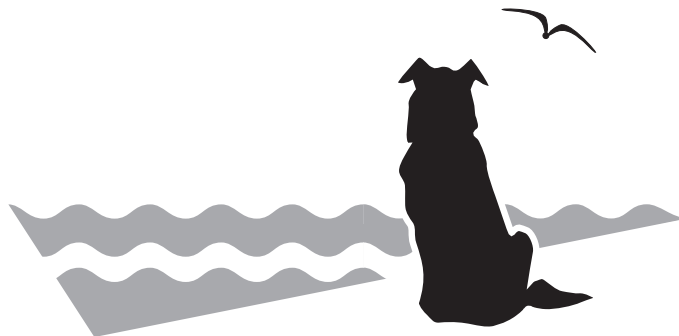




AVC NEWS

NUMBER 17 • SUMMER 2006



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



From the Coordinator's Desk

Welcome to the *Summer 2006 AWC News*, the newsletter of the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre at the Atlantic Veterinary College, University of Prince Edward Island. In this issue, you will find descriptions of the eight service and research projects recently funded through the SJDAWC 2006 grant, bringing to over 100 the number of projects funded since 1994. You will also find information on the upcoming second annual "Animal Welfare: In Practice" conference (September 2006), an update on the federal government's animal cruelty legislation, and an article about a second chance for mature dogs through the *AVC humane dog training programme*.

With the 2006 grant, the Centre has funded five new projects and renewed funding for three service projects. Among the new projects, we are particularly excited about the *Chinook Project*, through which AVC clinicians and students will provide veterinary services to a small community on Baffin Island. Dr. Wendy Duckett's two returning service projects continue to provide health management services to the Handibear Hills Equine Sanctuary Inc. and the PEI Equine Retirement Society Inc. The Centre's longest-running project (funded since 1994), *Medical and surgical care of homeless animals*, received another two years of funding under the leadership of Dr. Caroline Runyon, in cooperation with the PEI Humane Society.

Dr. Caroline Hewson left the Atlantic Veterinary College at the end of April to return to the United Kingdom. The College has very much appreciated her leadership as inaugural Research Chair in Animal Welfare, as well as her initiatives both at the College and internationally, which have helped to raise veterinary awareness of animal welfare issues and to make a name for the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre. It has been a pleasure for me to work with her on the many initiatives we have undertaken over the last six years, including the Animal Welfare Series of brochures, and various speakers and conferences hosted by the Centre. Through her articles and presentations in Canada and abroad (notably her regular columns in the *Canadian Veterinary Journal*, and, most recently, her guest editorship of the *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education* special issue on animal welfare, Winter 2005), she has challenged veterinarians, veterinary students, and members of the public to think of animal welfare in broader terms than is customary.

With Dr. Hewson's resignation, the College took the opportunity to thoroughly review the position of Research Chair that was created when the SJDAWC was launched in 2000. There was agreement that concerns and awareness about animal welfare are growing within society, and that it behooves veterinarians to bring their expertise in animal health and well-being to the debate. Shifts in attitudes within the veterinary profession to improve the welfare of animals, and to show leadership in this area, must start with teaching at the veterinary colleges.

Ultimately, there has been a College-wide affirmation of the importance of leadership in research and in teaching about animal welfare. The closing date for the Chair's position was May 30. Look for a message from the new Chair in Animal Welfare in the fall issue of this newsletter.

Please visit our website at www.upei.ca/awc to find out about upcoming events at the Centre, and for information on all projects funded to date, associated publications and presentations, and animal welfare resources at UPEI's Robertson Library.

AC Crook



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

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PROJECTS FUNDED—2006

Evaluation of platelet function in ill dogs

S Burton, B Horney, A Nicastro, P Foley, E Côté

Platelets are small blood cells that are important in the formation of blood clots. Dogs with various illnesses, including liver, kidney, heart or inflammatory disease, or cancer, can have changes in platelet function that may lead to serious complications or death. Existing tests of platelet function are crude in nature and somewhat uncomfortable for patients, or require expensive and time-consuming shipment to specialized laboratories.

The situation has improved recently in human medicine with the development of a simple machine, the Platelet Function Analyzer (PFA)-100, which assesses the function of platelets through a measurement called closure time. In a pilot project funded through the SJDAWC in 2005, Dr. Burton established normal AVC reference values for healthy dogs using the PFA-100. The current project will use the analyzer to assess results in ill dogs with possible increased or decreased platelet function. This knowledge will assist in the treatment of such ailing canine patients, at AVC and elsewhere, once the results are published.

