



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

FACULTY OF
VETERINARY MEDICINE

2024

Impact

Report



Companion Animal Health Fund



MESSAGE FROM

Dr. Renate Weller

Dean and Professor,
University of Calgary
Faculty of Veterinary
Medicine



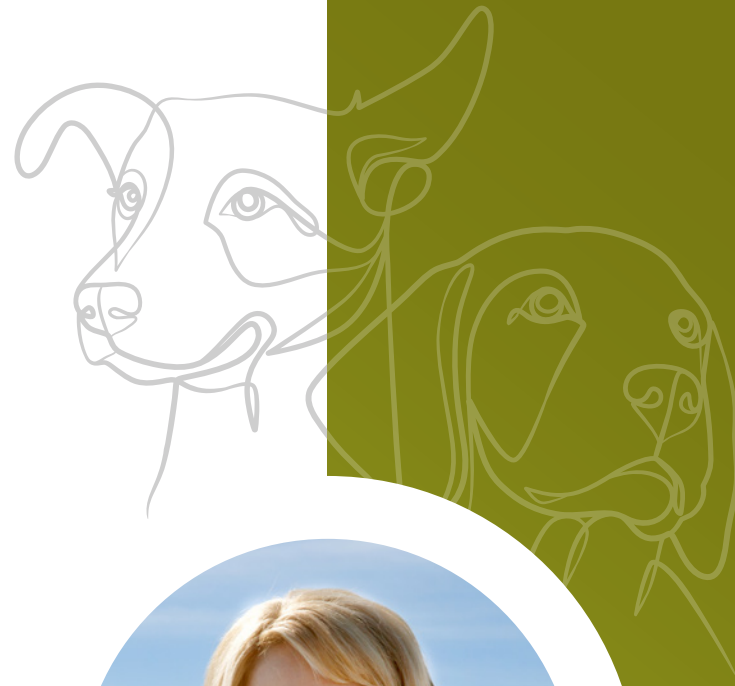
With our school expanding, so does our impact—more students gaining hands-on experience, more research pushing boundaries, and more opportunities to improve animal and human health.

Change is on the horizon at the University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (UCVM), and 2024 has been a year of preparation. With our incoming **class set to double in 2025**, we've been working hard behind the scenes to ensure our students have the space, resources, and hands-on learning opportunities they need to succeed. Our expanded facilities remain on track and on budget to open in September 2025, marking a major milestone for our faculty and the future of veterinary medicine in Alberta.

This year has also been full of exciting initiatives and partnerships. Our plans for a permanent **Community Care Clinic** continue to take shape, addressing the growing need for accessible veterinary care while giving our students invaluable real-world experience.

At the same time, our researchers and emerging scholars remain at the forefront of tackling some of the most pressing challenges in veterinary medicine—from antimicrobial resistance to zoonotic diseases to animal welfare. As our school grows, so does our capacity to make an impact. Doubling our cohort means more students gaining critical skills, more research pushing boundaries, and more opportunities to improve both animal and human health.

Your caring support is more valuable than ever. Gifts made to our animal health funds directly help us train the next generation of veterinarians and drive forward discoveries that make a difference. Thank you for being part of this journey—I welcome you to visit anytime, my door is always open.



MESSAGE FROM
DR. GLENN MAULDIN
Associate Dean,
Clinical Affairs
University of Calgary
Faculty of Veterinary
Medicine



2024 marked an exciting opportunity for me to lead the meaningful initiatives funded through UCVM's Animal Health Funds.

These funds are not for one single large project, they allow us to start something. These are meant to be bridge funds that allow projects to start as dreams to become a reality.

It is a true honour to see how these generous philanthropic gifts have impacted faculty, staff, students, animals, and research. I am aware of the vital need to promote and protect animal and human health and welfare through education, research, and service.

UCVM will only evolve into 2025, as we expand our Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) program, doubling student intake to 100 annually to meet the growing demand for veterinary expertise.

We also await the opening of UCVM's Community Care Clinic, which will offer students meaningful hands-on learning opportunities with small animals. This in turn will support vulnerable pet owners who are having to face heartbreaking decisions due to rising veterinary care costs, ultimately adding to strained veterinarians, bylaw services and shelters.

I would personally like to thank you for your support of the Health Funds. Your valued gift fuels the learning, innovation, and the meaningful work that helps UCVM make a lasting impact. Small and impactful funds!

Comparing surgical patient preparation protocols

Principal Investigators

Dr. Aylin Atilla
Dr. Marina McConkey



“Your funds are essential for helping to contribute veterinary specific knowledge into a field that largely borrows information from human medicine literature.”



