Small Animal Reproduction Expands and Adds Residency

The VMTH is pleased to announce that the Small Animal Theriogenology Service has recently expanded, and is adding a residency. This exciting development will allow the VMTH to broaden the existing range of high quality reproductive care and breeding management services we can provide to dog and cat owners and breeders.

The Theriogenology Service will be led by Drs. Bruce Christensen (chief of the service) and Ghislaine Dujovne, both board-certified in the American College of Theriogenologists, and Dr. Autumn Davidson, who is a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine and is recognized internationally for her expertise in small animal reproduction and fertility. They will work together with other board-certified specialists from the VMTH’s Small Animal Internal Medicine and Small Animal Surgery Services to provide routine and advanced reproductive care, including breeding management, insemination, pregnancy diagnosis, Caesarian sections and much more.

This expansion of small animal reproductive services has been a top priority since the addition of new faculty allowed for the replenishment of the Equine Reproduction Service last year, and will allow the VMTH to launch a comparative multi-species theriogenology resident training program. A generous gift from the American Kennel Club and the Theriogenology Foundation will fund a two-year Theriogenology Residency Program that will provide specialty training in all aspects of veterinary reproductive medicine and surgery, as well as all features of clinical practice related to male and female reproduction, obstetrics and neonatology in companion animals.

Since board certification in theriogenology requires experience with multiple species, the resident will receive on-site and off-site training with enthusiastic collaborators in private practice to gain all necessary experience and skills. The resident will also spend two months of the two-year program working with farm animals with the Livestock Herd Health and Reproduction Service; another two months will be spent with the Equine Reproduction Service.
The VMTH’s Oncology Service has recently brought on board two new faculty members in veterinary oncologists Drs. Katherine Hansen and Jenna Burton. Both board certified, Drs. Hansen and Burton bring diverse backgrounds and extensive experience to UC Davis, and will allow the VMTH to increase its offerings to oncology patients.

Dr. Hansen has been with UC Davis previously, having recently completed a three-year residency training in radiation oncology. Prior to that, she was post-doctoral associate in radiation biology with an emphasis on nanoparticle development and hypoxia research at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Hansen’s research interest is in clinical radiation oncology with an emphasis on advanced radiation therapy and patient positioning.

Dr. Burton was formerly an assistant professor of oncology at Colorado State University where she was responsible for the day-to-day management of, and recruitment of patients to, all clinical trials at the CSU Animal Cancer Center. Her research interests include comparative and translational oncology and development of novel therapeutics through clinical trials.

The addition of Drs. Hansen and Burton to the faculty comes on the heels of the acquisition of the VMTH’s new TrueBeam linear accelerator, a highly advanced system to treat cancer with image-guided radiotherapy. The new TrueBeam system will allow UC Davis oncologists to deliver more precise cancer treatments with pinpoint accuracy. This technology enables expanded radiotherapy treatment options for even the most challenging cancer cases, and offers VMTH patients the most advanced veterinary cancer treatments available anywhere in the world.

Dr. Jamie Peyton has joined the VMTH as our new chief of the Small Animal Integrative Medicine Service. Board certified in Emergency and Critical Care, Dr. Peyton also brings with her a wealth of knowledge and training in multiple aspects of integrative medicine.

Through several years of emergency and critical care work, Dr. Peyton continued to investigate additional therapies for pain control, increased mobility and patient quality of life. When her own dog developed osteosarcoma, she found that combining radiation therapy and complementary treatments, such as acupuncture, helped improve her dog’s cancer pain and quality of life. This experience changed her focus to continue to promote integrative medicine and a new career path was forged.

“Integrative medicine is about combining conventional medicine with complementary therapy to provide a whole patient approach,” said Dr. Peyton. “I was inspired by this philosophy and wanted to learn additional modalities to help my patients not only leave the hospital earlier, but live a more comfortable life afterwards.”

Dr. Peyton has since continued her studies at the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society, and became a certified veterinary rehabilitation therapist at the Canine Rehabilitation Institute. She has gained membership into several integrative medicine associations, including the American Academy of Veterinary Acupuncture, the American Association of Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine and the International Veterinary Academy of Pain Management.
Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the spring issue of VMTH Heartbeat, our quarterly newsletter geared specifically to inform our referring veterinarians of developments at the VMTH. Most of you are aware that UC Davis implemented a “new” DVM curriculum in 2011, and that the first class to graduate from the new curriculum will do so in 2015. In addition to the many changes in course structure and teaching methodologies incorporated into the integrated block design of the new curriculum, students also enjoy clinical experiences in the VMTH during their first and second years. These experiences have already enabled the graduating classes of 2015 and beyond to meet many of our staff, faculty and house officers, and also to develop an appreciation for the clinical teaching environment and the operation of many VMTH Services. We anticipate that these experiences, together with our increased emphasis on training in the business and communication strategies needed to succeed in private veterinary practice, will have better prepared our students to start their senior clinical year and will facilitate their interactions with you and your clients. We look forward to hearing your feedback as to whether our efforts are making a difference.

The new curriculum adheres to a semester schedule rather than the traditional quarter schedule. Additionally, the senior clinical year has been expanded from 48 to 59 weeks in duration. The result is that the upcoming senior class has had more choice with regard to which clinical rotations they will elect and how many weeks they will spend on each rotation. In other words, the students have had more latitude to customize their senior clinical year to align with their individual educational and career goals. The senior clinical year in the new curriculum has been scheduled in two-week blocks so that, for the most part, students will rotate on and off each Service at the same time rather than having overlapping schedules, as is currently the case. This “all in, all out” schedule will allow for better sequencing of structured instruction during each rotation and will help students more consistently achieve the defined core competencies.

Whereas the senior clinical year in the current (“old”) curriculum extended from mid-June to mid-June, the clinical year in the new curriculum will run from early April to mid-May of the following year. Starting this year, students will spend the first two weeks of their senior year completing the business/communications training before coming into the VMTH. The outgoing senior class (class of 2014) and the incoming senior class (2015) will, therefore, overlap by eight weeks. The result will be a larger number of students in the hospital during that time. We have made extensive arrangements to ensure that this overlap will not cause interruptions or delays of our services to you and your clients. Thank you for your continued support of the VMTH.

Regards,

Dr. W. David Wilson, BVMS, MS, Hon DACVIM
Director, William R. Pritchard VMTH
Dr. Matt Mellema, a faculty member in the Emergency and Critical Care Service, has been awarded the 2013 Distinguished Teacher Award by the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges. The award, sponsored by Zoetis, recognizes excellence in professional veterinary medical education, and is presented to an educator whose sustained record of teaching excellence and ability, dedication, character and leadership has contributed significantly to the advancement of the profession. It is considered the most prestigious national teaching award in veterinary medicine, and is more than 50 years old.

“Dr. Mellema exemplifies the qualities we seek in an honoree,” said AAVMC President Dr. Kent Hoblet. “Students and colleagues alike applaud his dedication and passion for education. Teaching is his priority, and his emphasis on critical thinking, problem-solving and self-directed learning maximizes students’ chances for lifelong success.”

Dr. Mellema has been described by peers and students alike as having a passion for teaching with a creative approach to instruction.

The Washington, D.C.-based AAVMC counts as its members 48 veterinary medical colleges worldwide, nine departments of veterinary science, eight departments of comparative medicine and six affiliate colleges.