

*the* NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA • COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE  
**veterinary**  
*page*

UF initiates incentives to draw more students into food animal medicine

BY SARAH CAREY

To help address a critical shortage of food supply veterinarians at the local, state and national levels, the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine has initiated two new programs aimed at tempting more veterinary students to pursue careers in the field.

For the first time this year, the college made four admission slots available to pre-veterinary undergraduates with a strong interest in food animal veterinary medicine. These students, identified with the help of faculty from the UF Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences' animal sciences department, were required to have met all prerequisite requirements for veterinary school.

"Beyond these four individuals, there were two other animal sciences majors who were on the alternate list for admission and they also wound up being admitted through the standard admissions process," said Owen Rae, D.V.M., chief of the college's Food Animal Reproduction and Medicine Service, or FARMS.

Each year, four more students will be admitted.

The admissions initiative was created through a joint collaboration involving IFAS; the veterinary college's dean, Glen Hoffsis, D.V.M.; Eleanor Green, D.V.M., chairwoman of the college's department of large animal clinical sciences; members of the Florida Cattlemen's Association; and FARMS faculty members.

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, only 1,703 of its 77,237 member veterinarians are in practices that exclusively focus on food animals. Another 4,459 are in practices that predominantly treat food animals.

UF also is launching a 16-credit food animal certificate program for students who complete requirements aimed at preparing them for careers in food animal practice or the food systems profession.

"The certificate provides a template for mastering basic skills associated with food animal veterinary medicine, including food animal/systems-oriented courses taught within the UF veterinary college as well as targeted extracurricular experiences," Rae said.

Students will be expected to participate actively in the Food Animal Club within the college, and to take part in weekend wet labs that will provide hands-on learning opportunities as well as the chance to interact more frequently with faculty mentors and other students with similar interests.

In addition, students will be required to become members of the American Association of Bovine Practitioners and will be encouraged to participate in the Society for Theriogenology. Both associations strongly advocate student development within those respective disciplines.

Hoffsis said the certificate program will not only enhance students' interest in the food animal specialty early in their veterinary curriculum, but also will position participants as more attractive job candidates in all areas of food supply veterinary medicine.

"Participants in this program will likely be extremely sought after for the very best jobs, due to the cross-disciplinary exposure they will be getting to all aspects of the field, including both practice and industry," Hoffsis said.

However, Green added that ideally, recruitment efforts would start well before veterinary school.

"In local communities, talented young people must be encouraged by local producers, veterinarians, school counselors and others to pursue careers in food supply veterinary medicine," she said. "They must then be mentored well in their pre-veterinary curriculum in order to retain their interest and strengthen their credentials to optimize their chance for admission to and success during veterinary school."

Incoming freshman veterinary student Jason DeLaPaz will complete his master's degree at UF in August. Mentored by Art Donovan, D.V.M., of the FARMS group, DeLaPaz studied the immune response potential of individual Holstein dairy cows. He believes the food animal certificate program will help get him "up and running" in a meaningful career after graduation.

"I believe it will serve an important role in increasing students' awareness and that this may trigger interest in food animal medicine for the very same reasons I have chosen this career path," DeLaPaz said. "I was not raised on or near a farm, but was attracted to the greater purpose involved in food animal production. The food supply is very important, and food animal practitioners help to ensure that it is safe.

"Such a small portion of the population has ever been on a farm and are largely oblivious to the research, concerns and practices involved in food production," DeLaPaz added. "Due to the present as well as the projected shortage in food animal practitioners, I believe it was the right decision for the UF veterinary school to proactively address this issue."



Dr. Carlos Risco is shown at UF's Dairy Research Unit in Hague looking at the total mixed ration fed to cow groups in accordance with their specific animal nutritional needs. The ration consists of silage, hay, commodity feed ingredients, vitamins and minerals  
 (Photo by Sarah Carey)



The calves shown in the photo, taken at UF's Beef Research Unit, are Brahman, Angus and Brahman-Angus crossbreeds. They are awaiting their turn to enter the processing area where they will receive their first immunizations.

