



SJDAWC NEWS

NUMBER 38, 2021 FALL EDITION

SIR JAMES DUNN ANIMAL WELFARE CENTRE *at the Atlantic Veterinary College*



PROMOTING ANIMAL WELFARE THROUGH RESEARCH, SERVICE, AND EDUCATION



UNIVERSITY
of Prince Edward
ISLAND



SPRING WEBINAR SERIES ON DOG BREEDING MARCH 2022

We are moving our webinar series back to the spring next year. Three webinars will be held during March 2022 and will focus on animal welfare concerns with breeding dogs.

Speakers will discuss how to assess and monitor the welfare of dogs used for breeding, including their veterinary care, housing, and behaviour. Ensuring that responsible dog breeding practices are used will also be a topic of discussion, such as avoiding selecting for genetic traits that result in health problems for the dogs later in life. Participants will also learn about some of the current regulations and other methods used to assure the welfare of these dogs. Stay tuned to find out more!





Dr. Katy Proudfoot

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

It has been a colourful and warm fall here in Atlantic Canada. The Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre (SJDAWC) always tends to be busy at this time of year, as we host our annual webinar series and give out several awards to students. Read on to find out more about the 2021 webinar series, which focused on improving the welfare of companion animals during routine veterinary visits. We also have two veterinary summer students to introduce you to, as well as a new graduate student studying horse welfare in PEI.

In this issue, we are spotlighting one of our longest running service projects that has aimed to reduce the feral cat population on PEI for the past 20 years. Lastly, a big round of applause to all the student recipients of SJDAWC awards this year.

We welcome your feedback at animalwelfare@upei.ca. Please contact us at animalwelfare@upei.ca to receive the newsletter (in full colour!) by email and to be added to our email list for occasional upcoming events.

To learn how you can support the Centre, please go to upei.ca/awc or write to:

The Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre
Atlantic Veterinary College
University of Prince Edward Island
550 University Avenue
Charlottetown, PEI, Canada C1A 4P3

All donations are tax deductible.

FALL 2021 WEBINAR SERIES

The SJDAWC was fortunate to have Dr. Karen Overall, MA VMD, PhD, DACV, present three topics for our annual webinar series. This series is in its sixth year and continues to attract veterinarians, technicians, and students from around the world. This year, Dr. Overall covered three important topics in veterinary behavioural medicine. Below is a summary of some of the main take-home messages.

WEBINAR ONE

WELFARE OF DOGS AND CATS DURING VETERINARY VISITS: SHOULD WE BE PREMEDICATING OUR PATIENTS?

In the first webinar, Dr. Overall described the importance of understanding the welfare of dogs and cats in the clinic, including their emotional well-being. A first step in improving patient care is recognizing when dogs and cats are experiencing distress. To help with this, Dr. Overall described a “dog stress” score that she created to help veterinarians know when their patients are not faring well during the visit.



Hamilton and Dr. Karen Overall

Once you recognize distress in dogs or cats, you can make decisions about the care of each animal on a case-by-case basis using a “decision tree.” Ideally, veterinarians should be monitoring their patients at various time points during the exam, starting from the moment they enter the door.

If a dog or cat is showing signs of distress at any time point during the exam, you can take steps to reduce distress before proceeding with the exam. For example, Dr. Overall recommends moving distressed canine patients to a quiet room for 20 minutes to let them calm down. Another option is to pre-medicate dogs or cats before they come into the clinic with pharmaceuticals that reduce anxiety.

WEBINAR TWO

NEW APPROACHES TO MINIMIZING STRESS AND DISTRESS WHEN HANDLING DOGS AND CATS

The second webinar started off with a definition of restraint and some of the negative consequences of forcefully restraining animals. Animals are often restrained for various veterinary procedures, but Dr. Overall argued that these practices may be aversive and cause long-term negative effects on their welfare.

Dr. Overall described examples of how veterinary procedures, such as blood draws, can be done without the use of forceful restraint. Veterinarians can alter the physical and sensory environment of their patients by using tools like music, lighting changes, or floor mats to make the animals more comfortable during the procedure. Veterinarians can also use food toys to distract animals during the procedure. Finally, medication can be used to help keep the patient calm during the procedure.

WEBINAR THREE

WHAT'S NEW, HOT, AND IMPORTANT IN VETERINARY BEHAVIOUR AND BEHAVIOURAL MEDICINE LITERATURE?

