

Every April I sit down with 17 of the very best equine veterinary scientists I can find to deliberate over a large collection of research proposals. They are submitted by faculty members from both the University of California and the California State University systems. Each has been carefully thought out and written, with each researcher giving their very best argument for why their individual project should be funded.

Submitting scientists know that all projects will have to compete equally with many others based on their scientific merit and importance to the equine industry. This nonbiased merit system has resulted in submissions of ever-increasing quality. Every year's pool of research proposals has proven to be better than the last. Consequently, the CEH scientific review committee's deliberations are growing ever more intense and the job of selecting those to be funded more and more difficult.

The need for quality research never ceases because the demand for better health care is ever present. The process of developing and maintaining a productive science-based research program in equine health care requires the hard work and dedication of all involved, whether proposing a project or reviewing one for funding. The Center for Equine Health is fortunate to have the best working in both capacities.

The research proposals from submitting scientists are written, reviewed, critiqued and redrafted. Often projects receive funding only after several submissions, with each refusal leading to improvement of the project based on the constructive criticism received from the reviewers. Collaborations are suggested and often established. Preliminary data are collected to test the soundness of the proposed hypothesis or scientific method, literature reviews are undertaken to see what others have done in similar experiments, and experts from around the world are consulted for advice. Each funded project, therefore, may represent several months or years of preparation and preliminary investigation.

The end result of this arduous process is what we present to you in the pages that follow: a collection of innovative scientific ideas that have been molded by sound thinking and careful workmanship into high-quality experimental plans that have been

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Dr. Gregory L. Ferraro

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Director's Message—Continued

deemed by the scrutiny of experienced reviewers to be the best of a very good lot.

We fully expect each of these funded grants to result in the production of useful information that can be applied to the improvement of equine health care. Please accept my invitation to preview these forthcoming studies. I'm quite sure you will be impressed by their quality and application to the needs of the horse industry. Remember them as well, so that when their results are ultimately used to help your horse, you can say, "I knew about this when it was just a gleam in the CEH Director's eye"! ✨



From the Editor . . .

As with the introduction of the January 2004 Horse Report, this year's Research Preview contains some changes in both format and content that have been designed with the reader in mind. We hope to make your reading more enjoyable as well as help the nonscientist understand how each of the research projects will result in an improvement in the health and welfare of horses. With this in mind, the first part of each study description is generally nontechnical, while the section on "Experimental Approach" gives an overview of the scientific nuts and bolts of each study.

We gratefully acknowledge drawing on the wealth of information presented in the UC Davis Book of Horses for explaining a medical condition or process. It has been an excellent resource in "laying the groundwork" for this presentation of innovative scientific ideas. Again, we hope you find the changes agreeable and welcome your comments and suggestions.

Happy reading!