(Photo by Sarah Carey)

# Longtime veterinary faculty member acknowledges former residents, friends and colleagues at retirement party

BY SARAH CAREY

**D**r. Gail Kunkle's place in the UF College of Veterinary Medicine's history is secure. Hired by the founding dean, Dr. Charles Cornelius and former medical sciences chairman Dr. Richard Halliwell — a person she describes as her first dermatology mentor — Kunkle has experienced the ups and downs of college life for nearly 30 years.

Among the challenges she recalls was dealing with many aspects of sick building syndrome in the 1980s, along with other veterinary faculty and staff. During a retirement reception held for Kunkle July 25, she shared some of her memories with a room packed full of CVM faculty and staff as well as former residents and friends who came for the occasion.

"People were sick and had a multitude of symptoms," Kunkle said. "A full-time nurse was employed just to document problems. Animal patients were examined in faculty offices and baby wipes were used to clean doctors' hands when no running water was available."

"Morale was low, then, reminding me of the current budget issues," Kunkle said. "It was hard, but we got through it, thanks to (former college dean) Dick Dierks. We bonded and laughed together and had a big party at the end."

Kunkle's career path took the 1974 graduate of The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine to the rank of full professor of small animal dermatology at UF and included many years as service chief. Her stellar career has not been without personal setbacks and challenges. In recent years, Kunkle struggled with leaving the clinic and losing her spouse of more than 30 years. She raised two teenage boys, Matthew and Benjamin, who she says now have grown to be "wonderful young men."

More recently, her efforts have been focused on education as part of her role as associate chair for instruction for the department of small animal clinical sciences.

She's proud of the searchable curriculum map she recently helped develop as chair of the college's curriculum committee.

"It's not perfect, but it's a great start," she said.

The awards and honors Kunkle has amassed over the years include OSU's Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1999 along with the American College of Veterinary Dermatology's Award for Excellence that same year; Outstanding Woman Veterinarian of the Year in 1993 and the Norden Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award in 1990. She also received a Provost Fellowship in 2004 through former UF Provost David Colburn's office.

Kunkle cherishes her many deep and special friendships.

---

**"I hope you can picture me walking and sitting on the beach in St. Augustine, in between tackling all the other things on my 'to do' list."**

*— Dr. Gail Kunkle*

---

But while she stresses that all of these things are important, what matters most to Kunkle are her 34 former dermatology residents and the pride she feels at having shared in their training.

"They're my second kids," she said. "Teaching students is very rewarding, especially when they come back as alums and tell you how important dermatology is to their practice. I do think our students get a great foundation in derm, which is one of the two most common reasons other than basic wellness care where owners seek veterinary help, even in areas where they don't have fleas! But when you work with students, you don't get to see them develop through their clinical years — you only get a snapshot."

With residents, a more lasting relationship develops from continual observation and teaching, she said.

"The residents draw an incredible amount of information out of you in the first six months, but then after that, they're teaching and invigorating you," Kunkle said. "I have formed lifelong bonds and friendships with many of them."

Drs. Allison Flynn-Lurie and Rosanna Marsella organized a reception for Kunkle at the recent ACVD meeting, and 33 of Kunkle's 34 former residents were present. A scrapbook they had put together for her was on hand at Kunkle's retirement party for college faculty and staff to also enjoy.

"The best part of what I've done is to leave behind residents who can train other residents to relate to the public and to referring veterinarians," she said.

A few years ago, Kunkle became involved in multiple committees at the college as well as serving on the American Veterinary Medical Association's Council on Education and the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates.

"The COE's mission is to accredit veterinary schools, but only one of 21 members represents academic small animal clinical training. It was a huge amount of work to visit different schools and see various training methods to produce an entry level veterinarian, but I valued it and it was fun as well as hopefully helping our profession."

