THE INSTITUTE REPORT

September, 1952

From the

VETERINARY VIRUS RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Cornell University, Ithaca, New York
THE INSTITUTE REPORT

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* Until September 1, 1952
** Visiting investigators: Capt. Mitchell, A.U.S., assigned for training purposes; Dr. Celiker is studying on a fellowship from the Turkish government; Dr. Stunzi held a fellowship from the Association of Swiss Universities.
Development

The welfare of mankind has always been related to the welfare of his livestock. The relationship may be seen more easily, perhaps, in a primitive society, where each man is his own herdsman and his wealth is measured in terms of the animals he possesses. Nevertheless, it is true today, as always, that an entire nation’s wealth and economy, as well as the health of its entire population, can be affected by the health and productivity of its livestock. Through steady progress in veterinary medicine, and by the application of basic principles of genetics and nutrition, there have been developed breeds of animals and individual animals which have increased tremendously the value of animal industry. In the United States alone a recent estimate places the value of animal production at the almost unbelievable total of eighteen billion dollars annually. Yet of this eighteen billion dollars, there is a yearly loss, because of animal diseases, of approximately ten percent—or nearly two billion dollars.

Similar infectious diseases also occur in cats and in dogs. In certain breeding establishments or hunting kennels the financial loss from disease can be considerable, although a monetary value alone cannot be placed upon a family pet.

A group of individuals, interested in helping establish a permanent center for work upon diseases of dogs, approached Cornell University officials concerning the matter, and offered to help provide the funds necessary. Their offer was accepted.

Establishment

On September 20, 1950, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of Cornell University voted to establish, in connection with the New York State Veterinary College, a new unit, to be known as the Veterinary Virus Research Institute. Formation of the Cornell Research Laboratory for Diseases of Dogs was approved as a section of the Institute.

Purposes

The primary objective of the Veterinary Virus Research Institute is to prevent loss from infectious disease in animals. Towards this end basic research is conducted upon organisms which cause disease in order to increase knowledge concerning their nature, means of spread, and methods whereby their spread can be controlled. A secondary objective of the Institute is the training of workers in the field of virology. Determined by the amount of laboratory space available, a limited number of graduate students and visiting investigators is accepted.
Facilities

Located on a hill adjoining the Cornell Campus, the Virus Institute is near the University, but is far enough in the country so that farmland is available for rearing animals and a part of the uncontaminated feed supplies necessary.

After careful planning and consideration of the technical difficulties involved in work with viruses and other organisms which could be airborne or transplanted accidentally in other ways, three new buildings were designed and have been in successful operation for the past two years. In these buildings are isolation facilities and two modern laboratories, the Daynemouth Division of the Cornell Research Laboratory for Diseases of Dogs provided by Colonel and Mrs. Lee Garnett Day and the Giralda Division by Mrs. Geraldine R. Dodge. Older structures, including the general laboratory building and several barns have been remodelled for service.

Believed to be the only one of its kind in the world is our herd of disease free cattle given by the Rockefeller Institute. This herd furnishes calves free from latent infection. Also unique and important is the kennel building given by the Gaines Dog Research Center for rearing dogs free from disease.

Nearby are the clinics and library of the Veterinary College. Invaluable cooperation can be obtained readily from faculty members who are specialists in their particular fields.

The disease free herd of cattle showing the double fenced enclosure to provide isolation and prevent introduction of disease from outside sources.
Financial Support  The Institute derives a large part of its financial support from private sources. The State of New York is providing funds for some of the work on farm animals. A portion of the additional funds needed have been made available by temporary grants in support of specific projects from industrial organizations and from the National Institute of Health.

The Cornell Research Laboratory for Diseases of Dogs must obtain its operating expenses entirely from contributions, since funds from public sources are not available for this purpose. Individual dog owners, industrial organizations, veterinarians and dog clubs have assumed the responsibility of providing for its operation.

Sufficient unrestricted funds are needed to take care of future operations of the Institute. This is imperative in order to plan long-range projects and to assure funds for the future salaries of trained employees. This would also enable promising lines of research to be carried out without delay.

Bequests and Gifts  In establishing the Institute under its administration, the Board of Trustees authorized the Treasurer's office of Cornell University as custodian of all funds given in support of the Institute. Donors, therefore, are assured of maximum benefit from their gifts by this supervision of Cornell University officials. Cornell is glad to receive any gifts or bequests that will help the work of the Institute. All checks should be made payable to Cornell University, and instructions should be given that the funds are for support of the work of the Virus Institute.
All of the investigations are concerned with some aspect of agents that cause disease. In initial studies of a new clinical entity, specimens are obtained from natural cases, the causative organism isolated and its properties determined under carefully controlled conditions. These studies are then extended in an effort to understand the relationship between the host, the infective agent and of various factors that influence this relationship. Whenever possible, fundamental findings are developed into control measures. At present, the various laboratories have the following specific problems under investigation.

