Impact Report

Bovine Health Fund
MESSAGE FROM
Dr. Renate Weller
Dean and Professor
University of Calgary
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

This year has been a busy one for us, full of exciting new initiatives and partnerships. We’ve laid the groundwork for a permanent Community Care Clinic, which will address the growing need for affordable veterinary access to pet owners, while simultaneously providing a practice ground for our future DVM students to gain hands-on, real life experience.

Our emerging scholars and research faculty members continue to break ground on some of the most challenging questions facing us today. With multi-disciplinary focuses, from anti-microbial resistance to zoonotic diseases to animal welfare, the University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (UCVM) is well poised to bring forth concrete innovations to improve both animal and human health and welfare.

As explorers of the natural world, we often find that as we depart down one pathway, one research question, we encounter bumps and detours along the way. We crest one horizon, only to find another. We take one off-shoot, leading us to a bountiful world of further questions and queries. I wish to thank you for your continued support for all we do. Your contributions to our animal health funds allow us to advance animal and human health while giving exciting opportunities to our students. I welcome you to come visit, my door is always open to chat with fellow explorers.

We’ve continued our mission to contribute to the protection and promotion of animal and human health and welfare through education, research, and service throughout 2023. Our cohort continued to grow, with the admission of fifty-five eager new Doctor of Veterinary Medicine students, our largest admission since our inception in 2008.
MESSAGE FROM
Dr. Ashley Whitehead
Associate Dean,
Clinical Affairs
University of Calgary
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

2023 was an exciting year for the growth and development of UCVM and our corresponding Animal Health Funds. Our Bovine, Equine, Companion Animal, and Wildlife Health Funds are the catalyst of support to vital areas of teaching and research, as well as clinical and diagnostic activities.

Research is a journey, not a destination. As we answer our research questions, those answers often open a door to further questions. We continue along this road, knowing that we will always have further to go, while enjoying the journey nonetheless.

This year, I will pass along the torch of the health funds steering committee to a new lead, as I embark on a research and scholarship leave.

I feel confident passing leadership along to another of my esteemed colleagues. Over the past year we have established a robust process for application and adjudication, drawing a strong map to guide us as we navigate our research goals.

I would personally like to thank you for your support of the Health Funds, as well as invite you to continue along with us on our journey.

$65K+
awarded since 2008
We all know the importance of cattle to Alberta’s economy. As food production pressures and customer expectations grow, UCVM is contributing to finding solutions to the emerging issues, while focusing on the health and welfare of these important animals.

*A leader in production animal welfare, UCVM is ensuring not only the health of individuals and herds, but also their well being.*
Thank you from Dr. Timothy Olchowy, DVM
Professor, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

Thanks to your generous donation, we were able to acquire a portable genomic library preparation device, which allowed us to conduct on-site detection of respiratory pathogens and antimicrobial resistance in live cattle. This innovative device, coupled with commercial and customized kits, enables us to produce a genomic library in field settings within a remarkably short timeframe of 1.5 to 5 hours. Subsequently, these libraries are suitable for sequencing in portable field-compatible devices, facilitating rapid and accurate identification of pathogens and antimicrobial resistance genes.

THE PROJECT

I am pleased to report that our project is currently underway, with promising progress thus far. We have successfully processed field samples and prepared genomic libraries, which have been subsequently sequenced to identify both respiratory pathogens and antimicrobial resistance genes. Furthermore, our team is diligently working to optimize and customize the library preparation kits to enhance efficiency and accuracy in pathogen detection.

MOVING FORWARD

The implications of our research are far-reaching, with the potential to revolutionize disease surveillance and management practices in cattle populations. By enabling rapid on-site detection of respiratory pathogens and antimicrobial resistance, we aim to empower veterinarians and livestock producers with timely information to implement targeted intervention strategies and mitigate disease spread.

As we continue our research endeavors, your ongoing support is invaluable in driving forward our mission to safeguard animal health and welfare. Together, we are making significant strides towards enhancing the resilience and sustainability of livestock production systems.
Thank you from Dr. Jacob Thundathil, BVSc & AH, MVSc, PhD Professor, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

With your funding, we were able to acquire essential equipment to assist in the retrieval of eggs from live cattle for laboratory production of embryos. This Cook Aspiration Unit has significantly enhanced our capabilities in conducting in vitro fertilization (IVF) procedures, paving the way for groundbreaking research in the field of reproductive biotechnology.

Furthermore, your contribution has facilitated the training of two veterinarians and a post-doctoral fellow in IVF technology, equipping them with the necessary skills and expertise to provide this service to their clients in Alberta. This investment in human capital not only enhances our research capabilities but also ensures the sustainable dissemination of knowledge and technology within our community.

Our project is focused on investigating the effects of diverse genetic backgrounds for feed efficiency on the success of embryo technologies. By leveraging advanced reproductive techniques, such as IVF, we aim to elucidate the intricate relationship between genetic factors and reproductive outcomes in cattle. Through meticulous experimentation and analysis, we seek to identify novel strategies for enhancing fertility and productivity in livestock populations. Thank you for your support of this project!
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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