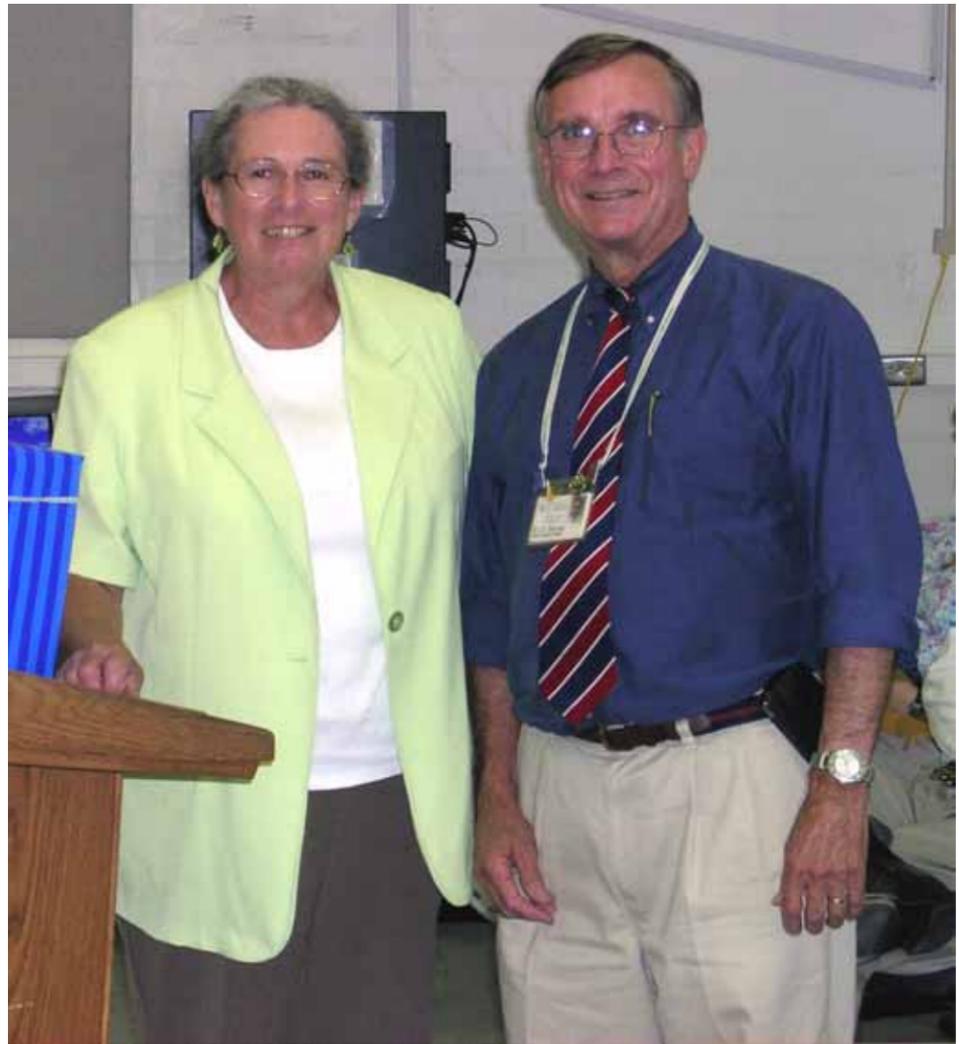
Dr. Cheryl Chrisman, professor emeritus of small animal neurology, first became friends with Kunkle during their Ohio State days.

"Besides my great admiration of her for all the accomplishments in veterinary medicine, Dr. Kunkle has been my treasured friend for over 36 years," Chrisman said. "We have shared the big chapters of life together- career, marriage, divorce, births, deaths and rebirths and we will also share retirement.

"Although different, we are connected by the same strong Midwest values," Chrisman added. "She is the practical one and I am the intuitive one. She taught me to shop and I taught her to hug. She has many friends and I am honored to be considered among them."



