2014 Year in Review

When the Ebola crisis hit countries in West Africa, veterinary medicine researchers from the school headed to the frontline. They served a critical role by conducting laboratory testing to identify cases so that rapid tracing of patient-contacts could begin, thereby reducing the transmission of the disease. These researchers, graduates of the Veterinary Scientist Training Program, have the joint skillset of a DVM and PhD—making them invaluable in situations like this Ebola outbreak where emerging and zoonotic diseases can have such a devastating impact.

UC Davis leads the nation’s veterinary schools with $74 million in research funding for the fiscal year 2013-2014. Many research findings can be translated from veterinary medicine to human medicine, such as discovering the genetics of cleft palate in a particular dog breed that will aid in understanding this human birth defect. Melanoma treatment in dogs also holds hope for human patients.

Many faculty members were recognized for their contributions and expertise including:

- Associate Professor Matthew Mellema received the national AAVMC Distinguished Teacher Award.
- Professor John Madigan delivered the keynote Milne Lecture at the American Association for Equine Practitioner’s Convention to a standing room only crowd.
- Professor Sue Stover received the prestigious Founder’s Award from the American College of Veterinary Surgeons.
- Professors Xinbin Chen and Gino Cortopassi joined the illustrious ranks of AAAS Fellows.

Students for One Health joined with School of Medicine students to provide monthly basic veterinary care for pets of an underserved agricultural population at the Knights Landing Clinic.

The school successfully achieved an ambitious goal of raising $160 million in philanthropic gifts as part of The Campaign for UC Davis, an 8-year comprehensive fundraising effort. More than half of this total—over $80 million—was directed to research and program support, and nearly $32 million went to help students.

Shelter medicine was recognized as a veterinary specialty by the American Veterinary Medical Association board—thanks in large part to the dedicated efforts of Kate Hurley, associate director of the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program.
The school’s One Health approach is highlighted by the PREDICT program—a project of the One Health Institute that received a $100 M grant from USAID to continue the work of preventing pandemics.

A novel theriogenology residency was added to the school’s line-up of resident training opportunities, the largest resident program in the country.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency awarded $800,000 to scientists studying how chemicals interact with biological processes, to better understand the potential health effects of chemical exposures.

UC Davis researchers presented a study representing the largest genetic sampling of mountain lions in Southern California, which supported the concern regarding loss of genetic diversity due to animal populations being cut off from each other by freeways and human development.

Veterinary students won the inaugural Veterinary Innovation Challenge with a clever idea for owners to better care for their pets using smart phone technology.

In a follow-up to a previous study of the effects of neutering, it was discovered that neutering poses more health risks for golden retrievers than Labradors.

Researchers solved a century-old mystery when they determined the survival mechanism for bluetongue virus, a serious disease that annually costs U.S. cattle and sheep industries an estimated $125 million.

Veterinary oral surgeons increased the scope of their novel jawbone regrowth surgeries by successfully performing a nearly complete lower jaw reconstruction in a dog that lost part of her jaw to cancer.

Thanks to surgical techniques developed in a veterinary clinical trial, a veterinary ophthalmologist was able to successfully treat cornea disease in a dog and hopes to discover the gene causing the disease.

As California continues to struggle with ongoing drought, UC Davis’ Western Institute for Food Safety and Security, provided guidance for dairy farmers and ranchers with information on workshops, assistance application sessions and on-line resources. The California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory system published a special report on drought-related feed toxicity to build public awareness of this health risk.

The California Raptor Center released a young, female golden eagle after more than eight months of treatment and rehabilitation for a novel mite infestation, first identified by UC Davis veterinary epidemiologists.