Imagine your dog or cat surviving a needed surgery only to suffer from infection afterwards. Already in a vulnerable state, post-surgery infection is particularly dangerous for our pets. Under the supervision of **Drs. Aylin Atilla** and **Marina McConkey**, DVM student **Alyshia Skurdal** is leading a study on pre-surgical antiseptis protocols to reduce the risk of infection after surgery. During UCVM's surgery weeks in January 2025, data was collected from 28 community dogs and cats to assess the effectiveness of different antiseptis techniques. This research is critical for improving surgical outcomes and refining best practices in veterinary medicine.

The next phase will expand data collection to include teaching animals and work toward opening the study to privately owned pets.

This project is made possible thanks to donor support. As Alyshia shares, “Thank you donors! The funds I received helped me be able to increase my sample size to a number that is seen in similar published studies. Your funds are essential for helping to contribute veterinary specific knowledge into a field that largely borrows information from human medicine literature.”





POCUS in emergency setting – Revolutionizing Emergency Vet Care

Principal Investigators
Dr. Soren Boysen
Dr. Serge Chalhoub

The use of ultrasound is vital for the health of animals – allowing us to see issues in their bodies in the most non-invasive way. Ultrasound machines are typically so large that they are immovable, making their use in an emergency a challenge. **Drs. Soren Boysen** and **Serge Chalhoub** are advancing the use of light weight Point-of-Care Ultrasound (POCUS) to improve emergency veterinary care. This technology enhances diagnostic capabilities in dogs and cats, allowing veterinarians to detect trauma-related damage that traditional exams may miss. Their research evaluates the incidence of pathologies detectable by POCUS in both stable and unstable patients, with the expectation that unstable cases will show a higher incidence of pathology.

This important study is a collaborative effort involving UCVM students, residents, and international partners, including esteemed colleagues from Belgium. Thanks to support from donors like you, Dr. Boysen and his team can present their findings at international conferences and publish in peer-reviewed journals, helping to shape the future of emergency veterinary medicine.

“POCUS is transforming emergency veterinary care—giving us real-time insights that improve patient outcomes,” says Dr. Boysen.

The effect of using nail stickers on hand surface bacterial counts after surgical scrubbing

Principal Investigator
Dr. Aylin Atilla

Under the supervision of **Dr. Aylin Atilla** veterinary student **Natalie Tsao** is exploring how fingernail properties and applied cosmetics, such as nail stickers, impact bacterial counts after surgical scrubbing. This research aims to inform infection control protocols, enhance surgical preparation techniques, and improve patient outcomes in both veterinary and human healthcare.

With the support of Dr. Atilla, **Dr. Beverly Morrison**, and the **DSU Bacteriology Lab**, the team successfully completed sample and data collection in October 2024. Participants were recruited, nail surface swabs were collected, and bacterial cultures were conducted. The next phase focuses on data analysis and manuscript preparation, with completion expected by March 2025.



Natalie shares, “Thank you so much for your contributions to this project. With your support, we were able to add additional bacterial culture time points to compare the bacterial load on fingernail surfaces on participants wearing nail stickers vs. when they just had their natural nails.”

2023 UPDATES:

Your support for projects funded through the Companion Animal Health Fund doesn't end with your gift. See where previously funded projects are today:

1 | Investigating efficacy of sedation & analgesia protocols in bearded dragons

Dr. Daniel Pang and his team were successful in completing the assessment of five different sedation/anesthesia protocols, along with the effects of varying temperatures and different doses of a sedation reversal agent in bearded dragons. Their results provide diverse drug options based on the procedure and enhance safety when treating bearded dragons.

2 | Paused proton pump inhibitor project

The proton pump inhibitor project was paused due to GI concerns in enrolled dogs, underscoring UCVM's commitment to animal welfare. **Dr. Julie Menard** and team have pivoted to a new hypothesis exploring the effects of pro and prebiotics on the microbiome, demonstrating our agility and adaptability in the ever-evolving research landscape.

Conducting research that addresses issues of importance to our animal industries at the interface of animal and human health, we are coming up with innovative solutions and training the next generation of clinicians and researchers.

For over 10 years, UCVM has worked to support a shortage of veterinarians serving Alberta.

As an internationally recognized and accredited provider of high-quality veterinary education, we are an acknowledged leader in comparative biomedical, veterinary and population health research.

Our research, graduate education and clinical training programs advance animal and human health — **where innovation meets community.**



Contact us to learn more:

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These projects were made possible by our 2024 Companion Animal Health Fund donors:

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