In the third and final webinar, Dr. Overall reviewed some of the new and exciting literature on veterinary behavioural medicine. Here are a few examples of the studies she reviewed:

- » **Periuria in shelter cats.** Periruria, or urinating outside of the litter box, is a common reason for relinquishing cats to the shelter. A recent study has found that 91% of cats with periuria that were relinquished to a shelter were adopted out. This suggests that many of these animals can be re-homed instead of being euthanized¹.
- » **Non-nutritive eating in dogs.** There is a debate in the veterinary behavioural literature about whether non-nutritive eating (e.g., ingesting foreign objects like fabric or plastic) is behavioural or health-related in adult dogs. A new study found that dogs who eat foreign objectives as adults also performed similar behaviours as puppies. This result supports the idea that the problem is behavioural².
- » **Do dogs with black coats get hotter?** Although it may seem like a dog with a dark coat experiences more heat than dogs with lighter coats, a new study has found that this may not be the case³. The study compared the body temperature of dogs with black versus yellow coats before, during, and after being walked in the sunlight and found no differences between the groups.

¹Liu, et al. *Journal of Veterinary Behavior* (2021), ²Masson, et al. *Journal of Veterinary Behavior* (2021), ³Neander, et al. *Journal of Veterinary Behavior* (2021).



If you are a veterinarian with questions about veterinary behavioural medicine, please email Dr. Overall at koverall@upei.ca. If you have a dog, cat, horse, or other companion you love who needs behavioural help, email: AVCBehaviouralMed@upei.ca for appointment information.

To view previous webinars hosted by the SJDAWC, please visit our new YouTube channel at www.upei.ca/youtube/awc

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SJDAWC

2021 SJDAWC VETERINARY SUMMER RESEARCH AWARD RECIPIENT

This summer, Allison Morse, AVC Class of 2024, worked alongside Dr. Karen Overall and Dr. Camille Squair on their project, “The Effects of Veterinary Handling on Canine Behavior and Physiology.”

The aim of this study was to determine if veterinarians can create environments for their canine patients that reduce stress. There is a lack of knowledge about how best to improve the welfare of dogs that come in for routine veterinary visits. Through her project, Allison was able to see how much of an impact veterinarians have. She discovered that by making small changes they can make veterinary visits a more positive experience for their patients.

“I am grateful I had the opportunity to work with such inspiring and dedicated individuals and I am certain this project is a stepping stone for many future conversations.”

Allison Morse



Allison Morse Photo credit: Kristy Faulkner

CALLAN JOHNSON WINS TOP AWARD FOR POSTER PRESENTATION

Congratulations to Callan Johnson, AVC Class of 2024, for winning first at the AVC Summer Research and Leadership Program poster presentation. Callan was supervised by Dr. Katy Proudfoot and student mentor Hannah Spitzer.

The goal of Callan’s project was to understand the relationship between personality, sex, age, and chronic stress in ring-tailed lemurs. She used an online survey filled out by technicians at the Duke Lemur Center in North Carolina. Although still preliminary, Callan found that the technicians considered female lemurs to be more dominant, but the males to be more extroverted. They also found older lemurs to be more neurotic than younger animals.



Callan Johnson with a wild lemur in Nosy Be, Madagascar

“I thoroughly enjoyed the initial aspect of the research scouring through countless papers, discovering unanswered questions, and trying to ‘put the dots together.’”

Callan Johnson

NEW GRADUATE STUDENT AT THE SJDAWC



Jake and Megan Ross Photo credit: Rachel Green

“While I think everything about this project is interesting and important, the social science part adds a layer of novelty to horse research.”

Megan Ross

Megan Ross started her master of science degree in May 2021 with main supervisor Dr. Caroline Ritter and co-supervisor Dr. Katy Proudfoot. Her research is focused on improving the welfare of horses by developing an understanding of owner attitudes toward horse care. She has been travelling to farms throughout Prince Edward Island to discover how horses are housed. Horse owners are asked to complete a survey which gathers information about their attitudes towards different housing types, reasons for housing horses the way they do, their level of satisfaction with housing, the changes they wish to make (if any), and the barriers to make those changes.

Megan’s research, which is funded through the provincial government and the SJDAWC, fills an important gap between what the science tells us about good housing for horses and what happens in practice.

