality of life*).

Update on Federal Cruelty to Animals Bill
Bill C-10B, an Act to amend the Criminal Code, is the first major amendment to the Cruelty to Animals sections of the Criminal Code since these laws were originally enacted in 1892. The new bill would move animals out of the property section of the Criminal Code and provide tougher punishments for killing or harming an animal, or for failing to provide adequate care. Bill C-10B has been before Parliament for 4 years. The Bill has received careful scrutiny in both the House of Commons and the Senate, and many organizations have provided input through the respective Standing Committees. The Bill is widely supported across Canada and has the expressed support of organizations such as the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association and the Association of Chiefs

of Polices, the provincial governments of Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, humane societies, and groups representing researchers, hunters, trappers, and farmers.

After the Bill was passed in the House of Commons (October 2002), the Senate proposed 5 amendments, most of which the House rejected in June 2003. The Senate re-proposed the amendments and the House rejected the amendments for the second time in September 2003. On November 6 the Senate voted to send the Bill back to Committee for the third time in a year, which effectively kills the Bill since Parliament prorogued immediately thereafter. (Prorogation is the ceremonial ending of a parliamentary session. All pending business before the 2 Houses is abolished). It will be up to the government of the country's new Prime Minister, Paul Martin, to determine whether to bring the animal cruelty legislation back to Parliament.

Bill C-10B contains amendments to the Canadian Criminal Code that would provide important new protection for animals in Canada. Under the Bill, Canadians convicted of intentional cruelty to animals would 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. It is widely believed that this legislation would make a significant contribution to the protection of criminally abused animals in Canada.

Animal Welfare Series brochures

The first five in the Centre's Animal Welfare Series of public education brochures are available, and can be obtained by contacting **acrook@upei.ca** The titles are: *So You Want to Buy an Exotic Pet....*, *Tail Docking and Ear Cropping*, *Feral Cats*, *Declawing*, and *Caring for Your Horse*. Copies of each brochure were distributed with the summer 2003 edition of *AWC News*, to all Atlantic Canadian veterinary clinics, all veterinary colleges and associations on our mailing list (which includes all colleges in North America, and others internationally), and to other outlets such as humane societies locally, nationally, and internationally. The brochures have been featured in the *Canadian Veterinary Journal*, and the *Alberta Veterinary Medical Association Magazine*. The brochures can be viewed in Adobe on the Centre's website (**www.upei.ca/awc**). Up to 25 copies may be ordered at no cost, while for larger orders a nominal fee of ten cents per brochure plus postage is charged.

We are very pleased at the interest generated by the brochures. We have received many orders, primarily from Canadian veterinarians. We are consistently told that the brochures are attractive and easy-to-read, and that they provide important and helpful information for veterinarians to use in discussing issues with clients such as declawing of cats. We have had requests for French brochures and are looking into translation options.

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.

Support the Animal Welfare Centre

We welcome the generosity of animal welfare supporters and friends of the Atlantic Veterinary College. For example, planned gifts established in the name of a donor, friend, or family member can be a fitting and lasting tribute. If you are interested in learning about ways you can support the work of the Centre, please contact: Dr. Alice Crook, Animal Welfare Centre Coordinator at 902-628-4360 or acrook@upei.ca

The Animal Welfare Centre gratefully acknowledges the continued support of the Sir James Dunn Foundation and the Friends of the Christofor Foundation.