Survival profile of Standardbred horses on PEI

S Dohoo, I Dohoo

There have been few studies looking at longevity of horses. The profile of the lifespan of Canadian Standardbreds, including reasons for career termination, is not known. This is a very specialized breed, and few of the horses unsuitable for racing or breeding move into a second career as a performance or recreational horse.

PEI has a very strong Standardbred industry, with many stables involved in breeding and racing. This study will provide a profile of a sub-population of horses involved in all sectors of the industry, over a one-year period. For each horse enrolled in the study, baseline data will be collected, including age, sex, breeding and racing history, present health status, and management factors. Each month, the farm owner/manager will be visited and data collected on any changes in health status,

management factors, or racing performance of the individual horses, as well as changes to the herd, including reasons for culling, if applicable. The data will be analyzed to describe the lifespan of Standardbreds on PEI, and to identify major risk factors for early end of career. This will provide guidance for future studies to modify these risk factors, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of life and longevity of Standardbred horses in Canada.

Health management services for the PEI Equine Retirement Society Inc.

W Duckett, G Conboy

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 14 have been placed in new homes, 6 have been euthanized due to intractable health problems, and 7 are currently at the facility. Through the support of the SJDAWC, AVC provides preventive medical care to the horses at the Society.

Project funding is continued for two more years. The programme includes a physical exam on all horses that come to the PEIERS, a parasite monitoring and control programme for the facility, dental work, routine vaccinations, and minor surgical and medical procedures as needed. The programme includes vaccination against Eastern, Western, and West Nile Virus Encephalitis, and screening of all horses arriving at the facility for equine infectious anemia. AVC senior veterinary students, interns, and residents participate in the care of these horses. This project provides significant benefits to the horses through basic preventive medicine in preparation for adoption, and by minimizing respiratory disease and parasite burden at the facility.

Health management services for Handibear Hills Equine Sanctuary Inc.

W Duckett, G Conboy

Similar to the project *Health management services for the PEI Equine Retirement Society Inc.*, this project provides preventive medical care to the horses at the Handibear Hills Equine Sanctuary Inc. This facility in South Granville, PEI, is owned by Ms. Yogi Fell who for 20 years has provided a refuge for horses that need a home. Through programmes such as the Trailblazers Club, young people and adults spend time with the horses at Handibear Hills learning to ride, groom, and generally care for the horses.

Project funding is continued for two more years. The programme provides regular dental care and vaccinations for the 21 horses currently at the sanctuary, as well as parasite monitoring and control. The programme includes vaccination against Eastern, Western, and West Nile Virus Encephalitis. AVC senior veterinary students, interns, and residents participate in the care of these horses.

Chinook Project—Providing veterinary care to Kimmirut, Nunavut

L Miller, J Magrath

This project will provide basic veterinary care to an isolated community on the south shore of Baffin Island. The community has a population of 450, many of whom maintain a traditional lifestyle involving hunting, fishing, and several strong sled dog teams. There is an estimated dog population of 115. No veterinary care is currently available.

A team of one coordinator, two clinicians, one senior veterinary student, and up to four additional vet students will travel to Kimmirut for one week in August. Team members will provide veterinary care for sled dogs and homebound dogs in the form of vaccinations, examination and treatment for parasites, spaying and neutering, and some medical and surgical treatments (such as tumour removal). The AVC volunteers will also provide an educational programme for interested community members. Adults will be given basic information about emergency care, vaccinations, and parasite prevention; and supplies will be left with them to improve the health of their animals. Children will

receive information about animal welfare and caring for the dogs.

Chinook team members will also participate in a cultural exchange, to allow them to broaden their understanding of Canadian diversity. Participants will keep journals during their stay, which will be compiled into a record of the experience. This inaugural project provides funding for two summers; it is anticipated that the programme may travel to other Northern Canadian communities in the future.

Development of an objective scoring system for changes to the equine pituitary gland in aged horses (pilot project)

L Miller, W Duckett, D McFarlane, M Breshears, M Miller

Equine Cushing's disease, or PPID, occurs in about 30% of horses over 20 years of age. The disease results from overproduction of hormones by the pituitary gland with resulting impairment of immune and metabolic function. This causes an array of clinical syndromes, including laminitis (frequently resulting in euthanasia), pneumonia, muscle wasting, and diabetes. There is effective treatment available for PPID, but there are difficulties with diagnosis, due in part to inconsistencies among veterinary pathologists in interpreting histopathological changes in the pituitary gland.