SPOTLIGHT ON SERVICE: 20 YEARS OF NEUTERING FERAL CATS ON PEI

In 2001, the SJDAWC awarded Dr. Peter Foley and others with a service grant to help the PEI Cat Action Team (CAT) neuter feral cats on the Island. Twenty years later, with the help of the SJDAWC, CAT, and the Pegasus Family Foundation, the “PEI Feral Cat Neutering Program” is still going strong.

Since 2001, over 14,600 cats have been neutered through this program through efforts from AVC and other veterinary clinics on PEI. At AVC, senior veterinary students participate in the program under the supervision of veterinarians. Students gain valuable surgical skills while learning about methods for humanely controlling populations of feral animals.

The long-term goal of this project is to decrease the breeding population of feral cats on PEI, resulting in fewer feral cats being relinquished to the PEI Humane Society. Indeed, over the last 20 years there has been a dramatic decline in cats surrendered to the Humane Society from over 2,000 cats in 2001 to 850 cats in 2020. The program will continue as long as there are volunteers, funds, and feral cats to neuter on PEI.



GOVERNOR GENERAL'S MEDAL AND THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Dr. Larry Hammell, Associate Dean, Graduate Studies and Research extended congratulations to Dr. Peter Kimeli on winning the 2021 graduate Governor General's Medal and the Faculty of Graduate Studies Award of Distinction. These honours are awarded to the graduate student who has achieved the highest academic standing in a combination of course work and thesis, and whose record in the program is so distinguished as to warrant special recognition.

Dr. Kimeli was a recipient of the 2017 Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Graduate Scholarship. He was supervised by Dr. John VanLeeuwen.

"I would like to heartily thank the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre for awarding me the PhD scholarship. Your support towards my education has changed my story, and I am truly grateful."

Dr. Peter Kimeli



Dr. Peter Kimeli

NEW CONTENT FOR OUR SOCIAL MEDIA BROUGHT TO YOU BY STUDENTS



Kendall Wyman and Piper

Starting this fall, the SJDAWC will be posting educational resources for the public and veterinarians about animal behaviour/welfare on our Facebook page and website. This effort, led by former Animal Welfare Club president Kendall Wyman, will help AVC and SJDAWC spread the word about the latest and greatest in companion animal care.

In the first post, Kendall and Santana Hourihan, both class of 2022, describe "Behaviour Tips: 5 clues your dog needs behavioural help" including:

1. Your dog doesn't have an "off" switch
2. Your dog consistently reacts negatively towards other dogs
3. Your dog falls apart when they're not with you
4. Your dog reacts negatively when you touch their things
5. Your dog overreacts to noises

Check out our Facebook page to find out more!

<https://www.facebook.com/SJDAWC/>

Although these tips are helpful, please discuss any behavioural or medical concerns with your local veterinarian. For all cases where you still have concerns, seek specialist services (www.dacvb.org). At AVC, you can contact the AVC Behavioural Medicine Service at AVCBehaviouralMed@upe.ca.

2021 CHRISTOFOR AWARD IN ANIMAL WELFARE

Nicholas Johnston, AVC Class of 2022, received the 2021 Christofor Award in Animal Welfare for his long-standing interest in improving the welfare of animals. His love of animals started as a young boy volunteering for a local charity, DunRoamin' Stray and Rescue.



During his time as a volunteer, he realized how vital veterinarians are to the welfare of animals and this interest and passion for animals inspired him to pursue a career in veterinary medicine. Once he graduates as a veterinarian, he will achieve his lifelong goal of helping both animals and owners by helping to assuage the suffering of animals who need medical assistance and educate their owners to keep their pets healthy and happy.

Nicholas Johnston

2021 DR. TOM A. W. TAYLOR SCHOLARSHIP

The 2021 Dr. Tom A.W. Taylor Scholarship was awarded to Julia Bland, AVC Class of 2023. The scholarship is awarded in memory of Dr. Tom A. W. Taylor. It is given to a student who is well rounded and academically proficient and has demonstrated initiative and interest in research activities. After graduation, Julia plans to pursue a career in mixed animal medicine with a particular focus on preventive medicine, dentistry, and nutrition, as well as participating in research studies through data collection in-clinic.



Julia Bland

2021-22 ANIMAL WELFARE EXTERNAL ROTATION AWARDS

Two students have been awarded \$500 each to assist them in their fourth year to travel for an external rotation related to animal welfare.

