W. David Wilson, BVMS, MS, HonDACVIM, Director, VMTH

Avian and Exotic Pets Benefit from Expertise and Collaborations

One of the best features of the VMTH, and a distinct advantage to our clients, is the collaborative nature of the hospital. Our Services continually work together to produce the best outcomes for our patients. In no Service is this truer than in the Companion Avian and Exotic Pet (CAPE) Service. CAPE treats the hospital’s most unique patients, and continually consults with other specialists throughout the hospital to benefit their patients.

Because of the diverse anatomy and physiology of the many species of patients presented to the VMTH, an exotic animal with a skin condition, for example, will first be seen by CAPE rather than being referred directly to the Dermatology Service. Clinicians from both Services will then work together to address that patient’s issues. In fact, CAPE and Dermatology Services recently collaborated to treat a guinea pig with cutaneous lymphoma. Other examples include: regular consultations with the Ophthalmology Service on cataracts and other eye diseases; collaborations with the Cardiology Service to treat a rabbit with congestive heart failure or a parrot with atherosclerosis, a heart disease with a high prevalence in birds but not in dogs and cats; and consultations with Orthopedic Surgery on broken limbs or wings. This team approach utilizes the expert knowledge of multiple Services to provide the best outcome for the patient.

Perhaps CAPE’s greatest collaboration is with the school’s California Raptor Center (CRC). CAPE faculty clinician Dr. Michelle Hawkins also serves as the director of CRC. Together, CAPE and CRC work as a cohesive unit to treat and rehabilitate injured wildlife. In the past year, they have worked successfully to release many rehabilitated eagles, hawks, owls, and other birds of prey back into the wild.

“Part of our expertise with raptors comes from having so much wildlife in this area to work with,” said Dr. Hawkins. “It also provides a tremendous teaching opportunity for us to train our students and residents.”

Beyond its work on campus, CAPE also handles the veterinary care of animals at the Nickie Grove Zoo in Lodi, and assists the Zoological Medicine Service in caring for animals at the Sacramento Zoo.

Since treating avian and exotic species requires a diverse knowledge of anatomy, often very different from dogs and cats, CAPE clinicians and technicians are constantly challenged with understanding the unique physiology of each of their patients, as well as their size.

Thanks and Praise from Grateful Clients

“We want to thank the following staff for all their efforts in trying to save our beloved stallion, Junior Starlight: Drs. Jamie Kuczynski, Monica Aleman, Krista Estell, students Lauren Richardson and Lisa Fowler, farrier Bill Merfy, the hospital staff and barn crew. Most of all we want to thank Dr. Eldthor Swain. She went above and beyond in coordinating the treatments and caring for Junior. It was a horrific situation and she handled it with professionalism and compassion for both Junior and us. We are so glad UC Davis VMTH is staffed with such fine people and training great veterinarians for the future.”

– Riedel Ranch, Elk Grove, California

“Words cannot express the thankfulness that I have for each and every one of you. I enjoyed 14 amazing years with my little girl and I love much of that to you and the immeasurable care you all give at the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine.”

– Randy H., Vacaville, California

“My lung cancer dog, Linus, is still with us and thriving (at the end of chemo cycle #4). I think of all of you often. I’m grateful that he’s enjoying another beautiful spring.”

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www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/vmth

The level of medicine that we practice requires years of specialized training, and I don’t blame general practitioners for not wanting to treat exotics beyond providing basic care,” said Dr. Guzman. “It requires a solid foundation of medicine and surgery to apply techniques to specialized procedures in birds, reptiles, small mammals and other exotic species.”

Handling and treating exotic cases can be extremely time consuming, and beyond the realm of many general practitioners who cannot devote the time needed to achieve successful outcomes in complex cases. CAPE, however, with its exclusive dedication to avian and exotic pets, can utilize its extensive team (four faculty and four resident veterinarians, four technicians, and multiple students routinely rotating through the Service) to take the time necessary to concentrate on these challenging cases.