Dr. Gail Kunkle with longtime friends and colleagues, Dr. Cheryl Chrisman and Dr. Glen Hoffsis.  
(Photo by Sarah Carey)



Dr. Gail Kunkle with Dr. Colin Burrows during Kunkle's retirement party July 25.  
(Photo by Sarah Carey)

Kunkle's friendship with the college's dean, Dr. Glen Hoffsis, has "come full circle," Kunkle told guests at her retirement party, adding that Hoffsis served as the preveterinary advisor at Ohio State when she was an undergraduate animal science major.

Kunkle also acknowledged Dr. Colin Burrows, her longtime department chair, as well as Drs. Amara Estrada, Richard Hill, Pam Ginn and current and past dermatology faculty members for helping to make her "a stronger person and a better listener."

But she said she's excited to begin a new chapter of her life now.

"There is more I want for myself," Kunkle said. "The self-imposed stress and my sense of responsibility are not good for my health."

She has been granted professor emeritus status and plans to stay in touch with the college, telling friends she is "only an e-mail away."

"But I hope you can picture me walking and sitting on the beach in St. Augustine, in between tackling all the other things on my new 'to do' list," Kunkle said.

Burrows said Kunkle had always been someone he could look to for wisdom and sage advice.

"We already miss her," he said.

*Congratulations  
to new graduates,  
Diplomates and others*

Recent recipients of CVM graduate degrees include:

Master of Science: Jason DeLaPaz  
Ph.D.: Tonya Bonilla, Rebecca Grant, Shasta McClenahan, Pablo Pinedo, Heather Townsend.

Master of Science (non-thesis degree in Forensic Toxicology): Rebecca Derienz, Caroline DiCarlo, Nicole Duett, Charles Foster, Michael Greenberg, Jillianne Harris, Rachel Hiers, Amanda King, Andrew Larkin, John Ripper, James Santo, Matthew Stillwell.

In addition, the American College of Theriogenology boasts two new Diplomates, Dr. Gurmeet Dhaliwal and Dr. Scott Bailey.

Congratulations to all!

*Veterinary researcher honored  
for mycoplasma research*



**Dr. Meghan May**

Dr. Meghan May, a scientist in the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, received the Louis Dienes Prize for outstanding research by a postdoctoral fellow during the 17<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the International Organization for Mycoplasma, held July 6-11 in Tianjin, China.

May's presentation, coauthored by her academic mentor, Dr. Daniel Brown, an assistant professor in the college's department of infectious diseases and pathology, dealt with an infection-producing enzyme known as sialidase, which is produced by the bacteria *Mycoplasma gallisepticum*, the most economically significant mycoplasma pathogen affecting poultry.

"This pathogen causes chronic respiratory disease, reduced feed efficiency, decreased growth and decreased egg production," Brown said. "Meghan's work may lead to a basis for novel treatment and/or vaccination strategies focused on the role of sialidase in diseases associated with this pathogen."

The Veterinary Page is the college's electronic internal newsletter. Story ideas should be submitted to Sarah Carey, editor, at careys@vetmed.ufl.edu.

## Radiosurgery procedure used successfully to treat dog's prostate cancer

BY SARAH CAREY

Since William Lassiter rescued Corey, then a pathetic looking, mixed-breed dog he first spotted outside of a pawn shop eight years ago, the two have been inseparable.

"The shop had lots of weed eaters and chainsaws," said Lassiter, a former medical malpractice attorney who retired from his Jacksonville firm in 2000 and now lives on 380 acres near Melrose. "I'd just bought a farm and needed some equipment, so I whipped in impulsively one day and saw a brown dog chained to a tree nearby. The owner said a man had left the dog there that morning, and that the dogcatcher would be taking him to the pound in about an hour."

Lassiter went over to the dog, whom he said looked "crestfallen," loaded him into his jeep and took the animal home, where he has since lived happily with Lassiter and three other family dogs, riding shotgun in his owner's truck around the property every day until late June, when Corey suddenly began to have trouble urinating.