This pilot project will involve three pathologists who will evaluate, individually, histopathological changes in the pituitary glands of aged horses that were euthanized for unrelated reasons. Information about the horse's age, clinical history, and hormone levels will be collected before death. The pathologists will develop and verify objective criteria for grading the changes, which will eventually allow veterinarians to more accurately diagnose, and subsequently treat, PPID.

Medical and surgical care of homeless animals

C Runyon, W Grasse, E Cawthorn

During the past 12 years, more than 2,750 dogs and cats have received care through this programme, which has been funded for a further two years to continue to address the problems of pet overpopulation and homeless animals in the region. Injured or sick animals are brought in to the AVC

Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) by the PEI Humane Society or Good Samaritans. These animals receive physical examinations, x-rays and/or other diagnostic procedures; emergency medical care; and continued medical or surgical care (including neutering) as required, in consultation with the shelter. Some lost animals are claimed by their owners, while most, once healthy, are placed in homes through standard shelter adoption. Some animals are placed in "special needs" adoptive homes because they require specific care during recovery. Animals with severe illness or extensive injuries are humanely euthanized.

There are many benefits to this programme. Sick or injured dogs and cats found by, or brought to, the PEI Humane Society have immediate access to treatment. Neutered animals are more adoptable and healthier and they won't "accidentally" produce any litters. Due to the close working relationship developed with the animal shelter, there is increased awareness and discussion of companion animal welfare issues with AVC students.

A new diagnostic test for inflammatory airway disease in the horse

M Wichtel, W Duckett, S Burton, A Hoffman

Inflammatory airway disease (IAD) causes cough and reduced performance in horses of all ages. It affects a large proportion of stabled horses and, if left untreated, may lead to chronic lung damage, commonly known as "heaves." Equine pulmonary function testing (PFT) can lead to earlier diagnosis of airway inflammation; however, such testing is not available in Atlantic Canadian practices or at AVC because of equipment costs and lack of portability.

This project will look at a new, non-invasive, portable PFT system (Open Pleth™), which shows promise as a practical screening test for IAD. Dr. Wichtel will compare lung function, using the Open Pleth™ system, with lung inflammation, as assessed by bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL) cytology and other traditional diagnostic techniques. If the non-invasive, portable, and affordable PFT system correlates well with the results of BAL, then it will likely become the method of choice for the diagnosis of IAD in horses. Earlier diagnosis will prevent the progression of IAD to heaves, one of the most debilitating respiratory diseases in the horse.

UPCOMING CONFERENCE

ANIMAL WELFARE



IN PRACTICE

Animal Welfare: In Practice September 22–23, 2006

This conference, to be held at the Atlantic Veterinary College in September, will focus on small and exotic animal welfare, with talks on psittacine management to prevent behaviour problems, zoo animal welfare, local and regional anesthetic techniques, and issues in companion animal breeding. Speaking at the conference will be **Andrew Luescher**, DVM, PhD, Director of the Purdue University Animal Behaviour Clinic; **Georgia Mason**, PhD, Canada Research Chair in Animal Welfare, University of Guelph; **Kip Lemke**, MSc, DVM, Associate Professor of Anesthesiology, AVC; and **Norma Guy**, MSc, DVM, AVC Behaviour Clinic.

Dr. Luescher will begin the conference by giving the SJDWC's 2006 Invited Lecture in Animal Welfare, on *Stress-related behaviour problems in dogs*. The conference will be hosted by the AVC Humane Ethics Club with support from the SJDWC Student Project Fund and the Animal Welfare Foundation of Canada. Please see www.upei.ca/animalwelfareinpractice for more details and registration information.

OTHER NEWS

Update on Federal Animal Cruelty Bill

The most recent version of the previous Liberal government's proposed legislation to amend the animal cruelty provisions of the Criminal Code, Bill C-50, was introduced in the House of Commons on May 16, 2005. It was identical to its predecessor, C-22, except that C-50 had the addition of a non-derogation clause to address Aboriginal concerns that had been raised in the Senate. Bill C-50 died when the federal election was called in the fall.