“At the VMTH, we have the special knowledge and equipment to handle these cases, and our Service has the luxury to specialize in exotics exclusively,” said Dr. Guzman. Dr. Joanne Paul-Murphy, chief of CAPE, added, “We really enjoy working closely to assist referring veterinarians, and to be available to their patients and clients as a specialty resource.”

WILLIAM R. PRITCHARD VETERINARY MEDICAL TEACHING HOSPITAL • UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS

LEADING VETERINARY MEDICINE, ADDRESSING SOCIETAL NEEDS
**Did You Know?**

- ...that Dr. Munash Chigwirwe, head of the Livestock Medicine and Surgery Service, won the 2014 Academic Senate Distinguished Teaching Award?
- ...that Dr. Gary Magdesian, head of the Equine Medical Emergency, Critical Care and Neonatology Service, was recently nominated to serve on the AVMA Task Force on Veterinary Compounding Legislation?
- ...that Dr. Boaz Arzi of the Dentistry & Oral Surgery Service was the “Raymond Reid Lectureship Speaker” at the 2014 Edward C. Hinds Symposium in Houston? He presented to an audience of human medical oral and maxillofacial surgeons examples of how basic and regenerative laboratory science discoveries can be translated into advances in clinical practice that benefit patient care.

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**CASE OF THE MONTH – PROPHET**

After being abandoned at a county fair, Prophet the goose was rescued by Farm Sanctuary and taken to their ranch in Orland, California. For the past 16 years, Prophet has enjoyed the “good life” at Farm Sanctuary. Recently, though, there were concerns with her health.

On a visit to Farm Sanctuary, veterinarians with the VMTH’s Companion Avian and Exotic Pet (CAPE) Service could feel firm structures in Prophet’s coelomic cavity (similar to the abdomen in mammals). There was a concern about possible egg binding, meaning Prophet was unable to pass eggs she had formed.

Prophet was brought back to the VMTH for further diagnostic evaluation. She underwent radiograph and ultrasound evaluations to determine what the two firm structures were in her coelomic cavity. Radiographs clearly showed these were eggs that she was unable to pass, but exactly where those eggs were located was the big question. Specialists from the Diagnostic Imaging Service consulted with Prophet’s veterinarians over the ultrasound images in an attempt to determine if the eggs were in her oviduct (similar to a uterus in mammals) or were free in the coelomic cavity. The images proved inconclusive.

Due to concerns about Prophet’s declining health, signs consistent with egg binding, and a history of reproductive issues, it was recommended that she undergo a salpingohysterectomy, a procedure to remove the oviduct. During the successful surgery, veterinarians found and removed not two, but three eggs in her coelomic cavity.

Prophet’s post-surgical treatment included anti-inflammatory and pain medications, as well as a regimen of antibiotics. She was hospitalized at the VMTH for six days. While Prophet’s oviduct was removed, her ovary was left in place due to the risks associated with removing avian ovaries. With an ovary present, there is potential for ovulation and egg formation, even if the rest of the reproductive tract no longer exists. To control this, Prophet was given an implant to control hormone production.

Prophet has returned to her life at Farm Sanctuary and remains healthy. She and her companion goose enjoy life on their pond with shade trees and the company of an assortment of ducks.

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**VMTH Veterinarians Successfully Treat a Dystocia with Ectopic Eggs in a Goose**

The VMTH’s Dentistry and Oral Surgery Service (DOSS) has recently upgraded its services with the acquisition of a new cone beam computed tomography (CBCT) machine, which delivers high resolution images in two and three dimensional views. This new equipment will allow the hospital to offer its clients even higher quality services in veterinary dentistry and oral surgery.

By coming down on a particular area of interest, the CBCT allows for a more precise analysis of bone structure, tooth orientation and oral and maxillofacial disorders. These highly accurate scans are comparable to conventional CTs but require a much lower radiation dose. The major advantage of CBCT over conventional CT is its spatial resolution and rapid acquisition of thin sections.