"He was in distress, so I called the vet," Lassiter said. After two weeks in a veterinary hospital in Interlachen, tissue samples were sent to the University of Florida's Oncology Service to determine whether Corey might have prostate cancer. The diagnosis was positive.

"I brought Corey to UF and everyone was very prompt and gave me a number of options, none of which were acceptable," Lassiter said. "I wasn't ready for Corey to go to the Rainbow Bridge."

UF oncology veterinarians then came up with another idea, worth trying on the chance Corey could be saved. The idea was to use stereotactic radiosurgery, a technique used in oncology cases in patients with brain, nasal, bone and urethral cancer, but never previously attempted to target a tumor in the prostate gland.

Corey's cancer had spread to a lymph node and this was first removed by the oncology surgeons. Then in collaboration with Dr. Frank Bova at the McKnight Brain Institute, a high dose of radiation was delivered to the cancerous prostate. Corey recovered well from the procedure and began urinating on his own again soon after the treatment.

The UF veterinarians are now treating Corey with chemotherapy. So far, so good,



Dr. Nick Bacon, left, and Dr. Jim Farese, right, pose with William Lassiter and Corey just prior to Corey's discharge from the VMC. (Photo by Sarah Carey)

Lassiter said.

"He's alert and he's happy," said Lassiter, a cancer survivor himself. "The expertise right here in Gainesville is none other than world class and they are way ahead of everybody in this procedure. Corey was just very fortunate to find himself at UF with these incredible doctors. The UF people really have an esprit de corps, and it shows."

Dr. Nick Bacon, who performed the

surgery on Corey at UF along with Dr. Jim Farese, called Lassiter "an amazing individual."

"He fought his own cancer head-on and beat it," Bacon said. "He now just wants to give his best friend, Corey, the same chance. I'm pleased the team here was able to help them both and at the same time we benefit because we learn more about treating prostate cancer in dogs. We all win."

### *Taking a scholarly break*

Several UF veterinary students who participated in the Merck-Merial Summer Research program recently attended the annual Merck-Merial/NIH Veterinary Scholars Symposium in Lansing, Mich.

In the photo at right, taken at the North American River Otter enclosure at the Potter Zoo in East Lansing, Mich., are (standing at rear) Shannon Roff, Leonel Londono, Dr. Kevin Anderson, Tyrell Kahan and Santiago Diaz. In front are Amanda-Jo Joswig, Catriona Love, Jessica Rivera and Elijah Rooney.

The symposium brings together outstanding scientists and veterinary scholars who have been engaged in mentored research experiences over the course of the summer in colleges of veterinary medicine in the United States and Canada.



## They're here!

Members of the class of 2012 and their families came to the CVM on Friday, Aug. 15 for "Welcome and Family Day Celebration." The group heard presentations by Dr. Thomas Vickroy, interim associate dean for students and instruction, and Dean Glen Hoffsis, then were escorted through the Veterinary Medical Center and CVM for a variety of tours and demonstrations.



Little Molly Tunning makes friends with one of the horses used in a treadmill demonstration during freshman orientation Aug. 15. Her aunt, Jaimie Miller, shown at center, is an incoming veterinary student.

(Photo by Sarah Carey)



Incoming veterinary student Kristen Lewandowski, left, stopped by a zoological medicine booth manned by senior students Kristy Ramela, center, and Candice Manganaro, right.

(Photo by Sarah Carey)



Heather Rodgers, Carrie Lawson and Jennifer Close, all members of the class of 2011, man the Holistic Club booth during freshman orientation.

(Photo by Sarah Carey)



Kelly Meyer, an incoming veterinary student, is shown with her boyfriend, Justin Harrison, Dr. Kevin Anderson and Kelly's mom, Paula Meyer. Meyer and her group had stopped by the Team VetMed booth, which Anderson was manning.

(Photo by Sarah Carey)



Incoming veterinary student Sasha Orlova, right, and her husband, Mike Ronco, were in good spirits following the orientation presentation and were planning on heading for St. Augustine Beach over the weekend.

(Photo by Sarah Carey)