Austin Ebbott is eager to learn from veterinarians and rehabilitators at the Wildlife Center of Virginia. Furthering her skills and knowledge on wildlife medicine will help her improve the welfare of wild animals on an individual level, but also a population level through greater knowledge of conservation and public outreach. She plans on pursuing wildlife medicine after graduating from AVC.



Austin Ebbott with Marshall

Jared Schenkels will be travelling to Agwest Veterinary Group in Abbotsford, BC. He will complete a three-week rotation to help improve his techniques to address individual cows' therapeutic needs based on specific claw horn lesions. This rotation will help him learn which preventive measures and management practices help reduce the occurrence of lameness in dairy herd and thereby improve dairy cattle welfare.



Jared Schenkels

Derek Mathers' interest in animal welfare began when he and his husband pastured several goats at their cottage property on Nova Scotia's south shore. After moving to PEI several years ago, Derek sought out organizations which focused on animal welfare. This resulted in several generous donations to SJDAWC, including funding designated to veterinary care for horses kept at the Handibear Hills Horse Sanctuary Inc.

Two programs, done annually, provide AVC students with access to 17 horses (and one llama) for important "hands-on" equine health care training. One program allows fourth-year students to participate in an examination and floating of teeth on horses ranging from ages 8 to 26. The other program is a general health exam for students to measure, weigh, take temperature, and explore chronic health conditions of the horses.

Derek notes that the relationship between SJDAWC and Handibear Hills Horse Sanctuary Inc. runs deep, having many AVC students pass through the barn door at Handibear over the years.

"I am pleased to support this avenue for AVC student education and am enthusiastic about future endeavours and the growth of these and other programs".

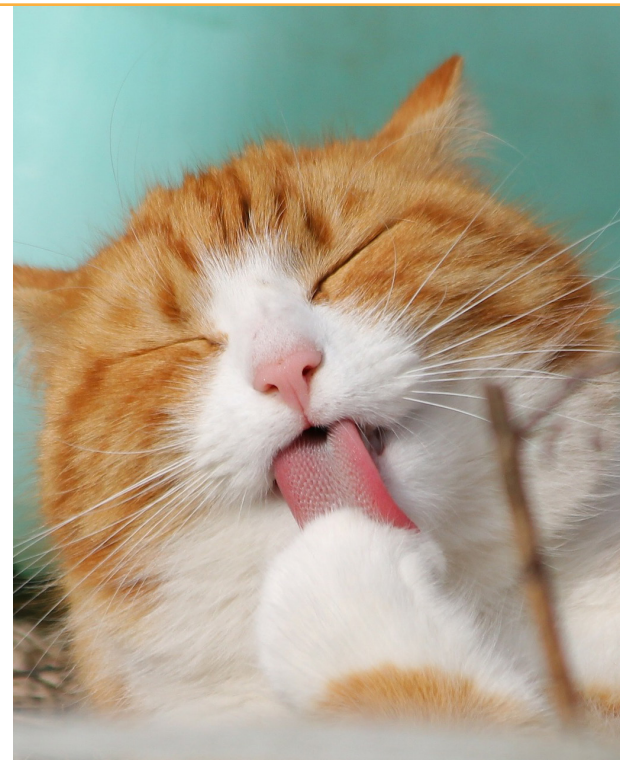
Derek Mathers

Thank-you supporters for making a paw-sitive impact!

We gratefully acknowledge the sustained financial support of **The Christofor and The Sir James Dunn Foundations**, without which the SJDAWC would not exist.

We also thank the following organizations and individuals who have supported the SJDAWC in the last year:

- Pegasus Family Foundation through the Silicon Valley Pegasus Project
- Atlantic Veterinary College
- In memory of clients' companion animals: Fairview Animal Hospital; Vetcetera Animal Hospital
- Universities Federation of Animal Welfare, UK
- Glenn Loranger
- Drs. Stephen and Tina McCarthy
- Derek Mathers
- Fran Mercier
- Faye Riehl
- Gladys Ascah
- Atlantic Flushing & Testing Inc.
- Janet Mah and Kevin Kane
- Maria Rodriguez
- Deanna Quigg
- Judy Profitt
- Marie Adele Davis



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ATLANTIC VETERINARY COLLEGE • UNIVERSITY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

550 University Avenue
Charlottetown, PE C1A 4P3

Website
awc.upei.ca