Senator John Bryden introduced a private member's bill in late April 2006. This is identical to Bill S-24, which Senator Bryden tabled in February 2005. It contains the exact wording of the current Criminal Code legislation, enacted in 1892, but with provisions for increased penalties, as in the previous

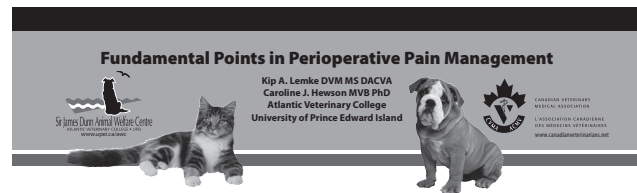
Parliament's Bill C-50. This is where the similarities between C-50 and S-213 end. There are many problems with Bill S-213, as follows:

- Bill S-213 maintains the outdated and confusing language of the original legislation, written in 1892.
- The Bill maintains the loophole of “wilful” neglect, which makes it virtually impossible to convict in cases of neglect, even where the animals have starved to death.
- S-213 maintains the animal cruelty provisions in the property section of the Criminal Code. This does not reflect current societal views towards animals. Cruelty against animals is viewed today as a crime in its own right, not only as a crime against property.
- S-213 protects different types of animals differently—i.e., cattle are in a different section than other animals. Crimes against cattle are indictable offences, whereas all other offences are summary offences.
- S-213 does not make it an offence to train an animal to fight other animals.

For these reasons, organizations that supported Bill C-50, including the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies and Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, are not supporting Bill S-213, and are instead calling for the re-introduction of C-50. For more information, see

www.cfhs.ca/legislation/Criminal_Code

Poster on perioperative pain management in dogs and cats



Dr. Caroline Hewson's 2001 survey of perioperative analgesic usage in dogs and cats¹ led to an educational poster and handout for veterinarians, and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, in cooperation with the SJDAWC, recently translated, printed, and distributed these materials to all small and mixed animal practices across Canada—2,200 clinics in all. The poster may be viewed on the SJDAWC website (www.upei.ca/awc). A limited number of hard copies are available (contact acrook@upei.ca). Drs. Caroline Hewson and Kip Lemke are creating a similar poster concerning analgesic use in cattle, pigs, and horses.

SPONSORS

The Centre has recently received renewed funding for the fifth six-month phase of the *Pegasus feral cat neutering programme*. We are grateful to the Pegasus Family Foundation, through the Peninsula Community Foundation, for this continued support.

And, as always, we most gratefully acknowledge the ongoing support of the Friends of the Christofor Foundation, without which the SJDAWC would not exist.

Help animals by supporting the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre

We welcome the generosity of animal welfare supporters and friends of the Atlantic Veterinary College. Donations or planned gifts in the name of a special animal companion, friend, or family member can be a fitting and lasting tribute that will benefit animals for generations to come. Donors may choose whether a gift will be used for the direct benefit of animals in the community, to support research projects, or for other priorities of the Centre. For more information on ways that you can support the work of the Centre and the Atlantic Veterinary College, please contact Rosemary O'Malley-Keyes, Major Gifts Officer, at (902)894-2865 or omalleykeyes@upei.ca.

¹ Hewson CJ, Dohoo IR, Lemke KA. Perioperative use of analgesics in dogs and cats by Canadian veterinarians in 2001. *Can Vet J* 2006;47(4):352-359.

Old dogs can learn new tricks

Kim McCallum

Recently I adopted Rosie from the PEI Humane Society. She is cute and cuddly, playful, and full of spunk. I love the way she curls up when she sleeps, and it is fun to see her explore and discover her new environment. How old is she, you might ask? A puppy? No, actually she is almost five years old.



Rosie (far left) and friends

Rosie is a full-grown adult who, among many dogs her age, found herself in the caring arms of the PEI Humane Society. Unfortunately, though, Rosie and her cohorts can wait weeks and sometimes months for a new home. Despite their many endearing qualities, these mature dogs are often overlooked because they are not small and cute like puppies.