CBCT has become a standard of care in human oral and maxillofacial diagnosis and treatment planning. The VMTH looks to translate that standard to veterinary medicine. The machine’s fast acquisition (18-26 seconds) of very fine images with minimal patient radiation furthers advances patient care and surgical planning, as it allows for extremely accurate assessment of oral and maxillofacial disorders. Specialized software allows clinicians to precisely depict the presence, location and extent of a lesion. The software also allows for several possibilities for 3D reconstruction of the images, which gives an excellent understanding of spatial configuration of disorders and more precise treatment planning.

While DOSS is the primary user of the equipment at this time, the CBCT may have future applications for other VMTH Services, such as Orthopedic Surgery, as the technology can be applied to other structures such as joints and small bones.

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**Large Animal Clinic Adds Equine Surgeon**

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he VMTH is pleased to announce the addition of Dr. Scott Katzman to its equine surgery team as an Assistant Clinical Professor of Equine Surgery. Dr. Katzman received his veterinary degree from the University of Minnesota’s College of Veterinary Medicine in 2004. Following three years in private practice, he came to UC Davis to complete an internship in Equine Medicine and Surgery in 2008 and a residency in Equine Surgery in 2011. Dr. Katzman has also worked as a researcher with Dr. Sue Stover in the UC Davis J.D. Wheat Veterinary Orthopedic Research Laboratory.

“We are thrilled to have Scott return to UC Davis as a board-certified equine surgery specialist,” said Dr. David Wilson, director of the VMTH. “He joins an already strong team of talented equine surgeons, and his recent experience as a house officer here at the VMTH and as a clinician at the University of Minnesota will not only benefit our patients, clients and referring veterinarians, but also positively impact the training of our students and residents.”

Dr. Katzman is a Diplomate in the American College of Veterinary Surgeons with a large animal emphasis. He is also a member of the American Association of Equine Practitioners. His research interests include rachetomy prevention, diagnosis and management of upper respiratory obstruction, and gastrointestinal surgery.

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From The Director’s Corner

Welcome to the June issue of VMTH View. This is the farewell issue of the View, as we transition to a new bi-monthly newsletter. Many of you are familiar with our quarterly referring veterinarian newsletter, VMTH Heartbeat. Heartbeat will now be doubled in size and its publication frequency increased from four to six times per year. It will serve as not only a publication for our referral community, but also to inform our internal audience and clients.

While so many of our articles focus on the more common animals we treat, I’m pleased to see CAPE featured prominently in this issue. Our avian and exotics veterinarians possess unique knowledge and skill sets as clinicians, and see some of our most interesting patients. As more clients own exotic pets and demand the best possible veterinary care, the services of our CAPE clinicians, including wellness programs, are becoming increasingly sought after.

This final issue gives the View a great send off, as it showcases the diverse care and cutting-edge technologies and talents available at the VMTH. When I think back to where veterinary medicine was when I graduated from Glasgow University’s veterinary school almost 40 years ago, I marvel at how far our profession has come and at how many of those advances were made right here at UC Davis. I feel blessed to lead such an amazingly talented group of faculty, house officers, staff, and students, knowing that all are focused on continuing to advance our profession to benefit the health of our animal patients and the lives of the people who love them.

This final issue of the View also gives me the opportunity to thank the Class of 2014 for all their hard work, dedication, and ability to have fun even during stressful times. As the last class to graduate from the “old” curriculum, they have faced and overcome some unique challenges, but they have been a pleasure to work with and are very well prepared. We feel very fortunate to have come to know the Class of 2014 and, on behalf of everyone in the VMTH, we wish them the best of luck for success and happiness as they embark on a multitude of career paths as graduate veterinarians.

Thank you for the feedback, and for bringing us great stories to tell in the View over the past two years. We look forward to the same success as we take the next step forward with Heartbeat.

Regards,

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