Dayemouth Division Under the direction of Dr. J. H. Gillespie, assisted by Drs. Greig and Celiker, interest is centered mainly in studies on the distemper virus and the mechanism responsible for its production of nervous manifestations. A particular strain of distemper virus, isolated in this laboratory and designated as "Snyder Hill" is now receiving intensive study. This strain was derived originally from a dog with encephalitis, and an analysis is being made of the factors which may be involved in the production of encephalitis.
Other work in the laboratory is concerned with dual infection produced by the distemper virus in combination with infectious hepatitis virus. It is believed that these two viruses in combination are responsible for many cases of disease diagnosed in the past as “severe distemper”. Work is also continuing on a previously undescribed agent from the respiratory tract of dogs.

Giralda Division  

Under the direction of Dr. Charles J. York various aspects of leptospirosis, as caused by *Leptospira pomona*, were studied, and an antigen was devised which shows if an animal has had the disease. Dr. York tested blood samples from many cattle and was able to find evidence that leptospirosis is present in herds from widely scattered parts of the United States. The antigen has been produced commercially and is now available. Any state, interested in dairying and cattle production, will be able to set up diagnostic service for this serious disease which is just beginning to be recognized throughout the country. In addition, work continued on a vaccine to protect against leptospirosis and one has been tested and found effective. This vaccine should be available in the near future from commercial sources. On the 1st of September, Dr. York became Director of the new Virus Research Laboratory of the Pitman-Moore Company in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Dr. George C. Poppensiek, the new director of the Giralda Division, has continued his work upon infectious hepatitis in dogs. Preliminary surveys have indicated that this disease occurs in nearly half of the dogs in the United States. Of this number, nearly ten per cent of the cases terminate in death, many others are injured, while a few animals show no evidence of disease. Virus has been recovered from the urine of infected dogs from 3 days to 261 days and infected urine undoubtedly is important in the spread of this disease. A focal interstitial nephritis indicates that the kidney is the source of virus eliminated in the urine. Further work continues on the significance of damage to the kidney and its relation to later development of an infected dog. An important accomplishment during the past year was development of a vaccine to prevent infectious hepatitis in dogs. This vaccine was combined with distemper virus so that dogs will be immunized against both of these diseases simultaneously. This is believed to be the first dual virus vaccine for animals, although for many years combination vaccines have been used to immunize children against tetanus, whooping cough, and diphtheria. Commercial production is expected shortly and veterinarians may be able to get supplies this winter.
A new graduate assistant in the Giralda Division is Dr. Manuel Moro, Jr., a Rockefeller Foundation Fellow from Peru. His work will be concerned with the relationship of age of puppies to the persistence of infectious hepatitis virus in the blood.

Dr. Poppensiek at work in the Giralda Division, assisted by Miss Barbara Ford.

**General Laboratory**  
Under the direction of Dr. James A. Baker, assisted by Dr. Louise McBee, Dr. Theodore Burnstein and Captain Grayson Mitchell, an investigation of diseases in swine is in progress. As a result of the transfer of hog cholera virus to rabbits with the resultant attenuated virus vaccines for immunization purposes, it was thought by some that all losses from diseases in swine might be avoided thereafter. A review of accumulated and newer knowledge about diseases in swine indicates that this is not to be the case. In considering the possible effect that the attenuated virus vaccines might have on the eventual eradication of hog cholera, it soon became apparent that we do not yet have full knowledge about the maintenance and spread of the virus of hog cholera itself. Accumulation of this knowledge is imperative if we are to proceed rationally with a program of eradication. Even though the new hog cholera vaccines offer great promise and, with-
out doubt, will be important in economical swine production, it is possible that cheaper and better ones might be developed, especially if the virus

These two pigs are in an isolation unit and are on a test for hog cholera virus.

of hog cholera could be transferred to the embryonated egg. In the General Laboratory studies are continuing on the epidemiology of hog cholera and on application of newer techniques to the cultivation of hog cholera virus in eggs.

In some years and in some areas, transmissible gastro-enteritis of baby pigs is even more important as a destroyer of pigs than hog cholera. Dr. K. M. Lee worked upon this problem as a part of the requirements for the Ph.D. degree from Cornell. Dr. Lee completed his graduate work on September 1st and will return to Korea shortly.

In an investigation of diseases in cattle by methods used for rickettsia, two agents of the elementary-body type have been found; namely, (1) a new member of the psittacosis-lymphogranuloma group provisionally named *Miyagawanella bovis* in keeping with the classification in Bergey's
Manual, and (2) an agent naturally infecting deer mice. Some progress has been made in characterizing the morphological, serological, epidemiological and pathogenic features of each agent.

*Calf from the disease free herd in an isolation unit. It will be vaccinated for leptospirosis.*

Work continues on *Leptospira pomona* and studies are directed towards epidemiological aspects with emphasis placed on swine as a possible reservoir of infection for other animals. Further work on transmissible gastro-enteritis of baby pigs is planned.

**RECENT PUBLICATIONS**


(13) Vaccination of Cattle Against Bovine Leptospirosis. York, C. J. and Baker, J. A. Submitted for publication.

PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS


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