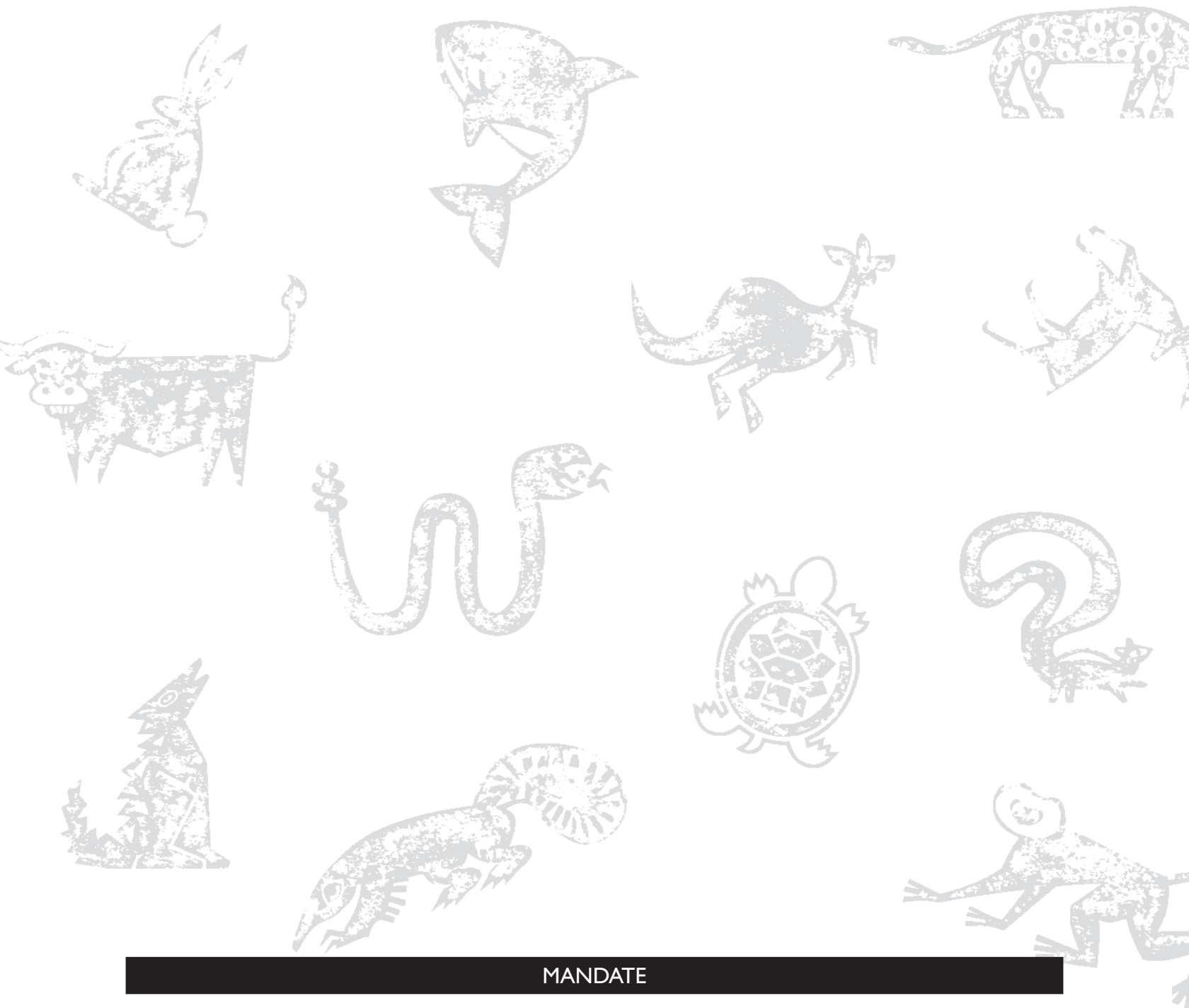
As a trainer at the PEIHS, I was fortunate to work with every dog on the adoption floor. The majority of these dogs are over the age of one. Would it surprise you to know that these dogs are our best students? It is a common misconception that older dogs have little potential to learn new behaviours, or come with too much “baggage” that cannot be modified. Yet, as my experience has confirmed, given a little time, thought, energy, and love, these dogs can quickly learn the basics— and much more.

Harley was another mature dog who, when he arrived at the PEIHS, was a bouncy but very trainable dog. Within a few weeks he learned to sit, lie down, shake paw, and not jump. But he spent another three months at the shelter before he was adopted. During that time he worked diligently and learned to roll over, give high-fives, bow, fetch, and heel. Harley proved that older dogs are able to learn new tricks and change their annoying habits.

All puppies need to be house-trained, leash-trained, and taught the ground rules. If you think you have the energy to train a new puppy, then you have the energy to teach an older dog (likely already house-trained) anything you want. Whether a dog is a puppy, an adolescent, or an adult, each dog has the potential to learn new behaviours, and change old ones, with positive re-enforcement.

When you are considering your next dog, please contemplate adopting an older dog from the Humane Society. Many of these dogs are already house-trained and know the essentials, and are eager to demonstrate that they can learn more. They will make great companions and wonderful additions to your home. We are thankful we found Rosie. She, like her older Humane Society friends, has a big heart that definitely deserved a second chance.

A recent graduate of AVC and winner of the 2005 Christofor Award in Animal Welfare, Kim was a volunteer trainer with the SJDAWC-funded AVC humane dog training programme (www.upei.ca/~traindog) throughout her four years at the College.



MANDATE

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

Objectives:

- 1) The Centre promotes research projects and service activities where there is a clear potential for tangible benefits to animals.
- 2) The Centre serves as a resource centre to compile, generate, and disseminate information relevant to the well-being of animals.
- 3) The Centre 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.

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